



# SAY YES TO WASTE LESS ACTIVITY GUIDE

## ACTIVITY

Upcycling Clothes to  
Create Useful New Items

## LEVEL

Secondary - Junior College





Pre-activity  
(1 to 3 days before)

- The activity can be led by a teacher or Green Club members to guide their fellow students, fostering leadership skills and stronger bonds among the students.
- If led by a student, the teacher will serve as a facilitator during the lesson.
- Inform students that they will be upcycling pre-loved clothes / fabric to create useful new items. Teachers may assign or allow students to choose to make 1 out of the 3 items below and will need to bring along the necessary resources based on their chosen item on the day of the activity.

No.	Item	Resources
1.	T-shirt bag (no sewing required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one pre-loved adult-sized cotton T-shirt</li> <li>- a pair of scissors</li> <li>- ruler / measuring tape</li> </ul>
2.	T-shirt bag (sewing required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one pre-loved adult-sized cotton T-shirt</li> <li>- a pair of scissors</li> <li>- ruler</li> <li>- marker</li> <li>- needle and thread (any colour of your preference)</li> </ul>
3.	Pouch (no sewing required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- one pre-loved fabric measuring at least 25cm by 25cm</li> <li>- dinner plate (25cm diameter)</li> <li>- salad plate (20cm diameter)</li> <li>- a drawstring / cord of about 30cm long</li> <li>- a pair of scissors</li> <li>- ruler</li> <li>- pencil / marker</li> </ul>

- Remind students that if the pre-loved clothes / fabric are in good condition, they should consider donating them to reduce waste and give them a second life.

Introduction  
(10 mins)

- Share the objective of today's activity: to learn that there's always a personal price to waste, and how we can all play a part in keeping Singapore clean and green.
- Share these two wasteful facts to explain why it's important to reduce waste:
  - **WASTEFUL FACT #1**
    - Singaporeans wasted **813,000 tonnes of food** in 2022. That's the same as 2 bowls of rice per person per day.
  - **WASTEFUL FACT #2**
    - Singaporeans discarded **265 million kg of disposables** in 2022. That's equivalent to 500 Olympic-sized swimming pools or 5,300 4-room HDB flats.



- We spend **\$405** a year when we buy and throw away clothes we don't wear anymore. (Singaporeans typically discard **27 pieces** of clothing a year, estimated at **\$15 per clothing**.)
- Upcycling clothes gives them new life, so that they don't end up in Semakau Landfill, Singapore's only landfill that is projected to be completely filled by 2035, and is also good for our own wallets.
- Alternatively, if they are in good condition, donating textiles such as clothes, bags and even bedsheets is a good way to reduce waste and give textiles a second life too.

### Activity (60 mins)

- Give an overview of the activity: to repurpose their pre-loved clothes into new, useful items, like grocery bags or pouches.
- Students are divided into groups, with each group assigned to create the grocery bag or pouch.
- The teacher/green club members will then guide each group with the help of the instructions listed on **pages 4-6**

### Review (10 mins)

- Select a few students to share their upcycled items and experiences with the rest of the class:
    - Was upcycling fun?
    - Is this something they might want to continue doing? Why yes, why not?
    - Why did they pick this item to create?
    - What would they use this item for?
  - Remind the students to use their upcycled item to reduce wastage and save money.
- Refer to **Annex** for more tips on reducing disposables and food wastage.
- Ask the class if they can think of other ways to reduce waste and save costs in their everyday lives. For example, storing excess food in the fridge so they can be eaten another day; or saying "no" to disposable cutlery when ordering takeaways.
  - By making small changes to the way we live, we can help make Singapore cleaner and greener. It's as simple as saying **YES** to reducing our use of disposable and saying **YES** to reducing food wastage.
- For more information and actionable tips, visit **Clean and Green Singapore**.
- The teacher may then conclude the activity.

**Show off your students' masterpieces! Share photos and/or videos and tag @cleanandgreensg with #SayYESToWasteLess.**

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

### T-SHIRT BAG (SEWING REQUIRED)

Click [here](#) for a video reference.

- 1** You'll need:
  - one pre-loved adult-sized cotton T-shirt
  - a pair of scissors
  - ruler
  - marker
  - needle and thread (any colour of your preference)
- 2** Make a straight cut across under the sleeves.
- 3** To make handles, cut about 16cm down from the top on both sides. Fold each side down around 3cm on themselves, and create a hem of 5cm from each side on top.
- 4** Sew the bottom to complete the bag.
- 5** Personalise the tote bag by decorating or sewing other fabric scraps onto it. Remember to bring your bag the next time you go out to reduce waste.

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

### T-SHIRT BAG (NO SEWING REQUIRED)

Click [here](#) for a video reference.

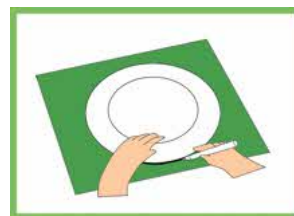
- 1** You'll need:
  - one pre-loved adult-sized cotton T-shirt
  - a pair of scissors
  - ruler / measuring tape
- 2** Cut the sleeves off to create handles.
- 3** Cut an oval shape at the neckline area to create a hole big enough to put your groceries through.
- 4** Turn the T-shirt inside out. Determine how deep you want the bag to be, then trace a line across.
- 5** Cut slits from the bottom of the shirt up to the line you marked earlier. They should be about 6cm long and 2cm wide.
- 6** Tie each fringe into a double knot.
- 7** Then tie each fringe with the adjacent fringe to properly seal the bag. Continue until the entire bag is sealed.
- 8** Turn the bag the right side out, then trim the excess fringes or tie them as embellishments.
- 9** Personalise the bag by decorating it. Remember to bring your bag the next time you go out to reduce waste.

## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

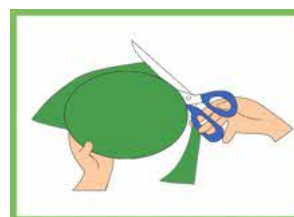
### POUCH (NO SEWING REQUIRED)

- 1 You'll need:
  - one pre-loved fabric measuring at least 25cm by 25cm
  - dinner plate (25cm diameter)
  - salad plate (20cm diameter)
  - a drawstring / cord of about 30cm long
  - a pair of scissors
  - ruler
  - pencil / marker

- 2 Place the 25cm dinner plate on the piece of fabric, and trace the outline with a marker.



- 3 Cut out the traced circle with a pair of scissors.



- 4 Put the 20cm salad plate in the very center of the circle of fabric, and trace its outline with a marker.



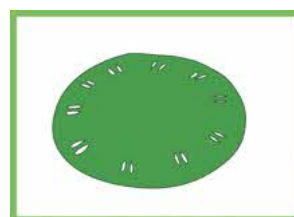
- 5 Using a ruler and a marker, mark the fabric with a pair of 1.3cm lines 12 points around the plate: one mark for each hour on the face of a clock. Each pair of lines should be 1.3cm apart, and 2.5cm from the bottom of the fabric.



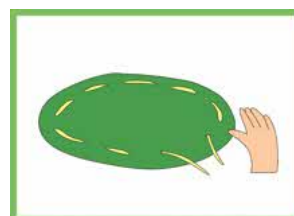
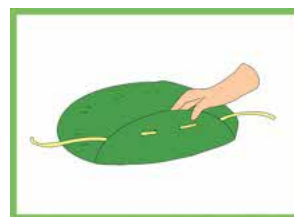
## ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

### POUCH (NO SEWING REQUIRED)

- 6** Cut through each of the marked lines with a pair of scissors. Don't cut past the lines.



- 7** Weave the cord through the notches you made: insert one end of the cord through a notch, bring it through the paired notch to come out through the other side of the fabric. Then repeat till the cord has zigzagged completely around the fabric, and you are back to where you started.



- 8** Pull the ends to gather the pouch, and tie dead knots at both ends of the cord to make sure they stay secure.



- 9** Tie a bow to close the pouch.



- 10** Personalise the pouch by decorating it.

# ANNEX

## MORE TIPS ON WHAT WE CAN DO TO WASTE LESS

### - Tips to reducing disposables

1. Opt out of disposables where possible (e.g., when ordering online / in-store, decline cup holders, cutlery and straws for takeaways)
  - a. Use your own reusable cutlery
  - b. Use your own reusable drink carrier
2. Bring your own reusable bag
  - a. Leave reusable bags near your home entrance or keep some in personal bags
  - b. Refuse bags if items can be carried in hands / pockets / personal bags
3. Bring your own bottle when ordering drinks for takeaway
4. Bring your own container for takeaway meals or snacks
5. Find alternative ways to bag trash instead of using plastic bags (e.g., reusing plastic wrapping, paper bags, yogurt tubs)

### - Tips to reducing food wastage

1. Prevent and reduce food wastage at the source
  - a. Make a shopping list and keep to it
  - b. Keep near-expiry food items within easy view
  - c. Store excess food properly to avoid wastage
  - d. Ask for less rice / noodles if you can't finish them
  - e. Say 'no' to side dishes you don't eat
  - f. Give ugly fruits / veggies a chance, and save money at the same time as they're usually discounted
2. Redistribute unsold / excess food
  - a. Donate safe and edible food items that you no longer wish to consume
3. Repurpose / recycle / treat food waste
  - a. Repurpose food waste (e.g., using odds and ends of veggies to make soup stock or other dishes)
  - b. Recycle food wastage through community food waste recycling programmes or food compost bins



# ANNEX

## THE MATH BREAKDOWN

Interested in how we calculated the price of waste? You'll find our math breakdown below.

### DISPOSABLES

#### Disposable Container

Cost of 1 takeaway container = \$0.50  
3 meals a day x \$0.50 = \$1.50  
365 days a year = **\$547.50**  
(rounded up to \$550)

Cost of 1 ticket to USS = \$50  
Number of trips:  $(550 / 50) = 11$  trips

#### Disposable Bag

Current plastic bag charges:  
\$0.05 per bag for supermarkets  
\$0.50 to \$0.10 for other retailers  
4 bags for a large grocery run = \$0.20  
1 bag for small grocery run = \$0.10  
2 bags for non-grocery run = \$0.20  
A month of 4 large + 12 small + 2  
non-grocery = \$2.40  
12 months a year = **\$28.80**  
(rounded up to \$30)

Cost of 1 scoop of ice-cream = \$4.30  
Number of scoops of ice-cream = **6.69**

### FOOD WASTAGE

#### Extra Side Dish

Cost of side dish at fast food outlets =  
\$3 to \$7 (using the upper bound figure)  
3 times a week = \$21  
52 weeks a year = **\$1,092**  
(rounded up to \$1,100)

Cost of 1 Airpod = \$202.70  
Number of Airpods = **5.38**

#### Expired Groceries

1 in 3 Singaporeans throw away more  
than 10% of food weekly. That works  
out to throwing away an average of  
\$258 worth of unconsumed food a year.  
\$342 million of wasted food a year.  
Using MAS's inflation calculator, \$258 in  
2019 would cost **\$297.01** in 2023.  
(rounded up to \$300)

Cost of 1 movie ticket = \$7  
Number of movie tickets :  $(300 / 7) =$   
**42.8**