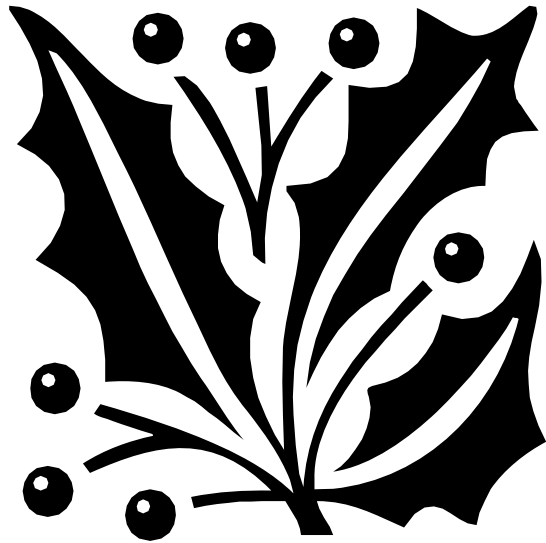


# Reuse and Waste Reduction Holiday Ideas



**Anoka County  
Integrated Waste Management  
Municipal Recycling Coordinators  
and Recycling Service Providers**

This booklet is printed in conjunction with the Reuse and Waste Reduction Holiday video produced by the Anoka County Integrated Waste Management Department for release to local cable TV stations.

For more copies or further information call (763) 323-5730 or e-mail to [recycle@co.anoka.mn.us](mailto:recycle@co.anoka.mn.us).

## **Cloth Bag Instructions**

Supplies: an old sheet or other material  
measuring tape  
scissors  
trim, if desired

1. Determine the size of the bag you wish to make and allow for seams. For an 11" x 14" bag cut a strip of material 12½" x 33" (16½ height x 2"). I used an old sheet and doubled the material, matching the pattern, to make a sturdier bag. In that case, your strip of material is 12½"x 66".
2. Fold the material in half and sew the side seams. (You can make french seams or overcast the seam so there are no raw edges but that is not necessary.) Fold the raw edge under about ¼" at the top and make a 1" hem.
3. Cut two strips of material about 2½" x 15" long for the handles. With right sides together make a seam to form a tube. Turn it right side out and iron along the seam line. Attach the handles to the inside hem at the top of the bag, folding under the raw edges. I attached them 2½" from each side edge.
4. To make the bottom of the bag, turn it inside out. Position the side seam in the middle and fold the bag so that a triangle is formed at the bottom of the bag. Measure and mark about 2", from the pointed edge, on both sides of the triangle. Sew a seam from one mark to the other. Follow this same procedure on the other side seam.
5. Trim as desired.

*Instructions courtesy of Sandra Coop, Anoka County*

## Cloth Covered Gift Boxes

Supplies: shoe box or similar type box with lid  
scrap fabric or wrapping paper  
hot glue gun or tacky glue  
pencil  
ruler  
scissors

1. Press the fabric if it's wrinkled. Measure the height of the box side and add 1¼". Place the box in the center of the fabric and cut this measurement around the base. Measure the height of the lid and double it. Place the lid in the center of the fabric and cut this distance around the lid. You may want to finish the fabric edges with a serger, pinking shears or a small hem glued or sewed.
2. Center the box on the fabric. Glue the long edges to the inside of the box first, leaving about ½" of each outside edge unglued. Press one side of the fabric in place, and then the opposite side, pulling the fabric taut. Place glue on the inside edges of the short sides of the box's top edge, leaving about half of the inside edge unglued. Press the fabric in place, pulling taut. Pull the corners inside the box, folding the outside edges of the fabric to form a pleat on the outside of the corner. Glue the bunched up fabric to the inside corner and bottom of the box to secure.
3. Center the lid on its fabric piece and starting with the long sides, glue the inside edge all the way into the corner, pressing the fabric all the way into the corner. Pull it taut on the second side. Instead of corner pleating the lid, fold the fabric in, apply glue and secure the outside edges and then the corner section. Pull the fabric taut to avoid puckers.
4. Make a handwritten or computer generated note to glue inside the lid, telling the recipient who made the box and when, and how you want them to reuse it as much as they can to reduce holiday waste.
5. For an elegant look, use a scrap of complimenting fabric draped around the gift inside. Silky fabric looks great.

*Instructions courtesy of Julie Jones, City of Fridley*

## Contact Paper Covered Boxes

Supplies: contact paper  
shoe or storage box  
pencil  
ruler  
scissors

1. Roll out contact paper, right side down, and place the lid, top side down, onto the paper. Hold the lid in place, and mark a dot at each corner using a pencil. If the contact paper you are using has a measuring grid on the backing, refer to it to keep your lid evenly spaced. Remove the lid, and connect the dots to make a rectangle.
2. Adding 2" to each side of the rectangle, cut out the shape. Draw a line from the corner of the outline to the corner of the contact paper. Repeat for each corner. Extend the long-side lines to the edges of the contact paper. Cut out the triangles created by those two lines. Trim 1½" from each end of the two side flaps, cutting off the points.
3. Peel back the protective backing of the paper, about ¼ of the way. Place the lid, top side down and centered, onto the sticky side of the contact paper. Peel back the rest of the protective backing while adhering the contact paper to the cover of the box. Smooth out any bubbles.
4. Adhere the side flaps to the sides of the box. Fold the tabs around the corners. Cut a slit into the contact paper at each corner, then fold down side flaps into the box. Fold up the remaining two flaps.
5. The steps are the same for covering the bottom of the box, only at Step 2. measure the depth of the box and then add 2". Continue with the remaining steps.

