



THE INSTITUTE FOR HUMANE EDUCATION  
P.O. BOX 260  
SURRY, MAINE 04684  
207.667.1025  
[info@HumaneEducation.org](mailto:info@HumaneEducation.org)  
[www.HumaneEducation.org](http://www.HumaneEducation.org)

## WHICH TO PICK?

**Grades:** 5 and up

**Time:** 15-30 minutes

**Materials:** A bag filled with items for comparison (see below)

**Relevant Subjects:** Social Studies, Science, and, with modifications, Mathematics

**Which to Pick?** is similar to **Choices Cards** but is more suitable to an assembly program.

**Preparation:** Gather a variety of similar items that represent a choice between two related objects and put them in a bag. For example:

- a cloth diaper and a disposable diaper
- paper towels and a cloth rag
- a polystyrene cup and a ceramic mug
- a can of soda and a reusable water bottle
- organic, fair-trade coffee and conventional coffee
- a leather shoe and a canvas or hemp shoe
- a plastic shopping bag and the canvas bag you've used to carry all the items
- Windex and a spray bottle of white vinegar mixed with water

1. During an assembly program, bring out your canvas bag and pull out an item -- for example, the polystyrene cup. Ask students what the item is, how often one might use it, and what one does with it afterwards. When the students say "throw it away," toss the cup on the floor. Then pull out the corresponding item, in this case the ceramic mug, and ask students the same questions. Next, ask the students which of the two items harms less and helps more. Continue with the other paired items. For the last item, bring out the plastic bag to contrast it with the canvas bag. At the end of this activity you will have a large pile of products on the floor -- an astonishing example of our "throw it away" lifestyle.

2. Invite students to commit to one small, compassionate choice for people, animals, and the environment.

**Activity from *The Power and Promise of Humane Education***