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# Ideas with IMPACT

**HEALTH & WELL-BEING**

## Desktop Sustainable Fairy Lanterns

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# Desktop Fairy Lanterns

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# Goals and Objectives

**Goals:**

1. **Foster Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability Awareness**

   Encourage students to appreciate nature and understand the importance of reusing materials through a hands-on project that integrates environmental literacy.

2. **Integrate STEAM Learning with Creative Expression**

   Provide a multidisciplinary experience that combines science, technology, engineering, art, and math with literacy and storytelling to enrich student learning.

3. **Support Resiliency**

   Offer students a calming, mindful activity that promotes self-expression, collaboration, and a sense of accomplishment—enhancing overall well-being and classroom climate.

**Objectives:**

1. Students will **identify and apply flower preservation techniques**, including pressing and drying methods, to prepare botanical materials for reuse.
2. Students will **design and assemble eco-friendly fairy lanterns** using recycled glass jars, pressed flowers, and LED lights, demonstrating an understanding of sustainable practices.
3. Students will **explore the science of light and plant materials**, observing how different textures and transparencies interact with illumination.
4. Students will **compose creative stories or fairy tales** inspired by their lanterns, linking artistic craftsmanship with literacy skills.
5. Students will **collaborate and engage in reflective conversations** about conservation, creativity, and the value of handmade, upcycled art.

# Florida Standards

SC.5.L.14.2 - Identify the major parts of plants and describe their functions, including the role of flowers in reproduction.

VA.3.C.1.2 - Reflect on and interpret works of art, identifying artistic choices and techniques.

SC.3.P.10.1 - Identify some basic properties of light, including reflection, refraction, and absorption.

ELA.4.W.1.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences using descriptive details and clear event sequences.

SC.6.E.7.3 - Describe how natural resources are used in daily life and the importance of conservation.

## Course Overview:

This course introduces educators and students to a creative, cross-curricular project that merges environmental stewardship with art, science, and storytelling. Participants will learn how to design and construct sustainable fairy lanterns using recycled glass jars, pressed flowers, and LED lights. Through this hands-on experience, learners will explore botanical preservation techniques, light diffusion, and sustainable design while developing fine motor skills, ecological awareness, and expressive writing abilities. The course also includes classroom management strategies for guiding students through a multi-step creative process, making it accessible and adaptable for grades K–8. By the end of the course, participants will have a completed lantern project and a deeper understanding of how to integrate STEAM principles with environmental literacy and creativity in the classroom.

## Course Outline:

In the first session, participants will be introduced to the goals of the project and the importance of sustainability and reuse. They will discuss the concept of eco-art and explore how natural materials can be used in artistic expression. Participants will begin identifying flowers and plants suitable for pressing and be assigned to collect specimens for the next session.

The second session focuses on flower preservation techniques. Participants will learn and practice traditional methods of pressing and drying flowers, and they will explore the science behind plant preservation, including the role of moisture and plant anatomy. They will prepare their flowers for use in their lanterns and may begin a reflective or creative journal entry from the perspective of a flower.

In the third session, participants will learn how to safely assemble their lanterns. This includes decorating recycled jars with pressed flowers, applying mod podge layers of glue, and installing LED lights. Science concepts such as light behavior, diffusion, and transparency will be discussed as they relate to the materials being used. Participants will be encouraged to experiment with design and layout for artistic expression.

The fourth session integrates creative writing and storytelling. Participants will engage in a short writing lesson focused on narrative elements and will craft a fairy tale or short story inspired by their lantern design. These stories will connect the artistic process with literacy development, and participants will have an opportunity to share drafts with peers for feedback.

In the fifth and final session, participants will complete their lanterns and prepare for a classroom or group showcase. During a gallery walk or presentation, they will share their finished lanterns and read their accompanying stories. The session will close with a group reflection on what was learned about sustainability, creativity, and the value of hands-on, integrated learning.

# Lesson plan and step by step guide

## Day 1: Introduction to Sustainability & Eco-Art

**Objective:**
Students will understand the concepts of sustainability, reuse, and how nature can inspire art.

**Materials:**

- Images of eco-art
- Recycled jars
- Sample pressed flowers
- Chart paper or whiteboard

**Activities:**

- Discuss what sustainability means and why reuse is important.
- Show examples of eco-art and nature-inspired creations.
- Introduce the fairy lantern project and explain its purpose.
- Students brainstorm items they can reuse at home (e.g., jars, ribbon).
- Homework: Bring in a clean glass jar and flowers/leaves from home.

