

Spring Cleaning With Clifford the Big Red Dog

 [scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/spring-cleaning-clifford](https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/spring-cleaning-clifford)

Woof! Woof! This lesson teaches children about the importance of working together to care for our surroundings and the environment through participation in cooperative learning and classroom projects.

Clifford's Big Idea: Work Together

Opportunities for a child to share a common goal with other children provide important lessons for growing up. Being with others and establishing positive relationships within a group can enrich a child's experiences and give that child confidence.

The following activities nurture essential:

- language and literacy skills
- social and emotional skills
- environmental awareness skills
- science and discovery skills

Materials

- *Clifford's Spring Clean-Up* by Norman Bridwell
- Three large, sturdy, empty boxes
- Labels for the boxes: Plastic, Paper, and Aluminum

Directions

Spring Clean-Up!

Step 1: Discuss the concept of working together, also called teamwork.

Step 2: Share illustrations from *Clifford's Spring Clean-Up* by Norman Bridwell. Ask children to guess, or predict, what they think will happen when Clifford decides to help his friends spring clean.

Step 3: Read the story aloud to the class.

Step 4: Discuss the things that Emily Elizabeth's family did to clean their home and yard. What happened when Clifford pitched in to help? Help children identify that it was Clifford's help that turned the vacant lot into a beautiful garden.

Step 5: Talk to children about ways people spring clean: washing windows, sweeping, dusting, raking leaves, clearing vegetation, taking out trash, pruning plants, tilling garden soil, etc.

Step 6: To end the activity, have children cooperatively compose oral sentences about Clifford and Emily Elizabeth's spring clean-up adventure.

Project Recycle!

Step 1: Give children an opportunity to experience recycling by introducing a classroom project. Send home notes informing parents and caretakers of the project. Encourage children to participate by bringing small items from home each day to contribute.

Step 2: Discuss the importance of recycling.

Step 3: Ask children to find classroom items that could be used in the project. Help children become aware of by-products, or things made from items normally thrown in the trash:

- Plastic: clothing, dog houses, playground equipment, vitamin bottles, rulers, video cassettes
- Paper: egg cartons, tissues, cereal boxes, newsprint, greeting cards, paper bags
- Aluminum: beverage containers, bicycles, pie plates, candy wrappers

Step 4: Place three empty boxes in the classroom. Label the boxes plastic, paper, and aluminum. For safety reasons, omit glass.

Step 5: Every day, help children sort the items for recycling. Set goals and reward the entire class at the project's end.

Lesson Extensions

The more we learn, the more we can understand why recycling is so important!

- Before taking full boxes to the recycling facility, ask someone knowledgeable in the process of recycling to come and present. Then prepare a classroom presentation for your students to inspire other classes to work together and recycle.

Clifford's Library

These books support Clifford's Big Ideas and reinforce valuable early literacy skills:

Also check out the [Clifford the Big Red Dog Book List](#).

Teaching Tips

- Inspire children with enthusiasm
- Build self-esteem by providing activities in which children excel
- Communicate, reinforce, and review expectations
- Modify instruction to accommodate special needs
- Provide a structured day, while allowing time for resting and refueling young minds and muscles
- Use positive reinforcement
- Create a stimulating, safe environment that fosters creativity
- Involve parents and caretakers