



# Prevent Balloon Litter.org

Inspirational, colorful, litter-free ideas to celebrate, to remember  
and to honor the people who impact our lives.

## Mid-Atlantic Prevent Balloon Litter Campaign

### Script for Educators

#### General Outline

- Intro: Discussion of litter, why we don't like to litter

*Transition: I want to talk about a very specific type of litter that might not always seem like littering-balloons!*

- How balloons become litter
- Balloon effects on wildlife/ecosystems/humans

*Transition: Luckily, now that we understand the issue, we can better understand how to solve it!*

- Alternative methods of celebration/remembrance (blow bubbles, plant a garden, dedicate a bench, etc)
- Plug for [preventballoonlitter.org](http://preventballoonlitter.org)
- Wrap up

#### Formal Talk/Presentation:

*“(After intro of your choice) Today I wanted to talk about litter. Growing up, we hear people say “Don't Litter!” all the time. Why do you think we might say not to litter? (have audience call out ideas/thoughts) Yes- litter isn't healthy for all the animals and plants that share our environment, including us! I can't say it's too good looking either- for example, no one wants to go to a beach that is covered in litter!*

When I picture littering, typically I think of someone tossing a fast food wrapper on the ground after they're done using it or a water bottle out a car window. But the kind of litter I'm thinking of is a sneakier kind, and one that we all might have participated in at some point in our lives without even realizing it. Specifically, I'm talking about balloon litter. You might have heard of people doing a balloon release- releasing balloons into the sky as part of a celebration or remembrance ceremony of some kind. However, when a balloon gets released into the sky, at some point it has to come down again! And once it comes back down to land or water, it's a troublemaker. A floating or suspended balloon can look a lot like a jelly- think of jellies you might've seen here today! We know that predators of jellies like sea turtles can mistake the two and accidentally eat those balloons. Just like there are no balloons on the human food pyramid, they're not on the sea turtle food pyramid either. Balloons can also get washed up

onto shore, where they present a threat to coastal animals who might try to eat or get tangled up in them, causing injury and sometimes trapping them in one place.

So you can see that like all kinds of litter, balloons can cause a lot of harm out in the environment. But now that we recognize the fact that it's littering, we know that it's worth it to look for alternatives to balloons! Luckily, there are so many other wonderful things that don't include balloons that you can do to celebrate or mark a remembrance of a loved one. If you want to watch something float up into the sky, a great option is to blow big bubbles. If you're looking for beautiful colors, planting a garden will give you those colors for weeks, year after year! You can also dedicate a bench, wave ribbon wands, or do all other kinds of things that replicate the aspects of a balloon release that you like while still avoiding harmful balloons and protecting important wildlife and habitats. There's even a website you can go to: [preventballoonlitter.org](http://preventballoonlitter.org). I encourage you to check it out or come talk to one of our educators here for more ideas and to answer any of your questions!"

### **Informal Encounter (more conversational)**

"Have you ever had anyone tell you not to litter? Yes- most people have heard that before! Why do you think it's important not to litter? It's not good for the environment, it's not healthy for animals and plants, it's even harmful to local economies because it's often quite ugly!

Now, when you think of someone littering, what do you picture? Typically, I think of someone tossing a fast food wrapper on the ground after they're done using it or a water bottle out a car window. But today I want to talk about a very specific, sneaky kind of litter. It's so sneaky that I think we all might have participated in it at some point in our lives without even realizing it! Specifically, I'm talking about balloon litter. What do you think I might be talking about when I say "balloon litter"? You might have heard of people doing a balloon release- releasing balloons into the sky as part of a celebration or remembrance ceremony of some kind.

However, when a balloon gets released into the sky, at some point it has to come down again! And once it comes back down to land or water, it's a troublemaker. Have you seen our jellies yet today? If there was a balloon suspended in the water right next to jelly, can you imagine how hard it might be for a jelly predator like a sea turtle to tell the difference? Just like there are no balloons on the human food pyramid, they're not on the sea turtle food pyramid either! There's also the strings or ribbon usually attached to the balloon- that can cause problems too, because shore animals like birds can get tangled up in it and get injured! So you can see that like all kinds of litter, balloons can cause a lot of harm out in the environment.

But now that we recognize the fact that it's littering, we know that it's worth it to look for alternatives to balloons! Luckily, there are so many other wonderful things that don't include balloons that you can do to celebrate or mark a remembrance of a loved one. If the thing you love to see is something float up into the sky, try blowing big bubbles! If you're looking for beautiful colors, planting a garden will give you those colors for weeks, year after year! Can you think of other ways to celebrate that don't involve balloons? Other kinds of decorations? If you'd like more ideas, there's a website you can go to: [preventballoonlitter.org](http://preventballoonlitter.org). I encourage you to check it out! Do you have any questions or other ideas?"