## Day 2: Nature Walk & Flower Collection

**Objective:**
Students will explore and collect botanical materials suitable for pressing.

**Materials:**

- Flower/leaf identification sheets
- Baskets or envelopes for collection
- Journals or science notebooks

**Activities:**

- Take a nature walk around the school or garden.
- Students collect small, flat flowers and leaves
- Identify and record plants in journals.
- Begin pressing flowers using book or press method.
- Discuss plant parts and their structure.

## Day 3: Flower Pressing & Science of Preservation

**Objective:**
Students will practice flower pressing and understand the science behind drying and preserving plant materials.

**Materials:**

- Books or flower presses
- Paper towels or parchment
- Journals
- Sample preserved flowers

**Activities:**

- Model how to press flowers step by step.
- Students press their collected items.
- Discuss moisture content, plant anatomy, and preservation science.
- Begin drying process (allow 2–3 days).
- Students sketch or label their flowers in journals.

## Day 4: Light, Transparency, & Lantern Design

**Objective:**
Students will explore how light interacts with different surfaces and plan their lantern layout.

**Materials:**

- Flashlights
- Transparent/translucent materials
- Recycled jars
- Sketch paper, pencils
- Rulers

**Activities:**

- Mini light science demo: test how light shines through different materials.
- Discuss transparency, diffusion, and how light affects mood/design.
- Students sketch lantern layout using their flower ideas.
- Optional: Introduce theme (e.g., fairy tale, garden story).

## Day 5: Lantern Creation - Part 1

**Objective:**
Students will begin assembling their fairy lanterns using sustainable materials and pressed flowers.

**Materials:**

- Recycled jars
- Pressed flowers (dried and ready)
- Mod Podge or clear glue
- Brushes

- Tweezers
- Paper towels

**Activities:**

- Step-by-step demo: how to glue flowers onto jars.
- Students apply flowers carefully using glue and brushes.
- Allow jars to dry overnight.
- Clean up and reflect: What worked?

## Day 6: Lantern Completion & Storytelling

**Objective:**
Students will finish decorating their lanterns and begin writing a story inspired by their creation.

**Materials:**

- Dried lanterns
- Ribbons, twine, LED lights
- Writing paper or notebooks
- Pencils, pens

**Activities:**

- Add final touches: LED lights, ribbon decorations, name tags.
- Prompt: “Tell the story of your lantern.”
- Students begin drafting a fairy tale or story based on their lantern’s theme.
- Peer sharing or teacher feedback session.

## Day 7: Showcase & Reflection

**Objective:**
Students will present their finished lanterns and accompanying stories, and reflect on the learning experience.

**Materials:**

- Completed lanterns
- Story drafts
- Display tables
- Reflection sheets

**Activities:**

- Set up a gallery walk or classroom showcase.
- Students present their lanterns and read their stories aloud or in small groups.
- Reflective discussion: What did we learn about art, science, and sustainability?
- Complete reflection sheets or exit tickets.

# Resource List

**For Lantern Assembly:**

- **Recycled glass jars** (8 oz size with wide mouth preferred—baby food, jam, mason jars, etc.) If purchased, Amazon
- **Pressed flowers and leaves** (collected or purchased)
- **Mod Podge** (matte or glossy finish) or clear-drying white glue Purchased on Amazon or Michaels
- **Foam or bristle brushes** (for applying Mod Podge) purchase on amazon
- **Tweezers** (to place delicate pressed flowers) purchase on Amazon
- **LED fairy lights** (battery-operated or USB; warm white preferred) purchase on Amazon or Etsy
- **Ribbons, twine, lace, or raffia** (for jar decoration) purchase on Amazon or obtained at Ocean Bank Warehouse
- **Hot glue gun** (optional, for securing lights or decorative elements)

**For Flower Pressing:**

- **Heavy books or flower presses**
- **Parchment paper, wax paper, to assist with flower dehydration**
- **Paper towels or newspaper** (for moisture absorption)

✏️ **Student Tools & Creative Supplies**

- Pencils, pens, markers
- Sketch paper and regular paper
- Scissors
- Journals or science notebooks (for reflections and sketching)

- Creative writing templates or graphic organizers (for story planning)
- Labels or name tags (to personalize jars)

**Instructional Resources**

**Videos/Tutorials:**

- Short YouTube video on **flower pressing techniques** (traditional and microwave)
- Video on **how to make a fairy lantern**

**Science Integration Resources**

- Magnifying glasses or digital microscopes (to examine plant details)
- Plant identification guides or apps (like Seek by iNaturalist)
- Mini LED light experiments (to observe transparency and diffusion)
- Diagrams of flower anatomy and plant parts