

## Elementary school

### Objective

Learn why it's important to save energy and how families can help save energy, and money, at home.

### ■ PREPARE

- Print out the attached “Energy saver cards.” Cut apart the cards and mix them up.
- Gather a supply of crayons, markers or colored pencils, and masking tape.
- Gather a few home energy bills (gas and electric) from recent months.

### ■ LEARN

- Ask children when they may have heard the word “energy” before. Have them tell you what they already know about energy.
- Explain that energy is the power that makes things work and makes things move. Talk about how energy is used at home: Energy makes the lights go on; energy makes hot water for baths and showers; energy runs machines like televisions, video game players and computers.
- Explain that lots of the things we use to make energy come from the earth: coal, gas, oil, wood. When we save energy, by not wasting it, we take better care of the earth. Have children list ways people waste energy, such as leaving the lights on when no one is in the room, setting the air conditioner lower than it needs to be, and taking long showers.
- Explain that energy costs money. Tell children that homeowners pay monthly bills for the gas and the electricity they use. Share some of these bills with children, and calculate how much is spent over a period of time. Guide children to learn that saving energy helps families save money.
- Explain that Habitat for Humanity believes in building homes that reduce the need for energy. Habitat also encourages homeowners to take their part in saving energy by changing some of their everyday activities that might waste energy and thinking differently about home maintenance and repairs that cut energy costs.

Share some of the tips and information presented in the bulletin at [http://www.habitat.org/env/pdf/energy\\_efficiency.pdf](http://www.habitat.org/env/pdf/energy_efficiency.pdf).

- Give each child the “Energy saver cards.” Read aloud the energy-saving tip on each card. Explain what the tip refers to by using places in the home as examples or, if possible, demonstrating the tip. Ask children to draw a picture to illustrate each tip. Together, come up with two more tips to complete the last two cards. Use the information in the bulletin to help you.
- Have children find places at home to tape up the cards as reminders, such as near a light switch, thermostat or door.
- Encourage your children to spread the word about energy savings. Have them make another set of cards. When finished, consider sending them to your local Habitat for Humanity affiliate to be given to new homeowners.

### ■ REFLECT

- Together, make a plan to reduce your home energy usage to save the earth and save some money along the way. Take out your most recent energy bills. Write your usage figures and dollar amounts on a separate sheet of paper to create a tracking sheet.
- Over the next month, encourage your family to follow the energy-saving tips posted in your home. You can find more ideas at the Green Build section of Habitat’s Web site: <http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/greenbuild/>. When your next energy bills arrive, record the new usage figures and dollar amounts on the tracking sheet. Compare and contrast the numbers. Did your family save energy? Did your family save money? Repeat the process over the next month and the next. Try to see how much your family can save over a year.
- You may also have fun making your savings into a game. Get other families involved. Visit your neighbors and ask them to join in on the savings. Compare your results with one another after a period of time. Try to make your block the greenest in town!

# Energy saver cards

**Turn off the lights when you leave a room.**

**Close windows and doors when the heat or air conditioning is on.**

**Take short showers instead of baths.**

**Turn off machines when you're not using them.**

# Energy saver cards

**Set the thermostat below 68° in the winter.**

**Use power strips. Turn them off when you are not using appliances or electronics.**

**Don't leave water dripping from the faucet.**

**When shopping for a new appliance, buy one with the Energy Star label.**

# Energy saver cards

**Replace light bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs).**

**Insulate doors and windows.**

**My tip:**

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