

# Paper Plate Education

*"Serving the Universe on a Paper Plate"*



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**What is Paper Plate Education?**

*Paper Plate Education* is an effort to compile a collection of hands-on activities that use common paper plates for supporting lessons in science, math, history, geography, social studies, art, music, and other disciplines.

**Who is Paper Plate Education?**

*Paper Plate Education* is the collective work of volunteer educators that have been building a series of activities with the paper plate theme since 1992. See [Background](#) for details. The majority of the material is from members of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association, but additional contributions have been submitted by young children, high school students, NASA researchers, teachers, and parents. See [Credits](#) for a partial listing of contributors. The web server for this site is being provided by the DePaul University broker/facilitator affiliation of the Office of Space Science. This site is maintained by GLPA member [Chuck Bueter](#).

**Can you organize the Activities by grade level or other categories?**

Yes, we eventually would like to organize the files more efficiently. For example, a [text-only Activities](#) list is available, as are the subdivisions below. However, these prototype pages are not actively maintained with current entries. Also, the following text-only categories may not work with all Internet browsers at this time. We welcome your suggestions.

[The Astronomy Series](#)

[The Navigation Series](#)

[The Planetarian's Series](#)

[The Music Series](#)

[Miscellaneous Activities](#)

### **How much class time do these activities take?**

That depends on the activity. Some, such as *Music Shaker*, are simple crafts that take only a few minutes to make, yet they can generate fun and discussion with young children. Other activities, such as *Latitude by Polaris*, may require hours of class time to integrate with existing lesson plans on celestial navigation. Also, some activities, such as *Mission Patch*, may be one-time events. Others, such as *Sunrise/Sunset*, require the participants to make brief observations over several weeks or months.

### **Are the lessons effective?**

The variety and quantity of lessons that have been contributed to this site are testimony that a number of educators believe the humble paper plate can lead students to a better understanding of many principles. Many of these activities have been tried in the classroom and have been tweaked to improve their efficacy. As more people send [feedback](#) we can further improve the product. The lessons become most effective when the teachers using these activities tailor them to their own circumstances.

### **Can I make and distribute copies of *Paper Plate Education* materials?**

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### **Why does *Paper Plate Education* have an emphasis on space science?**

*Paper Plate Education* began as an initiative of the Great Lakes Planetarium Association, which naturally has an affinity for astronomy. The GLPA endorsed the Paper Plate Project, which sought to fuse the enthusiasm and talent of space scientists and educators into a comprehensive package that advances appreciation for and understanding of the firmament. The GLPA produced a modest [video](#) on Paper Plate Astronomy for persons who have limited access to technology. The more we used paper plate creations for space science applications, the more we recognized that the same techniques could benefit others. Hence, *Paper Plate Education* is beginning to use this venue to serve other disciplines.

### **What are the objectives of this *Paper Plate Education* initiative?**

Measurable objectives of the *Paper Plate Education* effort include the following:

- to reduce complex notions to paper plate explanations,
- to demonstrate the engaging nature of paper plates as a medium for constructive learning in multiple disciplines and for learners of all demographics,
- to create teaching aids that serve populations and educators with limited access to technology or financial resources,
- to inspire educators to create hands-on materials that address their teaching needs,
- to establish an Internet depository of paper plate activities and related documents,
- to align innovative techniques and products with national education standards.

### **What direction do you intend to go with the *Paper Plate Education* website?**

At a later date we would like to add features and upload documents with supporting information, such as age-appropriateness, applications, and alignment with national education standards. However, because this is strictly a volunteer effort, this site will be maintained only as personal discretionary time permits. Please participate in *Paper Plate Education*--try some activities, send feedback and evaluations, reduce notions to paper plate explanations, or lend in-kind support. If grants are secured or if individuals or corporate sponsors step up to support *Paper Plate Education*, this site will have a better chance of ongoing improvement.

### **Why are some pages incomplete?**

The site will always be under construction. Rather than withhold all of the documents until they are ready for dissemination, we are releasing works-in-progress in the hopes that they will generate useful material for teachers and students in the interim. Besides, lesson plans are always evolving and never final. The fun really begins when you manipulate the plates. Once you understand the premise of *Paper Plate Education*, you are ready to set out on your own. Some of the activities are incomplete because the written instructions have not yet been uploaded. Look through the descriptions and pictures of those [activities](#) for ideas, then create your own paper devices. And be sure to pass your wisdom on to the rest of the teaching community with [feedback](#) and contributions to this site.

### **What is a favorite quote of *Paper Plate Education*?**

From Gordon Parks, as best as memory recalls:

"Enthusiasm is seeing the importance in what you do, giving it dignity, and making what you do important to yourself and to others."

Enjoy what we have served up on our plates. Thank you for your support.

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