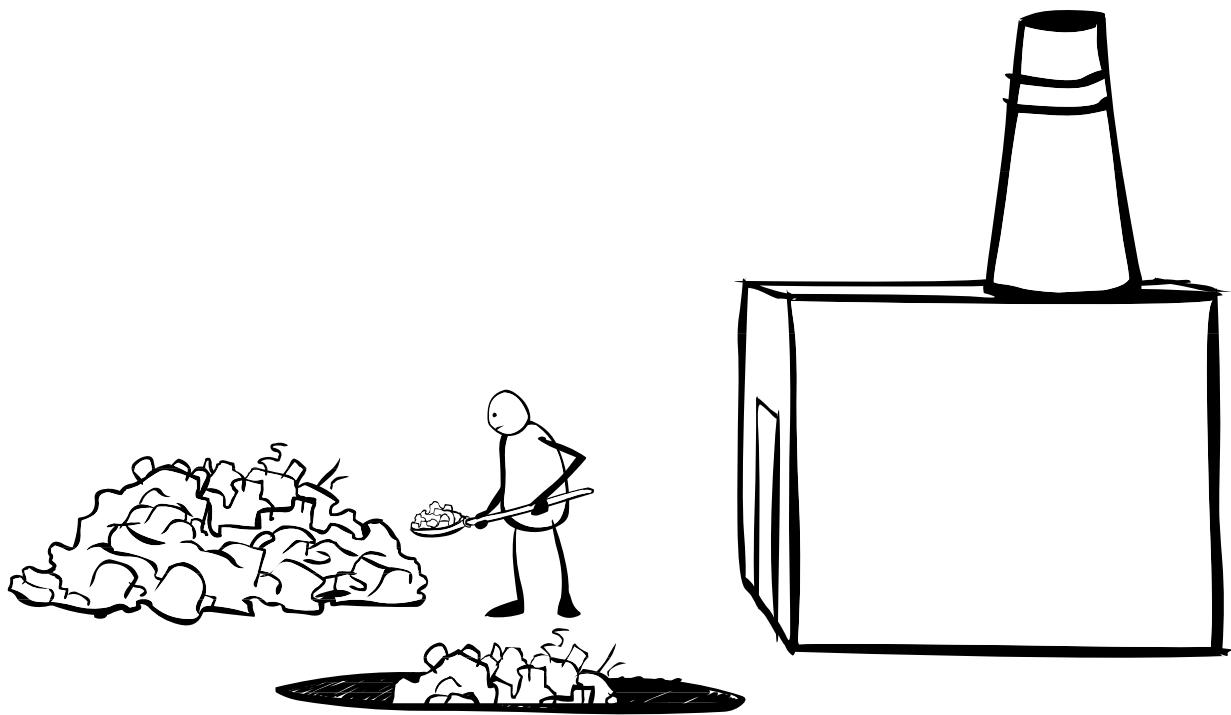


# SESSION 5: WASTE NOT!

LET THERE BE...STUFF?  
A SPIRIT-FILLED RESPONSE TO A CONSUMER-CRAZED WORLD  
A Faith-Based Program for Jewish Teens



created by

THE STORY OF  
**STUFF**  
PROJECT

  
**GreenFaith**  
Interfaith Partners in Action for the Earth

[www.storyofstuff.org](http://www.storyofstuff.org)

[www.greenfaith.org](http://www.greenfaith.org)

version 1.0

# SESSION 5: OVERVIEW

## ENTER AND CONNECT (8 MIN)

- Opening prayer
- Promise Poster
- Check-in
- Homework

## INTRODUCE (3 MIN)

## THINK (10 MIN)

- Story of Stuff Clip
- Waste Quiz
- Getting the Picture

## ENGAGE (20 MIN)

- Garbage Audit (Optional)

## REFLECT (5 MIN)

- Jewish Source Text

## INSPIRE (2 MIN)

- Teen Activist Story

## ENACT (8 MIN)

- Action Plans
- Another Way Sheet
- Award Ballots

## EXIT (3 MIN)

- Closing Circle: Lean On Me
- Blessing

# Preparing for Session Five

## Facilitation Preparation

For this session, you'll need to be careful to contain the garbage activity so it doesn't take the whole session. You can do it in 20 minutes and get back to the room for the rest of the session. Enroll some students to help you clean up after the session if you didn't have the chance earlier.

