

# Humboldt Park WWI Memorial

## Recycled Plastic Bag Armistice Day Poppy Project



*Use plastic shopping bags to create your 'paper' for this project. This project will help introduce ideas of sustainability to your class.*

*Shoppers worldwide are using approximately 500 billion single-use plastic bags per year. This translates to about a million bags every minute across the globe, or 150 bags a year for every person on earth. And the number is rising.*

*This project may be more suitable for older students or require preparation of materials prior to the art-making by parents or teachers.*

### **Step 1: Gather your bags.**

Have students bring in Target, Wal-Mart, and grocery store plastics bags

### **Step 2: Open and layer your bags.**

With your hands, smooth out one bag at a time onto a work surface. Trim off the handles, cutting across the top of the bag with scissors. Next, trim off along the bottom of the bag, opening up the pleats. Make 1 straight cut from the top edge of the bag to the bottom to create 1 large, single-layer rectangle. Repeat with the other 3 bags. Layer all 4 bags, one on top of another. Place a brown bag on the bottom and layer the print bags on top.

### **Step 3: Protect your equipment.**

Cover your ironing board with a sheet of parchment paper a few inches longer than your stack of cut plastic bags, about 42" long. Place the layered plastic bags on top, then cover them with another sheet of parchment. The bags will probably be a few inches wider than the parchment, so be sure to keep the plastic completely sandwiched between the paper when you're fusing it, by repositioning them both as needed.

### **Step 4: Iron your bags.**

Before getting started, be sure your workspace is well ventilated. Some plastics may give off an odor. Set your iron on the synthetics setting. Making sure not to touch the hot iron directly to

the plastic, slowly iron on top of the parchment paper. Keep the iron moving. As the plastic layers begin to fuse together, they'll shrink a bit. Be aware that any ink from the bags will transfer to the paper.

**Note:** I recommend reading through this step and then practicing on a few extra bags first. Experiment with the number of layers and iron temperatures, as this is not an exact science and your results will vary.



**Step 5: Fuse, check, and fuse again.**

After ironing one area, let it cool before lifting the paper. Check to see if the layers have started to melt together. You may want to increase the iron's temperature if you find that the plastic isn't fusing. Reposition the parchment paper and continue this process until you've fused the entire length of the stacked layers.

Turn the fused plastic sheet over, cover with parchment, and repeat the fusing process from the other side. The layers of your fully fused plastic should feel like 1 piece. The trick is to go slowly — an iron that's too hot will result in fast-shrinking plastic that's rippled. Once fused, your plastic sheet should measure about 14" X 36

**Step 6: Cut four petals using the provided template. Cut two 4" circles.**

**Step 7: Paint your petals red with acrylic paint. Paint the circles black. Let dry.**

**Step 8: Cut slit in the base of the petals as shown on the template. Bend and overlap bases of two petals; hot glue in place.**

**Step 8: Use hot glue to attach remaining petals around the central petals, as for a flower; gently fold back top of outer petals.**

**Step 9: Fringe one black circle with scissors all the way around. Cup circle in hand and curl edges into a cup-like shape. Glue into center of poppy.**

**Step 10: To make a stem, glue wire to the back of the poppy. Add glue and cover top of wire with the second black circle.**