

A VERY OLD PICNIC

- Objective:** To show the impact litter has on our environment and on future generations.
- Location:** Quiet outdoor area.
- Materials:** Bag, assorted items the might be left from a picnic (see list below as a guideline).
- Activity:** In a bag, have a variety of containers that might be found on a picnic. These will include paper, aluminum cans, plastic utensils, waxed paper, Styrofoam cups, chip bags, paper plates, napkins, etc.

Ask students to imagine that they have gone on a picnic (or better yet, have a picnic with the group at lunchtime). In a bag are the picnic remains. Everything left will be eaten by wildlife or broken down slowly and returned to the soil. Pull the items out of the bag and ask students to position them in the order in which they think they will decompose or break down over time. When they are finished, ask them to assign the length of time each item will take to decompose.

The following is a guide for you to help position the items:

Paper napkins	1 year
Orange and banana peels	2 years
Newspaper	4 years
Plastic coated paper plates	5 years
Plastic bags	20 years
Nylon fabric	40 years
Tin cans	50 years
Plastic soft drink rings	100 years
Plastic cups	250 years
Aluminum cans	500 years
Glass bottles	1,000,000 years
Styrofoam	Never

This is a good time to lead a discussion about litter and its impact on the environment. This is also a good activity to use to involve the students in recycling and composting. A great start to a conversation unit.

Encourage the students to adopt the following policy:



“Take nothing but pictures leave nothing but foot prints.”