

BE GLITTER FREE

About this session

Find a day (or more) in the run up to Christmas to go glitter free. Learn about the impact of glitter microplastics on the environment and how children and young people can help reduce glitter pollution.

The glitter we use in Christmas cards, wrapping paper and sparkly makeup is made up of tiny pieces of plastic, called microplastics, coated in coloured shiny metal and cannot be recycled.

When we wash or throw away the glitter, the microplastics pollute our rivers and oceans and can even enter the food chain. By choosing to stop using glitter we can prevent damage to the environment. What can we do in our everyday lives to stop using glitter?

This classroom activity encourages children to consider

the glitter alternatives they can use at home and in school.

- Fill in the pupil cards with ideas for switching to glitter free alternatives at school and home.
- Create your own glitter free recyclable Christmas wrapping paper and gift tags.
- Share pictures of the children's classroom activities and lesson plans to inspire other schools on our ideas bank.

Session outcome

- Learn about the impact of glitter and microplastic waste on the environment.
- Identify quick and easy ways to reduce glitter use.
- Complete the classroom activity showing how many glitter items your class uses.
- Encourage children and their families to have a glitter free Christmas.

Lesson plans and sources of information

Complete the survey using the classroom worksheet on page 3 to calculate how much glitter your class uses at Christmas time. The average UK household uses 4 rolls of wrapping paper each year which is a total of 227,000 miles used by the whole country.

There are many additional resources available to help children and young people understand the impact of glitter on the environment. "Bio-glitters" have been found to cause environmental damage so are not a recommended alternative.

- Glitter is Litter
[youtube.com/watch?v=iVx78Kz60So](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iVx78Kz60So)
- Litter Free Coast and Sea
litterfreecoastandsea.co.uk/current-projects-and-campaigns/glitter-is-litter
- Microplastics
nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/microplastics

- The Oceans and Plastics Pollution
www.org.uk/sites/default/files/2019-08/WWF_Oceans_and_Plastics_KS2_Handbook.pdf
- Marine Conservation Society
mcsuk.org/ocean-emergency/ocean-pollution/microplastics

For an additional idea try combining maths and shapes lessons with creating Christmas decorations. minieco.co.uk/i-mathematics-platonic-solids-garland

Go deeper... check out letsgozero.org, greenschoolsproject.org.uk and eco-schools.org.uk

BETHECHANGE

What worked well?

Share your lesson plans and pictures of classroom activities to inspire others.

oxford.anglican.org/environment

Have yourself a glitter free Christmas

This term, the children have been learning about climate change and thinking about how they can make a difference to the planet.

- Be Carbon Free looked at our carbon footprint as individuals, as families, and as a school.
- Be Vocal had children writing to world leaders and MPs ahead of the COP26 climate conference.
- This month, children are planning how they can have a glitter free Christmas.
- Be Plastic Free will help children consider ways to reduce plastic use at home and in school.

Talking with children about climate change can feel overwhelming for them and their grown-ups, but even the smallest child can understand that there's something powerful about the actions we can take without them feeling that all the world's problems are on their shoulders.

The children are learning about the impact of glitter and microplastics on the natural environment and thinking about the changes they can make to stop using glitter and protect the planet. Here are five easy steps you can take at home:

- Switch to glitter free and microbead free cosmetics
- Switch craft glitter for coloured sands
- Switch tinsel for recyclable paper chains
- Make your own recyclable wrapping paper using brown paper or tissue paper, ink stamp or paint it to decorate
- Make your own glitter free Christmas cards and decorations



"As young people we have a responsibility to lead climate action for our schools and make an impact against climate change."

Polehampton CE Juniors

"Treat others as you wish to be treated and that includes how we treat our planet."

Earley St Peters CE Primary

Download classroom posters and pupil resources at oxford.anglican.org/environment

BE GLITTER FREE

Classroom worksheet

How much glitter do you use at Christmas?

Christmas glitter items	Number of pupils
wrapping paper	
gift tags	
Christmas cards	
tinsel	
make up and nail art	
Total	

How does our class compare to others?

How can we reduce the amount of glitter we use this Christmas?

BE THE CHANGE