Don't forget to have students vote for the Earth Stewardship Awards before they leave. You'll have to do the tallying before Session 6. Be creative with your award "certificates." Make them out of ribbon or fabric scraps with a marker, or find some fun awards of your own. You'll probably want to get a head start on it.

## Overview

In this session we explore what happens to our Stuff once we get rid of it. Whether we recycle it or throw it away there's a big cost to the planet and to vulnerable populations. We will follow the secret life of the same objects we learned about in Session 3 to see where each of them goes at the end of their lives. Hint: It's definitely not heaven!

## Goals

- Understand the true cost of disposing of our stuff
- Understand and practice ways to reduce waste
- Understand how wasting resources is a sin

## Themes

### Religious:

- Wasteful use of Creation is a sin

### Secular:

- We are wasting like crazy. It's extremely toxic and a waste of precious resources.
- Reduce, reuse, recycle and rethink!

## Religious Text

- Exodus 16:11-18
- Deuteronomy 20:19-20
- Moses Maimonides Mishneh Torah, Book of Judges, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:8, 10

## Materials for Session 5

### Promise Poster

- Right Stuff Action board – Session 4
- Story of Stuff clip
- Chris Jordan photos
- Photos of children in Asia sorting garbage

### Garbage Audit

- A trashcan containing trash that is representative of the waste that your facility generates.
- A thick paper tarpaulin or large pieces of cardboard (avoid a plastic tarp) on which the trash will be poured, and which you'll dispose of at the end of the activity.
- Rubber gloves (one for each students)– preferably thick, reusable dishwashing/cleaning gloves, not thin latex gloves.
- A mop and bucket to clean up any spills.
- Pen and paper to record ideas
- Camera to document the waste

### Hand-outs

- Session 5 Readings Sheets and Bible Texts- for every 2-3 students
- Another Way Sheet
- Session 5 Action Plans- 1 per student
- Awards Ballot

## Session 5 To Do List

- Make copies and have Session Readings Sheet ready to hand out (1 for every 2-3 students).
- Make copies and have Jewish Source Text ready to hand out (1 for every 2-3 students).
- Have promise poster on wall.
- Visit [www.chrisjordan.com](http://www.chrisjordan.com) and select a few images from his "Running the Numbers" exhibit to share.
- Post Right Stuff Action board for Session 4 on wall.
- Set up *The Story of Stuff* clip cued for waste disposal section (16:44-19:01).
- Garbage Audit set up – Find a can of trash that is representative of the waste your facility generates. Have it ready some place where you don't mind emptying a can of garbage. We recommend doing this outside. Have the paper tarp set up next to the can and gloves ready to hand out to students.
- Have Action Plans ready to hand out.
- Have Award Ballots ready to hand out.

## Jewish Source Texts

### Exodus 16:11-18

The Lord spoke to Moses: I have heard the grumbling of the Israelites. Speak to them and say: By evening you shall eat flesh, and in the morning you shall have your fill of bread; and you shall know that I the Lord am your God. In the evening quail appeared and covered the camp; in the morning there was a fall of dew about the camp. When the fall of dew lifted, there, over the surface of the wilderness, lay a fine and flaky substance, as fine as the frost on the ground. When the Israelites saw it, they said to one another, "What is it?" For they did not know what it was. And Moses said to them, "That is the bread which the Lord has given you to eat. This is what the Lord has commanded: Gather as much of it as each of you requires to eat, an omer to a person for as many of you as there are; each of you shall fetch for those in his tent. The Israelites did so, some gathering much, some little. But when they measured it by the omer, he who had gathered much had no excess, and he who had gathered little had no deficiency: they had gathered as much as they needed to eat.