*Instructions courtesy of Amy Ulbricht, Anoka County*

## Fire Starters

Supplies: used wax (candles or crayons)  
sawdust or wood shavings  
used egg cartons

1. Melt the wax over low heat and stir in the wood shavings; allow time for the wax to soak into the shavings.
2. Pour into empty paper egg cartons. Gently press to mold. Allow to cool.
3. Break apart and package in a reused container.

*Instructions courtesy of Deb Gatz, Randy's Sanitation*

## Luminaries

Supplies: steel cans (any size)  
hammer  
a large nail

1. Wash the cans, fill them with water and place in the freezer. This minimizes the chance of denting when the design is punched.
2. After the water has frozen, punch a design into the can by pounding nail holes at regular intervals. The design may be freehand, or one that you have marked on the can. A paper design can also be taped to the can as a pattern, and removed when the design is completed.
3. Place a candle inside, anchoring it in sand, snow or a small candleholder. The can may be left plain or decorated with ribbon and small craft items.

Luminaries may be used inside or outside. They look great lining a walkway or in a grouping of various sizes at an entrance.

*Tip: Shop at garage sales or thrift stores for holiday dishes and decorations.*

## Paper Gift Bag Instructions

Supplies: grocery bag or used wrapping paper  
ruler  
pencil  
scissors  
glue stick  
paper punch

1. Press used wrapping paper with a warm iron if it is wrinkled. If you are using a grocery bag cut off the flat bottom area and the back seam.
2. Determine the dimensions you want to make your bag and cut the paper accordingly. Allow about an inch for seam overlap. Doubling the wrapping paper makes a sturdier bag. If you do not double the paper, allow a couple extra inches at the top to fold inside, doubling the area where the handles will be attached.
3. Glue the ends together; position the seam in the middle of the back and flatten. Mark  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the side depth from the left outside edge at the top and bottom and crease it inward along the marks. Turn the bag over and crease this side inward the same way. Follow this same procedure for the right side of your bag.
4. To make the bottom, fold up the same measurement as the side depth and crease. Open the bag and starting at the left corner, fold the side depth into the crease and apply glue to hold it in position. Follow this procedure for all four corners. Fold the front flap over the back flap and glue them together. Place a cardboard insert on the inside bottom of the bag.
5. Make holes for the handles with a paper punch. Cord, yarn, ribbon or raffia can be used for the handles.

These same basic instructions allow you to make a bag any size. Gift bags made from grocery bags can be decorated with markers, stencils, cutouts, stamping, old holiday cards, bits and pieces of trim, silk flowers or craft items.

*Instructions courtesy of Sandra Coop, Anoka County*

## Sew a SMART\* Lunch Bag

Supplies: clean used jeans (or other washable clothing)  
velcro  
scissors

1. Cut one piece of jean material 10" x 25" (two pieces 10" x 13" can be sewn together to make a 10" x 25" piece). Fold the fabric in half so that the fold becomes the bottom of the bag. Pin the sides together and stitch 3/8" seams with a straight stitch. Restitch inside the seam with a zigzag stitch.
2. Measure 1" from the top. Fold to inside and press. Fold in again and press. The top hem should be 1". Sew close to the bottom edge of the fold all the way around and backstitch.
3. Turn the bag inside out, fold so the side seams are matched up in the center and the bag forms a triangle at the bottom. Mark a line across 2" from the pointed edge. Sew with a straight stitch and backstitch. Repeat for the other side.
4. Pin a 2" piece of Velcro™ in the center of the bag on the inside. Sew around the outside edges as close to the edge as possible until you have sewn around the rectangle and backstitch. Repeat on the other side, making sure to center the Velcro™, so the two sides match up.

Trim as desired with puff paint, buttons, patches, or appliqué.

\*SMART means Saving Money And Reducing Trash

*Instructions courtesy of Betty Bergerson  
SRC, Inc. / Town & Country Disposal.*

Printed on 100% recycled paper with 30%  
post-consumer content and soy ink.

## Reuse Ideas for Holiday Cards

Bookmarks: Cut a rectangle from the card, hole punch the top and tie with a pretty cord or ribbon.

Gift tags: Use the card itself, hole punch and put a string through it to tie on the package. Cut out a figure from the card and glue it onto a construction paper card, hole punch and tie on with string or ribbon.

Place cards: Cut a rectangle from the card, fold into a tent with one side longer than the other. Place a piece of white paper behind the short side, glue or tape it to the card and write the name on the white portion.

Postcards: Cut off the front and use as a postcard for holiday greetings or at other times throughout the year.

*Instructions courtesy of Ruth Nelsen, City of Hilltop*

## More Reuse and No-Waste Ideas

- Make the wrap part of the gift:
  - Wrap a piece of jewelry or fragrance in a scarf
  - Wrap a toy in a child's T-shirt
  - Wrap a tool in an adult T-shirt
  - Wrap a kitchen utensil in a dishtowel
  - Wrap a homemade treat in a cloth shopping bag
  - Purchase a see-thru plastic container with a lid; line it with a scarf, T-shirt or towel and place a gift inside.
- Make computer-generated gift certificates giving of your time or a service (i.e. babysitting, washing windows, offer of transportation) or call Anoka County at (763) 323-5730 for a set of waste reduction gift coupons.
- Make candleholders from a round slice of wood cut from a birch tree branch. Drill a hole in the center and insert a candle or tea light.
- Spread peanut butter on pine cones and roll in bird seed. Place suet in a mesh bag (the kind onions come in). Put them all in a holiday ice cream pail.
- Make your own wrapping paper from brown craft paper or a grocery bag. Decorate with markers, stencils, stamping, or paints.