

It's A Wrap

Green Alternatives for Gift Packaging

If your holiday halls are decked with stacks of paper bags, mounds of crumpled wrapping paper, an array of random ribbons and a gaggle of gift tags destined for the local landfill, it's time to add a little "green" to your gift-wrapping regimen.

Given that the average household's waste jumps by more than 25 percent between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day and that holiday debris adds an additional one million tons per week to landfills, there is plenty everyone can do to recycle, reuse and reduce during the holidays. According to Eco-Chick.com, "If every family reused just two feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. If every American family wrapped just 3 presents in re-used materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields. The 2.65 billion Christmas cards sold each year in the U.S. could fill a football field 10 stories high. If we each sent one card less, we'd save 50,000 cubic yards of paper."

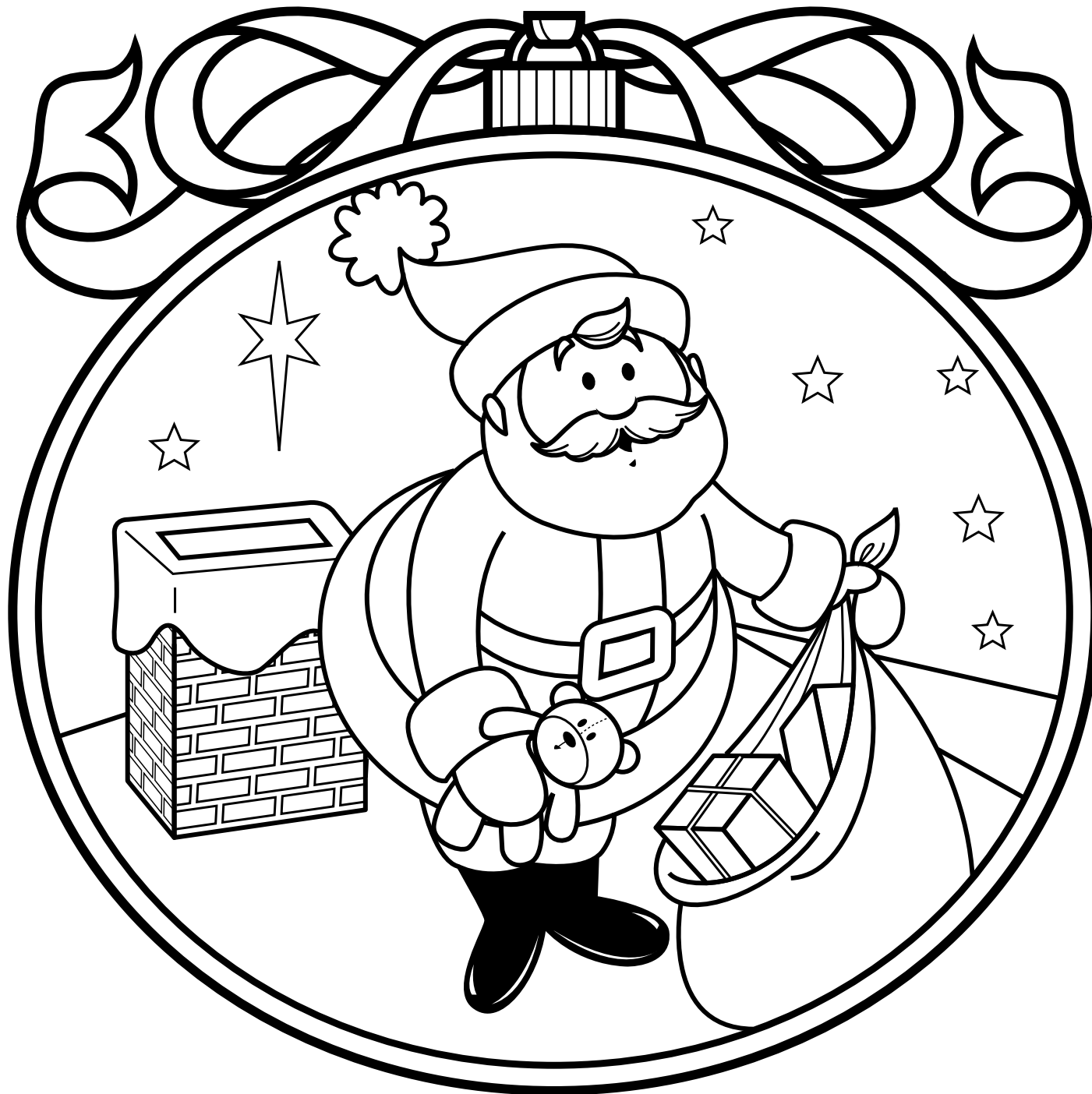
Here are some ways to go green and even save green on gift packaging:

Recycle: Conventional wrapping paper typically cannot be recycled since it is often coated in metal foil or is plastic laminated. But if the paper rips and doesn't glitter or shine, it can -- and should -- be placed in the recycle bin. Check with your local recycling provider to find out which types of wrapping paper they accept. The good news is that recyclable wrapping paper is increasingly available from both online and brick-and-mortar retailers.

Reuse: Before the opening of the gifts begins, set aside a box for collecting reusable boxes, wrapping paper, gift bags, bows, ribbons and other decorative items. Even if wrapping paper is torn, it can be used for craft projects, packaging filler or for smaller gifts. Gift bags are also great candidates for reuse. If the surface of the bag is marred from removing ribbon or a bow, the spot can be covered with other decorative items or scraps of used wrapping paper.

Reduce: Rather than wrapping gifts in paper, consider using scarves, old tea towels, cloth napkins, or left-over fabric. Create your own simple fabric sacks or paint an old pillowcase and tie it up with fabric ribbon, string or even shoelaces. And don't forget newspaper! The comics make colorful giftwrap any time of year.

Christmas Coloring Contest!



OFFICIAL CONTEST ENTRY FORM

Add Some Holiday Color
And You Could Win A Prize!

Contest open to children ages 5-11

All entries must be received by December 16, 2011

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____

STATE: _____

ZIP: _____

SCHOOL: _____

GRADE: _____