### Deuteronomy 20:19-20

When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city? Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siegeworks against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.

### Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (Moses Maimonides, 1135-1204 CE), Mishneh Torah, Book of Judges, Laws of Kings and Wars 6:8, 10.

It is forbidden to cut down food trees outside a [besieged] city, nor may a water channel be deflected from them so that they wither, as it is said: *You must not destroy its trees* (Deut. 20:19)....

And not only during a siege; whenever a food tree is cut down with destructive intent, punishment is incurred. But it may be cut down when it damages other trees, or it damages a field belonging to someone else; or its value for other purposes is greater [than of its food yield]. The Torah forbids only *wanton* destruction.

Not only one who cuts down food trees, but also one who smashes household goods, tears clothes, demolishes a building, stops up a spring, or destroys food on purpose violates the command: *You must not destroy..!*(Deut. 20:19).

## Notes on Jewish Source Texts

During this series, we've learned that in our current economy there is enormous waste, toxicity, and destruction.

The text sources that are our focus in this session work in a very different way.

1. In the passage from Exodus, the Israelites start out facing an enormous, immediate need with very few resources. God provides people with food that satisfies their real hunger. The food is distributed fairly, such that everyone has what they need, and no one has useless excess.
2. In the passage from Deuteronomy which is taken from a larger section dealing with the laws of war, environmental damage from warfare is to be limited if possible. After all, the trees cannot run like humans to escape.
3. In the passage from Maimonides the law in Deuteronomy is expanded to include the wanton destruction of anything. Maimonides was codifying what was considered one of the 613 mitzvot or commandments in the Jewish tradition. Thus the law in Deuteronomy is but an example of a basic principle: when we waste creation we are committing a sin. While we are permitted to constructively use natural resources, destructive or useless consumption is a violation of God's Creation. This goes back to the idea that everything, even the things we think we own, actually belong to God and we do not have the right to waste them.

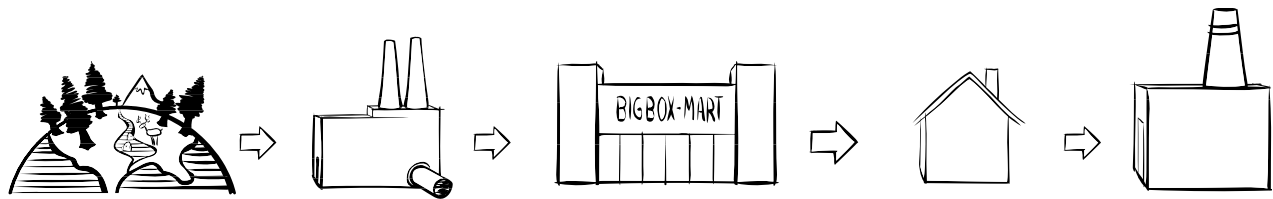
Clearly, there's a different logic and ethic at work in the story of manna and the laws in Deuteronomy and Maimonides as compared to the story of stuff. The Jewish tradition is calling us away from the current version of the story of stuff.

Earlier in this series, we remembered that God created everything and called it "good" – over and over. In another passage, the Bible again affirms that God created everything with a good purpose, one that certainly does not end up in an incinerator or landfill generating toxic waste:

*The designer and maker of the earth established the earth, not creating it to be a waste, but designing it to be lived in.  
Isaiah 45:18*

God calls us repeatedly to value people and creation. God affirms repeatedly that God values people and creation, that they were created lovingly, with a good purpose. Can we start by turning our own homes, and our houses of worship, into communities that treat the by-products of our consumption with responsible care rather than thoughtless abandon?

