

Earth Café 2050

Earth Café 2050 is an activity that is designed to show people their ecological footprint for the year 2050 by demonstrating their impact on the earth. It uses a moderate projection of population, land use, resources, etc., groups can determine what effects their lifestyles will have on the earth if everyone were to live the same way.

This activity is modeled after a cafeteria setup where participants are given a menu from which to “place orders.” The menu includes multiple choice questions regarding their own personal usage of materials and resources. The “food” is an arrangement of colored wooden blocks corresponding to the acreage required to support their lifestyle.

Required materials:

1. Five different colored blocks (Blue, Green, Orange, Red, Yellow) in two different sizes. One size representing 1 acre (about 15 blocks in each color), and the other size (approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ the size of the first block) to represent $\frac{1}{4}$ of an acre (about 36 blocks in each color).
2. Trays (enough for all of the participants)
3. Tray covers (enough copies for all of the participants; this cover has a shaded in area which the participants will stack their blocks in)
4. Menus (enough for all of the participants)
5. Conversion/cheat sheets These sheets have individual household numbers on them, these numbers correspond to answer number three from the menu; each question from the menu can be located on the conversion/cheat sheet along with the answers (a,b,c,d). For each answer there is a particular color block and amount of blocks needed to fulfill the “order.”
6. Earth Café 2050 receipts to be filled out accordingly
7. Have a station area for participants to go up to when they are finish filling out the menu. Blocks and trays will be distributed from here.
8. This game is designed for older participants; some questions may need to be modified for younger players. For certain questions if the actual number or amount is unknown, an estimate will be sufficient.
9. Discussion material for the end of the activity.

To begin:

- The leader should welcome and briefly explain the goals of Earth Café 2050 to any staff members that might be present.
- Have activity ready for participants. This will include making enough copies of the menu, having the tray covers in place on the trays, the blocks ready, and enough receipts for participants.

Customers Arrive:

- Welcome participants to Earth Café 2050 and briefly explain the goals of the activity.
- All participants will receive a menu and be instructed as to how to fill it out. Make sure that question number three is answered based on the individuals household.
- Once finished, have the participants go up to the station area to receive their “order.”

Preparation of Order:

- The conversion/cheat sheet is designed to help the leaders and staff to fill the “orders” properly. Each sheet has a household number on the top of it which corresponds to question number three on the menu. Each participant will have a different answer to that question so be sure to use the appropriate sheet.
- Give participants a tray with a cover sheet on it.
- Starting with question one, look at the answer provided on the menu. This will correspond to a letter on the conversion/cheat sheet. Choose the appropriate block color and fill the orders according to the answer the participant gave. Ex. A participant has a household size of 2 and answered question number one with the letter b. For that answer the participant will receive 1 large RED block, and 2 small RED blocks.
- The staff should not place blocks on the trays in an organized manner.
- Fill out a receipt for each participant. (This step is optional depending on the number of staff available)

Participants:

- Upon receiving their order the participants must stack the blocks in the gray area of the cover sheet. It works best if they use two large blocks per four small blocks in order to make up each layer.

Discussion:

- Each layer on the participant’s tray represents one earth in 2050. If all nine billion people were to live their lives the way the participant is currently, then we will need that many earths to sustain them.
- Have each participant figure out which blocks they have more of. Explain what those blocks represent (Red: food, Blue: Shelter, Green: Transportation, etc.). By doing this each participants can see what areas of their lifestyle they should try and improve.
- Staff can individually help participants by making suggestions as to how to change in order to better their impact of the earth.
- It is beneficial to explain how society shapes our actions, making it challenging to have a positive impact at times (ex: packaged foods that are not local can be much less expensive than local organic food).
- Provide examples of things humans do under each category. Ex. Instead of having everyone drive themselves to work or school, choose people to drive each day and carpool; this will save on fuel and make roads safer by lessening the amount of cars.

Some Helpful Suggestions:

- Make this as realistic as possible: wear chef hats, keep blocks in large pans, use a spoon to dish out orders.
- Use something to make the activity more interesting such as candy, ice cream, or grab bag for the end. Participants will be eager to find out their footprints because of the reward.