

## Less Waste, More Love: Better Alternatives for Valentine's Day at School

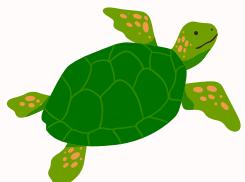
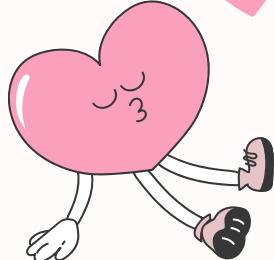


Valentine's Day used to be a straightforward affair in schools. Kids would go around the classroom to pass out paper cards, which might be adorned with a sticker. If you're really lucky, you might get a lollipop attached.

These days, goody bags have become popular giveaways. Students are coming home with cellophane pouches full of plastic toys and trinkets. These may be fun activities for a few minutes, but more often than not, they create plastic waste and put pressure on parents to make goody bags (which are more expensive!).

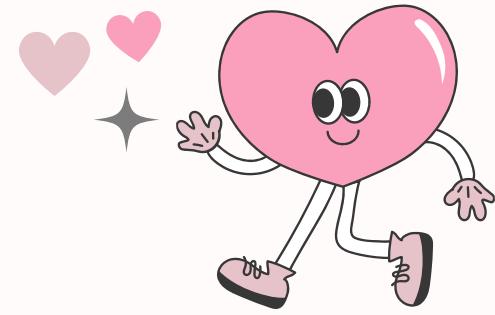
Instead, you can help show your children the true meaning of Valentine's Day by sharing kindness and thoughtfulness. And showing some love to our environment and wildlife by creating less waste.

Here are a few ideas for students, parents, and teachers, as we get ready for this holiday full of love!



**A simple paper valentine without the goodies is a great way to show you care with less waste!**

Most store-bought cards contain glitter, foil, or plastic add-ons that make them hard to recycle and harmful to the environment.



- Tap into your creative side and consider making your card from scrap paper. Use markers, crayons, colored pencils, or pens - whatever you have at home to add some color. It'll be one-of-a-kind and recyclable.
- Write a joke or poem to add some thought and creativity to your card.



**If you want to add a little something extra, gift giveaways that aren't as wasteful:**

- Pencils can be both festive and useful for your classmates. Avoid erasers which are typically made with plastic, usually polyvinyl chloride (PVC).
- Give foil-wrapped candy like Hershey Kisses. You can also look for mini Reese's peanut butter cups, which come in pink or red foil this time of year.
- Choose candy that comes in a cardboard box, like the classic conversation hearts. Other options can include Nerds, Milk Duds, Junior Mints, or Dots.
- You can also include cuties/oranges for a snack wrapped in nature's packaging.

**If you want make goody bags, here are better bag alternatives:**

Plastic bags and paper bags with metallic designs and/or glitter are not compostable or recyclable.

- Instead of plastic cellophane gift bags, opt for a recyclable paper gift bag or a paper treat bag.
- If you want to add personal flair, decorate your paper bags with magazine clippings, drawings, or dried plants.

**Parents**, feel free to share this information with teachers, so they can pass it on to other parents. If you are looking for ways to reduce plastic in your own celebrations, check out Surfrider Foundation's blog from last year to [Break Up with Plastics this Valentine's Day](#). Thank you for being a friend of the ocean!