# SESSION 5 – Waste Not!



## Enter and Connect - (8 min)

### Opening prayer (1 min)

#### SAY THIS

*May it be your will oh God, and God of our ancestors, that we may really learn what happens to the things we consume, when we are finished with them. Help us to see that our waste affects other people and the earth. Help us to build a society that does not create waste that hurts your creation, but instead renews all things for use in your service. You made everything that exists and you called it good at the beginning of time, forever and ever. Help us to be part of that goodness. AMEN.*

- Look at the Promise Poster together and ask students to raise the hand with the promise string on it if they intend to keep the promises during this session..
- Check-in: What was it like for you to spend the week more aware of media manipulation?
- Homework Check – Ask who did their homework. In pairs (not their buddies), have them tell each other what they did and how it went. (2 min. ea.) Back in the large group, have them each say how many points they earned that week (tally the points on the tally sheet) and choose a highlight to share. Have them post any pictures they brought on the Right Stuff Action board.
- Hand out Session 5 Reading sheets.

## Introduce (3 min)

Recap the previous week, if needed.  
Ask the students:

**SAY THIS** *What did we do last week?  
What did we learn?*

1. Tell them this:

**SAY THIS** *Now it's time to look at what happens once we're done with our stuff. It seems simple: We throw it away, we put it in the garbage can on garbage day, and the garbage truck comes and Presto! It magically disappears. Or does it?*

2. Have students take turns reading, changing readers every paragraph.

**READ ALOUD** *1.1 - Once it's taken away, most of us don't give our garbage another thought. We just keep filling our cans over and over again happy to have someone else dispose of it for us and to not have to look at or smell it ever again. It might be out of our sight, and off of our minds. But it's not off of the planet. It doesn't vanish into thin air or get taken to another planet. It's still here and a part of our world, which is getting piled higher and higher with our garbage.*

3. Ask:

**SAY THIS** *When we throw our stuff away, where does it go?  
Where IS away, exactly?  
What happens to it there?  
And what is the cost to the people and planet?*

4. Resume student reading.

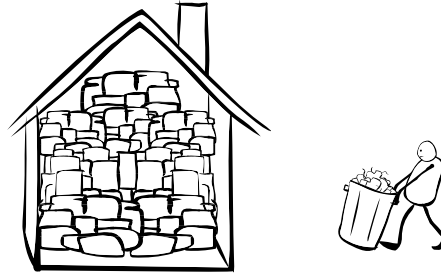
**READ ALOUD** *1.2 - In this session we're going to take good look at "away" and the real cost of the enormous pile of junk that's piling up there, When people try, they can dramatically reduce the amount of waste they produce. But it can be hard to change our habits even when we want to. It helps when we see the cost of not changing and get lots of inspiration and help for making the changes.*



## Think (5 min)

### Prep: Set up *The Story of Stuff* clip on disposal (16:44-19:01)

- Tell students they're going to watch a section of the video with the themes you'll be focusing on in this session.
- Watch the clip.
- Debrief (1 min) – What do you think?



## Engage (26 min)

### Part 1 – Waste Quiz

Tell them they'll be taking a little Waste Quiz and ask them the following questions. Provide answers after a few students have had the chance to offer their guesses.

#### WASTE QUIZ

**Q: How much waste do you think you generate each year?**

A: 4.6 pounds/day which is more than 1600 lbs. a year. That's the size of two adult gorillas!

**Q: What is the most toxic man made chemical?**

A: Dioxin. And we release dioxin every time we burn PVC or plastic #3 which is just one reason why incinerators are such bad news for our health and the health of the planet.

**Q: How many cellphones were thrown out in the US last year?**

A: 130 million. Which is especially sobering when you consider the number of toxics in our cell phones and that if we chuck our phones into landfills those toxics leaches into our groundwater or often the phones are being incinerated and releasing, you guessed it, dioxin!

**Q: How many pounds of clothing does the average American throw away and how much of that ends up in landfill?**

A: The average American throws away about 68 pounds of clothing and textiles each year – and about 85 percent of that ends up in landfills.

**Q: How big is the largest floating garbage patch (that's a patch of garbage that has accumulated from all the stuff we've thrown into our ocean)?**

A: The size of Texas, and a second patch in the Atlantic ocean was just discovered!

