

Giant Recycled Fish

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Recycled Fish



If you are looking for a great collaborative project either for a school or group, you can't go past something big and amazing to impress!

That's when recycling comes in very handy, because we all know schools and groups equals lack of craft funding.

So start kids recycling what ever they can at home, allow a good few weeks as it can be a slow trickle in. Teach and empower them in what sort of recyclables are needed, or you will end up a human rubbish pile. So ask for items like bottle caps, old cd's or dvds, paper, wool, foil, cake patties, basically anything that could be made decorative.



Don't forget tip shops for gathering materials, they have a wealth of decorative items donated, everything from bottle caps, cardboard, paper, wool, the trick is go often.

On this fish we used cd's, silver caps (found at the tip shop) coloured paper, paint, wool, egg cartons, foil, plastic roll, and even broken plaster, you could use broken crockery anything goes really.

First things first- you need a strong and sturdy background to support the weight of items glued to it, it needs to be wooden, I used plywood sheeting, don't use MDF because of its toxic nature when it breaks down and unless you seal both sides it can go horrible when it gets moisture in it, than comes mould yuck! So use the right materials for a good life span.



You may need to ask a handy parent with a jigsaw to cut out your shape, look to google for simple fish shapes and draw it on to your board so it can be cut out correctly.

Divide kids into small groups and get them doing different jobs, job roles can include cutting paper up into smaller pieces, cutting small circles from paper to cover the holes and edges of cd's, cutting egg cartons into cups and painting them different colours. Allow a process of rotation so kids get a chance at doing everything, and of course everyone must get a chance at adding to the fish.

Start by painting the background colour to your fish, most of it you will not see, but it helps to protect your wood and takes care of any peak holes so your fish totally looks the part. Once the paint is dry, your set to go, my advice is head to the hardware shop and buy a bulk 5lt container of PVA glue or Elmers glue, it is perfect for this project. In Australia head to Bunnings and buy wood glue it's under \$20 for 5 litres, much more efficient price wise then those little bottles, and you'll have plenty left over for other things.

Make it easy for the kids and fun, rotate every 7 minutes, create a team focused environment. If there are unfinished items on the table the next kids must complete them.

One job that is a little time consuming is scrunching up foil into balls, we made two sizes, super small and small, it added texture and variation.



Once you have your fish painted either one or multiple colours, draw thick marker lines dividing the fish into sections, this makes it easy for the kids to know where they are to place items.

Start by adding cut up paper and glue it as if you were collaging, so add some glue, add paper, and add glue over the top of it totally covering that piece of paper, it adds a nice gloss shine and sets you up for the next piece of paper. Start at the edges of your area with straight sides and work your way in, that way your area will stay defined rather than having pieces out of your area all over the place. Complete your area.

It's easier to get the flat areas done first before adding materials with height, as they can get knocked around a bit and end up coming loose, so definitely start with the flatter areas first.

Pick areas where height is a must, like the middle fin, it is good to have it stand out from the fish body, so use egg carton cups or bottle caps, anything that will allow for height. Other areas for height can be the tail, or around the edges of the whole fish, the eye etc.

Wool is a great tool, chop it into small pieces and throw in lots of colours and add it for a tail, it works great.

Work out whether your going to hang it or have it portable, I added a metal pole to a bucket of plaster and attached wheels to the bottom and then hung it on that, we travelled around the school with it from room to room so everyone could enjoy it for a bit.





Its a really enjoyable project and the kids will really love it, just remember be organised, explain what each group needs to do, and encourage team work.