

"Lifestyles of the Eco-Friendly"

GRADES: 5-College

TIME: 60-90 minutes

MINIMUM REQUIRED MATERIALS:

(Materials can be used or recycled items to reflect the values encouraged by the program.)

- **Baseball cap with sign that reads: FACTOIDS FOUND HERE**
- **Recycled poster boards, or an outdated desk-size calendar (use back), with factoids written on them**
- **All the props and products that you use in your daily life that will illustrate your day and provide students with the opportunity to examine the products themselves**
- **2 plastic milk crates**
- **Containers from products (available at local recycling centers) you *don't* use**

Comments: This program follows a day in the life of the presenter, examining the choices the presenter makes from products, to foods, to transportation, to entertainment. It is a lively, thought-provoking, fun and engaging program. Because the program follows the life of the individual presenter, it cannot be outlined exactly. Below you will find suggestions and guidelines for offering this program.

Note: It is essential that this program accurately reflect *your* lifestyle, not the lifestyle of the most eco-friendly person you can imagine, or the person you want to be in five years.

Your honesty and efforts to grow and change, and to live more compassionately and sustainably, are important elements in the integrity of this presentation.

Introduction: This program offers your audience the opportunity to explore the choices which we each make daily that can have a profound effect on people, nonhuman animals, and the environment. The main purpose of the program is to teach students that their daily choices matter, and to provide hope, ideas, and inspiration for a more compassionate, sustainable world through personal choices. Note that throughout the program, the choices that are healthier for us are invariably kinder to animals and better for the environment.

Part One: Invite the Class to Join You for a Typical Saturday

Ask the students to think about what eco-friendly means to them, and explain that your day reflects a way of living that has slowly evolved for you as you have learned all the ways that your lifestyle choices affect other species, your own health, other people, and the Earth itself. Explain that you try to live a life that harms others as little as possible, and that you are continually changing and growing. You might want to tell the students that if you had done this program five years ago, it would have been less eco-friendly, and that if you were to do it in five years, your hope would be that it would be even more eco-friendly.

Ask the students to constantly be thinking about the reasons why you've chosen certain products or made certain lifestyle decisions and to always ask themselves the following:

- 1. how does this choice help you, the presenter**
- 2. how does this choice help other species**
- 3. how does this choice help people in general**
- 4. how is this choice kinder to the environment**

Write these criteria on the blackboard, and throughout the program ask the students how an action or product is "eco-friendly," using the four criteria above.

Part Two: Choose a Mr. or Ms. Factoid

The factoid person sits in the front of the room, near you, and wears the “factoids found here” baseball cap. When you want to share a fact that pertains to a specific daily choice you say to your factoid person: “Ms./Mr. Factoid, give us a fact.” The factoid person should read one of the factoid poster boards and then show the fact to the audience. Sometimes you may wish your factoid person to read two facts at a time, and you can ask for this.

Part Three: Your Day

A. Perhaps your day begins with a short shower. If it does, make sure to bring a shower curtain, robe, shampoo, soap etc. Invite audience members to hold up your shower curtain while you shower. You can ask the audience to make water sounds while you take a short shower. Ask them “why do you think I take a short shower?” You can throw your shampoo container out into the audience and ask them “why do you think I use this shampoo?” (Additionally, you can periodically throw containers to the audience from products you do

not use, and ask the audience to guess which products you use and why.) If you use a low flow shower head, ask the students why. If you don’t shower each day, ask them why not. **FACTOIDS:** your factoids should reflect the facts which come into play for you in making the decisions you make. For example, if your shampoo is not tested on animals you might want to have Mr./Ms. factoid read facts about animal testing, such as these:

“Half a million rabbits are used each year in U.S. research facilities to test personal care and household products, and chemicals.”

“One of the most common tests is the Draize test in which the substance is applied to the rabbit’s eye while he or she is held in a restraining device.”

Make sure to discuss the factoids after they have been read to the audience. Regarding water consumption, you might share the following fact:

“1/3rd of the water used in the average U.S. home is in the shower.”



B. Getting Dressed: Take off your bathrobe (you'll be wearing your clothes underneath). Do you wear organic cotton? Do you avoid leather, silk and wool? Do you wear eco-fleece? Do you wear synthetic or natural fibers? Do you wear hand-me-downs and visit thrift shops instead of buying new? Do you make sure your clothes were not produced in a sweatshop? Discuss where wool, cotton and leather come from, and talk with the class about consuming less. You might also address the following: do you wear cosmetics? If so, are they cruelty-free? Ask your audience why you have made these choices, providing props and materials for them to hold, pass around, and discuss. Once again, have your factoid person read relevant facts that pertain to your choices, for example:

"Our use of resources directly affects other species by consuming resources that shrink their habitats and ours."

