

## What you can do...

Here's an activity you can do with your students (probably best for upper high school or eikaiwa) to help demonstrate exactly how lucky we are here in the developed world. It's really simple.

Every time you use electricity, put a one yen coin in a jar. That means every time you flick a light switch, use a computer, watch TV, play a video game or blow dry your hair (or anything else that requires electricity) you put one yen in a jar. Do the same for water. Anytime you use water...drink it, turn on a tap or flush a toilet...put a one yen coin in the same jar (Using the same jar demonstrates how water and power are related). Do this for one week.

At the end of your week you should have a pretty good collection of coins. This is a demonstration. Tell your students to count how many coins they have. Now tell them to cut that number in half. That smaller number represents the access to water and power that people in some developing countries have (countries like India, China or Brazil). Now have them cut that half in half. This even smaller number represents the access that people in less developed nations (i.e., those in Africa) have.

Now your students should be able to see just how lucky they are. Have a discussion about the issue. Some possible questions to consider...

- What do we use water/electricity for every day?
- How can we conserve water/electricity?
- Are there sources of electricity that don't require water? What are they?
- Where does water/electricity come from in Japan?
- What can we do to help countries that don't have enough water/electricity?

Of course those aren't the only possible discussion questions...they're just examples to get you started.

Now that the discussion is over, you have a choice to make. Remember that money you collected earlier? There are two things you can do with it.

Choice #1, have everyone take their money back home. The point of the coins was, above all else, a demonstration. You can throw all the statistics you want at

people, but until they see a firm demonstration of what those numbers actually mean most don't really get it.

Choice #2, you can pool your money together and donate it to renewable energy research. Discuss amongst yourselves where you think your money would do the most good. (Even if you think it's a pitiful amount, please remember that every little bit helps.)

This isn't a choice I can make for you. It depends entirely on your feelings and the feelings of your group. Even if you don't choose #2 (\*cough\*the right choice\*cough\*), your students will be more informed about global issues surrounding water and energy.

### Variations...

There are many different variations on this activity. Here are a couple of mine...feel free to come up with your own!

1- Keep the activity the same, but increase the coin denomination. At the end of the week you'll have more money in the jar, which means more money to donate to the charity of your choice.

2- Keep the coin denomination the same (1 yen), but change the activity a bit. Instead of simply adding one coin to the jar every time you turn on the power or the water, do the following:

- For each hour you use electricity (for example, for each hour the television or lights are on), add a coin to the jar. So, if you watch TV for two hours add two coins. If the lights are on from 6pm to 10pm, add four coins.
- For each minute you use water (for example, taking a shower or washing the dishes), add a coin to the jar. So, if you take a 10 minute shower add 10 coins. If you let the water run for 5 minutes while washing the dishes, add five coins.

3- Increase the coin denomination, and use the procedure outlined in (2). You'll make even more money that can be donated to a charity of your choice.

4- Do any variation of the activity for one week (for this particular variation, I recommend #2). During the next week, challenge your students to use fewer coins, that is, to use less water and power.