**Engage (26 min)**

**Part 2 – Getting the Picture**

**Prep: Have Chris Jordan and International garbage picker images ready.**

Instructions:

1. Pass out Chris Jordan images.
2. Ask for responses:



- What do you think these are?
- What do these make you think?
- What do they make you feel?
- How do you think God would feel about this?

3. Tell them this:



*When you think about all of this waste, take a second to think about your stuff: your cell phone, your t-shirt, your jewelry, or your make up. We've learned where it comes from. This is where it's likely to go. Landfills. Big holes in the earth filled with everything we throw away. These are pictures of "away." They are filled with the jewelry that went out of style last week, the T-shirt that got stained, and all the plastic that's used as packaging for just about every cosmetic product we buy.*

*What about your cell phone? Eventually, you'll find a better model and the one you have will get trashed. Sending it to the trash will put all those toxic chemicals into the groundwater and waste all those precious metals. If you decide to recycle it, it all too often just get shipped overseas to get smashed up and burned trashing -the environment and creating huge health risks for workers.*

4. Pass out photos of sorting and living waste and ask for responses:



- What do these make you think?
- What do they make you feel?
- What are God's feelings about these photos?

5. Tell them that, luckily, there are other things you can do with your Stuff and ways we can prevent the waste stream from causing more damage.

## Reflect (5 min)

**Prep: Have text ready for Exodus 16:11-18, Deuteronomy 20:19-20 and Maimonides.**

### Instructions:

1. Read the text.
2. Tell students: In our society, a lot of stuff ends up creating harm to people and the planet.
3. Ask:
  - What do these texts tell us about how people have felt about waste in pre-modern times?
  - In the Exodus story is there waste?
  - Why not?

4. Tell students:



*For God, the purpose of everything is to support life – just like the manna does. In the Exodus story, creation is used to feed people – and there isn't really waste at all – all the resources are distributed fairly. Wouldn't it be great if we could use our resources in ways that gave everyone access to their basic needs, rather than creating waste from a few people?*

## Engage (20 min)

### Garbage Audit (Optional)

It can help us realize the ways in which we personally contribute to the problem by taking a look at the waste we create...

#### SUMMARY

Garbage audits are an entertaining, memorable, effective way to educate people about the importance of good waste management and recycling habits, and to motivate them to take action. The goal of these audits is to identify ways that your facility can reduce the amount of garbage it generates – whether through recycling or by decreasing the amount of trash generated in the first place.

Here are some simple instructions to help you conduct a successful waste audit at your house of worship.

**Step 1: Get Prepared** The audit will involve pouring out a trash container onto a tarpaulin – so you need to make sure you've got the materials you'll need. We recommend that you dress in clothes which can get dirty, and that you conduct the audit in an auditorium or meeting room where there is a bare, non-carpeted floor and lots of space.

## Engage (20 min)

We also recommend that you gather the following items:

- A trash can containing trash that is representative of the waste that your facility generates.
- A thick paper tarpaulin or large pieces of recycled cardboard (avoid a plastic tarp) on which the trash will be poured, and which you'll dispose of at the end of the activity.
- Rubber gloves – preferably thick, dishwashing/cleaning gloves, not thin latex gloves.
- A mop and bucket to clean up any spills.

**Step 2: Get Started** Carefully pour out the contents of the trash can onto the tarp/ cardboard and sort the waste into the following piles:

- Office paper
- Aluminum, plastic and glass
- Food scraps
- Other food-related waste – e.g. paper or Styrofoam cups or plates

When you've sorted the waste into piles, assess how much of your waste falls into each of the categories above.

**Step 3: Analyze your Garbage** Have a student write down the suggestions for how to decrease their church's waste. These can be brought back into the classroom. Have another student in charge of photos, so they can share with the church.