C. Breakfast: Take out a bowl or plate and bring out the props for whatever breakfast you eat. If you use a cloth napkin, and if you compost your food scraps into a container, bring these, too. Ask your audience questions, such as: "Why do I use a cloth napkin? Why do I eat organic oatmeal? Why do I use soy milk instead of cow's milk? Why do I compost my food scraps? Why don't I eat eggs and bacon?" This is a good time to do the chicken crate activity described in the outline *Perspectives on Animals*, page 26.

The following are facts that your factoid person could read to the audience which pertain to animal agriculture. Remember that these are only examples, you can choose the facts that have most influenced your decisions. You can find many facts and sources in **Diet for a New America**

by John Robbins, or **Vegan: The New Ethics of Eating** by Eric Marcus (see "Resources," pages 80-81).

"64% of U.S. cropland is used for livestock feed. 85% of U.S. topsoil loss is caused by animal agriculture."

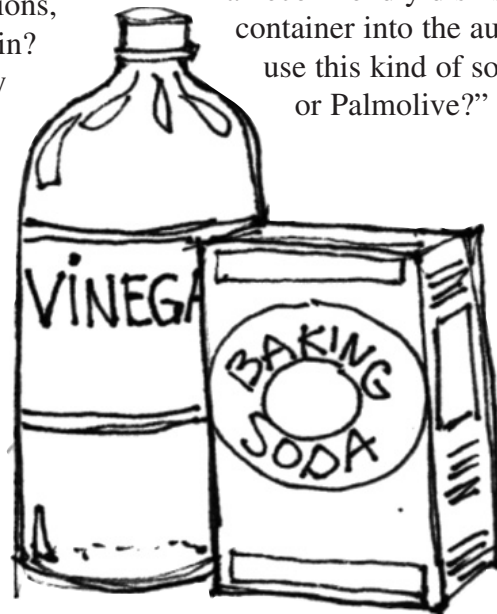
"Risk of death from heart attack for average American man: just under 50%"

"Risk of death from heart attack for American man who consumes no meat, dairy products, or eggs: approximately 4%"

"50% of U.S. wells are polluted, primarily from agricultural chemical run-off and animal wastes."

"It takes up to 12 pounds of grain fed to a cow to produce 1 pound of beef. More grain production means more water use for irrigation, more deforestation for creating fields, and more pesticide run-off."

After breakfast, clean your dishes. If you use an eco-friendly dish soap, you can throw the container into the audience, asking: "Why do I use this kind of soap instead of Joy, Dawn, or Palmolive?"



D. Clean the house: If you use homemade cleaners, such as white vinegar and water for cleaning windows, mirrors, and counters, and baking soda and water for scouring, cleaning bathrooms, etc., this is a wonderful opportunity to ask some audience members to come to the front of the class and do a little desk cleaning. You can ask them what

they think the products are, and if they can't guess, you can invite them to taste the products. You might ask: "Can any of you safely eat your cleaning products at home?" How is it better for you, the presenter, to use such products, and how is it better for the Earth and other species?

A pertinent factoid might read:

"Homemade household products save money, save on packaging, save the environment from more toxins, are not tested on animals, and are safer for me and my children."

If you typically do the laundry on a Saturday, you might share your choice of detergent, and also bring a rope and clothespins for the students to hang your laundry on (if this pertains to you). Then ask, "Why don't I use a clothes dryer?"

Part Five: Other Chores or Entertainments

What might you do on a typical Saturday? Might you do chores like changing the oil in your car? If so, what kind of car do you drive? What is its gas mileage? Do you car pool? Do you ride your bike on errands? Have you chosen not to drive at all? Do you go to the mall shopping on the weekend, or do you take hikes in the woods? If you like to shop, is it at used stores or do you buy new? Do you bring your own bag on errands? Do you utilize libraries rather than buy new books? Do you walk your dog? Do you watch a lot of television, or get together with friends for fun? Do you do arts or crafts projects with recycled materials? Whatever choices that you make that are kinder to the Earth and to other species are worth sharing, especially if they are relatively easy choices that were common until recently (like

going to the library, gathering with family and friends for entertainment, etc.) Use factoids that are relevant, and make sure to offer your audience the opportunity to see and touch the materials you use. For example, six audience members can pretend to be your car as you change the oil, or can patch your bike tire and pump it up, or can see and touch your art projects. Throughout the program, engage students with questions and volunteer opportunities.

Part Six: Wrap up

Invite students to think about their own lives, and what changes they might want to make to live more eco-friendly lives. The following factoids are useful for wrap up:

"What is the most powerful tool for the future of the planet and all the species on it?"

Allow students to answer this question, supporting all their comments, which are virtually

always important. Then ask your factoid person for the next factoid which reads: *"YOU!"*

Remind students that their choices matter, and that only together can our individual choices really work to save this planet. A last factoid might read:
"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Reject, Respect and Connect"

Remind students that it is important to make the connections between their choices and the Earth, other species, and other people around them. Only when they make the effort to understand and make the connections will they feel inspired and empowered to make eco-friendly choices.

