

All across Africa children play football on grass pitches or on dirty patches of ground, often with bare feet. Many children are not able to afford a leather football and in some areas they are very hard to buy, so they make their own out of local materials. This can include banana leaves, strips of cloth, rubber, and pieces of fabric. The most common material used is plastic bags.

There are lots of different ways to make plastic bag footballs and some African children are experts in their own designs. These sheets show you how to make a fairly simple version – feel free to improvise! You can use this lesson idea to talk about recycling and how for many African children recycling is a necessity, whereas for children in the UK it is a choice.



To make a football you will need:

- *20-30 plastic bags*
- *Some newspaper*
- *String or twine*

This is how to make it:



Get your plastic bags ready. Save a good one for the last bag.



Scrunch up some newspaper for the centre of your ball.



Place the paper in the first bag.



Shape the bag around the paper and then twist the small ball you've made.



Now that you have twisted the ball, hold the twisted bag and use the rest of the bag to cover the ball again by turning the bag over the ball the other way. If you have a large bag you may be able to do this twist and turn process again.



Tie this off neatly and try not to make a bulge in your ball.



Keep placing the ball in more bags, twisting, turning and tying.



Keep the ball round and make sure the knots are distributed evenly on the ball.



When you are happy with the size of your ball, put the last bag on.



Using the string or twine, tie onto the final knot on the bag. Wrap this string fairly tightly around the ball a few times. Then turn the ball 90 degrees and wrap the string around this part of the ball.



Now wrap the string in-between at 45 degrees and so on...



Wrap the string around as much as you like, or weave the string in and out.



Turn the ball on its side and wrap string around the middle. You can weave this in and out of the other string to make your ball stronger.

Tie off the last piece of string.



Now your ball is finished!

The more time you spend making it, the longer it will last.

This is a basic design, for a more intricate design see Matthieu's ball on the following page.

A Plastic Bag Football



10 year old Matthieu from Uganda