Make the following plans in relation to each of the waste categories:

- Office paper can be recycled. Make sure that there are paper recycling bins everywhere that there is a regular waste bin.
- Aluminum, plastic and glass can be recycled as long as there is no food waste attached to them. For example, an empty aluminum can is recyclable, while a piece of aluminum foil with cheese from a pizza melted onto it is not recyclable. Make sure that there are can/bottle recycling bins everywhere that there is a regular waste bin.
- Food scraps can be composted – you can find information about composting at <http://www.composting101.com/>
- Other food-related waste may in many cases be eliminated. For instance – paper cups or Styrofoam mugs can be replaced by mugs or cups, which can be used over and over and washed in a dishwasher or by hand. The same is true for paper or Styrofoam plates and plastic cutlery.

**Step 4: Clean Up** When you've finished analyzing your garbage, pick up the paper tarp/cardboard by its corners and replace the trash, with the tarp/cardboard, into the garbage can.

If they follow these four steps, and address each of the different waste categories listed above, most institutions find that they can reduce the amount of garbage that they generate by over 50%!

## Inspire (2 min)

**Prep: Have students ready with Session 5 Readings sheet.**

If you don't think you can make a big difference in the way we treat our waste, consider the story of this young hero.

Have students take turns reading, alternating every paragraph.



**Alexander Lin, E-Waste Crusader**  
**Providence, RI**  
**Age 14**  
**[www.w-i-n.ws](http://www.w-i-n.ws)**

**READ  
ALoud**

*1.3 - Moved to action by a Wall Street Journal article detailing the growing E-Waste crisis, Alexander Lin was determined to do something. And do something he did!*

*Still in junior high at the time, Alex convinced his community service group Westerly Innovations Network, WIN, to see what they could do to take on E-Waste in their hometown of Providence, RI.*

*1.4 - To get things started, Alex launched a recycling drive that collected over 21,000 pounds of E-Waste! Alex soon established a permanent E-Waste drop-off in town. Alex then went on with the other kids from WIN to draft and advocate for a local and statewide ordinance to ban the dumping of E-Waste in Rhode Island. And he just kept on it. Recognizing the need to extend the lives of the computers we have and share the technology, Alex convinced the computer staff at his high school to make computer refurbishing part of the curriculum. He then used developed a program to share the refurbished computers to schools in his hometown of Providence, RI and also to schools in Sri Lanka and Mexico. After setting up an Internet café in Cameroon, Alex began work with the UN Environment Program to provide refurbished computers to folks across the globe.*

## Enact (5 min.)

**Prep: Hand out Action Plans.**

**Instructions:**

Review the instructions if needed.

### Action Plan Instruction Sheet

Read and think about the actions:

- Which actions would you like to do?
- Which seem like you could do them?
- Which seem like fun?
- Which seem as if they will really make a difference?

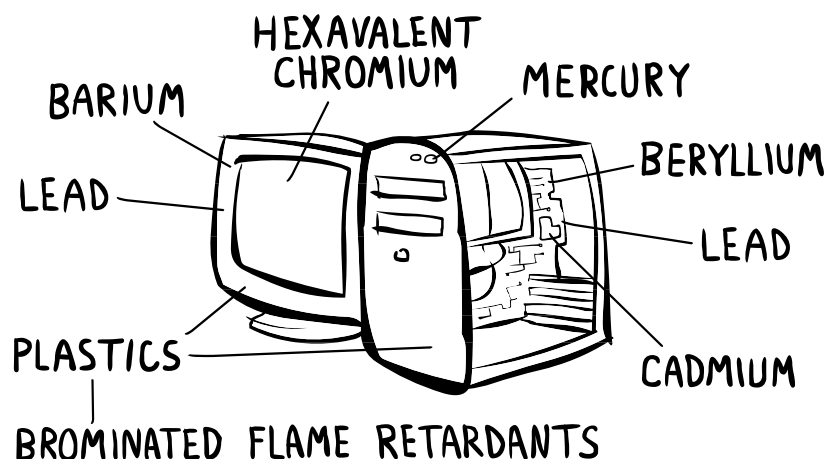
Decide which actions to take.

