

## WHAT BEING GREEN MEANS TO ME

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Being green means preserving and protecting our planet in as many ways as possible. Some people do not realize that the small things stop us from being green, like not turning a light off when you leave a room or driving a car when you could be walking or riding a bike. Speaking of being green, my nana bought a new car in September. It is not just any ordinary car at all. It runs on electricity, so you plug it up for a charge. What is the color of the car? Why, it is green, of course! We call it the lime green jelly bean! The funniest part of all, is that it has only one wheel in the front. It is classified as a motorcycle. It is just like a golfcart with a body!

When asking my nana, the owner of the green jelly bean, as well as other people her age, about the three R's, the older generation used to respond that the three R's were Reading, 'Riting, and 'Rithmetic! Ha! Ha! Today we know that the three R's are reduce, reuse, and recycle. If we follow these three R's, we will have a sustainable society.

How do you reduce your carbon footprint? You can think ahead before buying something at the store. For example, you want to buy a new DVD, but you probably will not watch it more than once or twice. The solution to your problem is to deny yourself the new DVD. How easy was that? You just saved twenty bucks, and you helped the environment. You can also start making wise “package” selections. The package surrounding the product really only needs to be designed to protect the product from damage, keep it clean and sanitary, and present product information. Most of this packaging is just too elaborate (and expensive!) than necessary with the hope that it will attract your attention or give the appearance that the product inside is better than its competitors.

Reusing is fun! You can repair something instead of buying a new one, or you can make gifts for someone out of a piece of cardboard! For instance, last year, for my dad’s birthday, I made a desk organizer out of paper towel rolls, a piece of cardboard, and some paint. You can make useful things out of some, well (trash!)! You know what they say, “One

man's trash is another man's treasure!" You can donate something you do not want to keep any more to a charity, have a yard sale of your own, or just give it away to a friend. Reusing things whenever possible is better for the environment than recycling, because when something is reused, it does not need to be processed before it can be used again. Instead of using a lot of styrofoam or plastic cups every day, you could buy one portable, washable cup to take anywhere rather than throwing away disposable cups (and throwing away your money). Rather than going to a retail store to buy an item, check your local paper for yard sales and shop for things that are of interest to you.

If you recycle, you can close the loop of the three R's. Recycling is an important step in keeping trash out of our landfills and wasting our nonrenewable resources. There is more to recycling than setting your recycling bins out on the curb or dumping them into a huge bin at a recycling center. In order to make the process of recycling work, we must buy recycled products. Often, recycling simply takes old materials and remakes them into the same products. With a little thought and

imagination, used materials can be made into totally new items. For instance, tires can be remade into playground flooring or a footstool can be made out of juice cans. By doing those things and thinking before we throw something away, we can help make our future look brighter.

There are many ways we can help the environment. If people would just pay attention to things that seem insignificant, like not leaving the water running when they are not using it, the world would be a better place. If everyone learns to follow the three R's, together we can do a better job of improving our environment so that it will last longer. That is what being green means to me!