

**GREENBURGH — WEEK 1**

# Week 1: Composting

## Soil Decomposition

### Station Setup

At each table station (shared by a small group of 4–5 kids), set up the following:

- **Cups:** Place one clear plastic coffee cup at each child's seat. Keep the lids stacked in the center of the table.
- **The Soil Bowl:** One medium bowl filled with the camp soil you gathered, with 2–3 spoons for scooping.
- **The Scrap Paper Pile:** A small pile of scrap paper or newspaper in the center. (The kids will rip this themselves!).
- **The Water Cup:** One cup of water with a spoon inside for drizzling.
- **The Community Food Bowl:** A tiny bowl with a few pieces of fruit skins or coffee grounds for the table to share.
- **Note:** Keep all permanent markers and notebooks at your main instructor table to prevent distractions and mess while building the cups.

### Lesson Plan

#### 1. Introduction & Hook (5 Minutes)

- **Introduce Yourself:** "Hi everyone, my name is Avika! I am so excited to be your activity leader today."
- **The Hook:** "Did you know that every single person makes about 1,000 pounds of trash a year? That's as heavy as a young grizzly bear! A lot of that trash goes straight into the ground at a landfill, which can be really bad for our environment. But today, we are going to learn about a much healthier alternative, called composting!"
- **Explain:** "Composting means taking old food, leaves, and paper, and turning it back into rich, healthy soil to grow new plants. It can shrink our trash piles by a whole third! Today, you are all making your own mini compost cup."

#### 2. The Instruction Walkthrough (5 Minutes)

- Hold up an empty coffee cup and say: "We are going to layer our cups step-by-step. We will start with dirt, then add plants and paper, and then more dirt! But first, we need to go outside to find our nature ingredients."

#### 3. Nature Scavenger Hunt (10 Minutes)

- Take the kids outside to a nearby grassy or wooded area of the camp.
- "Everyone needs to collect exactly 5 brown leaves from the ground and one small pinch of green grass. Hold them in your hands and bring them back to your station!"

#### **4. Building the Compost Cups (20 Minutes)**

Walk the kids through the steps altogether, ensuring they follow the exact alternating method from the guide:

- Step 1 (The Base Soil): Have everyone place a scoop of soil into the bottom of their container and dampen it with a small splash/spoon of water.
- Step 2 (The First Compost Layer): Tell them to rip up a few pieces of the scrap paper from the center of the table into tiny shreds. Have them add a thin layer of these paper shreds, their dry leaves, and their grass. Pass around the "Community Food Bowl" so they can add a small piece of food scrap or coffee grounds if they want.
- Step 3 (The Soil Covering): Add another layer of soil directly on top of the compostable materials, and dampen it again with a spoon of water.
- Step 4 (Repeat & Limit): Alternate one more thin layer of organic materials and a final layer of soil. Stop when the cup is between 1/2 and 3/4 full. Do not fill it to the top!
- The Seal: Walk around and help them snap their coffee cup lids on tightly.

#### **5. Decoration & Clean-Up Game (5 Minutes)**

- Pass out the markers: Bring the permanent markers to the tables.
- Give the kids some time to write their names on the cup so they know whose is whose, and draw a quick design on the plastic.
- Clean-Up: Collect the markers back into your bin. Instruct them to put all the spoons back in the bowls, and stack any leftover paper in the middle.

#### **6. Reflection & Science Notebooks (5 Minutes)**

- Hand out the small notebooks from your stash.
- The Drawing Activity: Ask them to open to the first page and draw a picture of what they think their cup will look like in one month.
- Reminder: tell them the leaves and paper will break down into rich, dark soil!
- Future Steps: Tell them to take their cups home, keep them near a sunny window, and give the cup a gentle shake or mix every few days to help it break down!