- Decide which actions you will do with your buddy and which you will do by yourself.

Remember to:

- Show your parent(s)/guardian(s) your action plan when you get home and ask them to support you. Think of what support you want from them. Ask them how they want to support you.
- Check in with your buddy at least one time this week.
- You can change your action plans.
- You can catch up on any unfinished actions at anytime.
- Take pictures or document what you do so you can share it!

## HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN A PC



## Awards (5 min)

Tell students that they will be voting on the award winners for this course and hand out the award ballots. Have them be thoughtful about how they fill them out so that students who deserve the recognition receive it. Invite them to add new categories and write someone in if they'd like. Make it both playful and serious by telling them that this is an opportunity to acknowledge the efforts everybody has made and what each person has contributed to the course. Remind them not to forget to have fun. Give them 5 min. Have them hand them in before they leave.

## Exit (5 min)

Remind them that the next session is the last one and that their parent(s)/guardian(s) are being invited to come to help celebrate the completion. Hand out the letter to parents.

### Closing Circle: Lean on Me

Invite everyone to stand in a circle facing the center. Then have them turn to the right and make the circle smaller so that they are inches away from the person in front and behind them. Have them put their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. Then, on the count of three, tell them to sit down as if they were sitting in a chair. Let them support each other and call attention to the fact they are supporting and being supported by each other at the same time.

### Blessing



*Source of all, you've blessed us with a great abundance of things – food to eat, shelter over our heads, clothing for our bodies, and much much more. Help us remember that everything which we buy, use and dispose of – all the stuff we throw out – goes on to impact other people, and strengthen us to take responsibility for our waste, and not to burden others with it. AMEN.*

### Follow Up

- Send an email or call parents to invite them to the last session.
- Tally award winners and prepare award certificates.

### WE WANNA KNOW...

Congratulations on completing Session 5! How did it go? How much time did the exercises actually take? What worked? What didn't? What do you think would work better?

Let us know at: [www.storyofstuff.org/teach.php](http://www.storyofstuff.org/teach.php)

# Session 5: Readings

1.1 - Once it's taken away, most of us don't give our garbage another thought. We just keep filling our cans over and over again happy to have someone else dispose of it for us and to not have to look at or smell it ever again. It might be out of our sight, and off of our minds. But it's not off of the planet. It doesn't vanish into thin air or get taken to another planet. It's still here and a part of our world, which is getting piled higher and higher with our garbage.

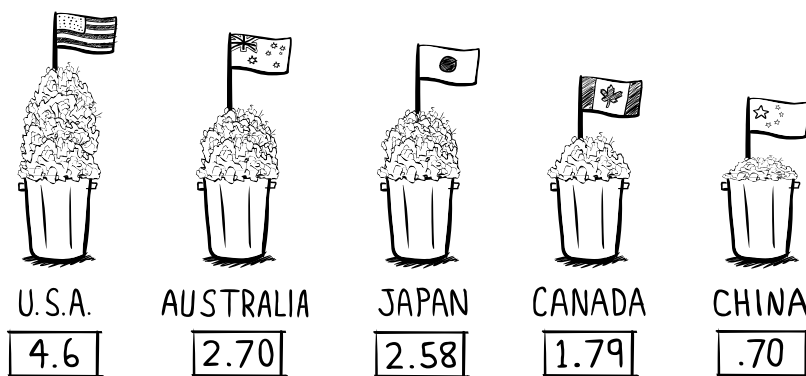
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1.3 - Moved to action by a Wall Street Journal article detailing the growing E-Waste crisis, Alexander Lin was determined to do something. And do something he did! Still in junior high at the time, Alex convinced his community service group Westerly Innovations Network, WIN, to see what they could do to take on E-Waste in their hometown of Providence, RI.

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## PER CAPITA GARBAGE PRODUCTION

AVERAGE POUNDS PER PERSON PER DAY





# Session 5: Action Plans

## Create

- Trash art - Make some art out of trash. Check out: <http://www.makeartnottrash.com/endnotes.htm> for ideas. (2 pts)
- Handmade Paper - Make some recycled paper out of old newspapers. Check out this website or do a Google search for directions: <http://www.make-stuff.com/recycling/paper.html> (2 pts)

## Communicate

- Explain zero waste to three people. Check out GAIA's website to learn more about it: <http://www.no-burn.org/section.php?id=90> (2 pts)
- Make a poster to help folks understand what gets recycled, composted and sent to the landfill. Start by looking up your local recycling facility: <http://earth911.com/> (3 pts)

## Get Smart

- Research zero waste – Look up strategies and ways to reduce the waste in your home, school, or church. Check out: <http://www.no-burn.org/section.php?id=90> and <http://www.greenfaith.org/stewardship/waste.html> (2 pts)
- Take a dump trip – Find out where your local dump is by looking online. If your town doesn't have a dump find the local transfer station. Take a trip to either the dump or the transfer station and just see what happens to your stuff. Reflect on it and write your thoughts and feelings in your journal (3 pts)

## Try Something New

- Repair something: fix your bike, replace a button on a jacket. Take a picture of it and show it. (2 pts).
- Say no to plastic - Avoid single use plastics like bottled water, straws, and yogurt cups- bring your lunch in a cloth bag. Write down what you did. (2 pts)
- Lose weight - Weigh your family's garbage. See if you can reduce it by at least 1 lb the next week. See how low you can get your garbage. (3 pts)

## Have Insights

- No More Away - Next time you throw something away just think about the fact that there is no away. Imagine that all the stuff you see came from nature and will one day end up in a landfill. Reflect on these questions and write your response in your journal. What does that make you feel? How would your life be different if you were always aware of that? What makes you forget? (1 pt)

## Be a Leader

With peers

- Host a Trash to Treasure party. Have friends over and turn trash into art. Check out this slideshow to get inspired: <http://www.treehugger.com/files/2009/06/rethinking-trash-into-inspired-art-slideshow.php> (3 pts)

# Session 5: Action Plans Cont.

## Be a Leader

In your family

- Stop The Catalogs - Sign your family up with Catalog Choice and reduce the number of unwanted catalogs that flood your mailbox and destroy thousands and thousands of trees. Visit their website at <http://www.catalogchoice.org/> (3 pts)

In your school

- Green Your School - Think about ways to make your school a Zero waste school or a green school. Draft up an action plan, check out this site in Illinois to get started: [http://www.greeningschools.org/resources/view\\_cat\\_teacher.cfm?id=178](http://www.greeningschools.org/resources/view_cat_teacher.cfm?id=178) (3 pts)

In your neighborhood

- Know your recycling - Call your local recycling facility and see what plastics they actually recycle. If you don't have recycling make a list of who you would call to talk about setting up a program (2 pts)

In the Congregation

- Be an E-Steward - Set up a box as an e-waste pick up for cell phones at your synagogue and then drop them off with an E-Steward. Make a poster with the changes in the synagogue's disposal policies and what they will be doing to reduce their garbage.  
<http://www.e-stewards.org/> (3 pts)

Remember to take pictures of anything you did to share and put them on the mural.

## Another Way

Reduce, reuse, recycle and rot. The mantra may be simple but it's filled with wisdom. First you have to reduce the amount of stuff you buy, use and throw away, then you should keep on reusing it, and then (if you can't think of anything better to do with it) you can go ahead and recycle it. If it's an organic material, you can put it in the compost and let it rot. Of course, that means you have to set up a compost pile if you don't have one already.

More tips:

- Bring your own bag when you do go out shopping.
- Skip bottled water and use reusable bottles instead.
- Buy second hand when possible. Not only is it cheaper and better for the planet, but then you'll have something one of a kind.
- Check out *The Story of Stuff's* list of 10 Little and Big Things You Can Do: <http://www.storyofstuff.com/anotherway.php>



# GETTING THE PICTURE

