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## Eco-Friendly Giftwrap Ideas with Courtney Cerruti

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### Chapter 1 - Eco-Friendly Giftwrap Ideas

#### Overview

- Hi, I'm Courtney Cerruti. I'm the Editor-in-Chief at Creativebug. I've taught many, many classes. And some of my favorites are the gift wrap classes. Because so much gift-giving happens during the holidays and it's a frantic season, sometimes I feel pressured to find the perfect gift wrap, the best ribbons. But I find that that really takes away from the enjoyment of the process of selecting and gift wrapping a present for the person that you have in mind. This season, I'm gonna take a different approach. I'm gonna share with you some of my favorite materials that you may not be using for gift wrap traditionally and elevate them with found and foraged items like florals, bits of twine, scraps of fabric, to create really beautiful packages that are intended for the recipient. Both a present and the wrapping can tell a story. And because we're using items that we already have, this class also has an eco-friendly element. And this is just a starting point to get you thinking about and looking at materials in new ways. (inspiring music)

#### Materials and what to gather

- Because we're focusing on things we already have, your materials will look totally different than mine. I have the gifts that I want to wrap gathered. Some are in boxes and some are not. If I'm gonna use actual wrapping paper, I've selected things that are matte. They don't have any metallic or glitter finish. Some roll wrap will actually say on the backside, that it's recyclable. If you're not sure or the label doesn't say, then look for things that look more like regular paper. I have something in a matte red, a craft, and a white. You could decorate these with natural beeswax crayons, a pencil, and they'll still be recyclable. I actually love using wax paper for wrapping. This is good for food items because it's food safe, but I think it's also very pretty because it's translucent, and I have a natural deli paper here as well that can be nice for wrapping. Because we want things that can be compostable and or recyclable, I'm only using paper-based tape or string to tie up my packages. Not any plastic or cellophane tape. This is washi tape and architectural tape. You want a nice pair of scissors, things from your garden, dried elements, found or foraged elements from walks are all good package toppers. You can use things like evergreen, but you can also use herbs like rosemary. I have strawflowers, limes, oranges, and lemons that I dehydrated in the oven, and pine cones gathered from a walk. I have some small bits of fabric that I'm gonna play with for using as package toppers. This is a good way to reuse scraps that would otherwise go unused. And I also have some large or long pieces of fabric to create ribbon from, as well as square or rectangular pieces, anywhere from 20 inches up to 36 inches to do Furoshiki, which is a Japanese wrapping and transporting technique. I love ribbon, twine, string, embroidery floss, yarn, all of that. I have huge boxes of these from small amounts to large amounts, and I always keep these handy for wrapping. This is raffia that's been dyed. I also have hardware store twine, baker's twine, another style of baker's twine, a little bit of yarn that's too small for any project other than making a pompom or using for gift wrap. When you're using thicker materials like twines and yarn, you'll wanna have tapestry needles. I also like embroidery or pearl cotton floss, and thread for certain types of wrappings. I've got buttons and more tapestry needles here. Also have some very basic salt dough ornaments I made, and these are good year after year, and I like them just plain for package topping.

### Using natural materials

- This first approach to wrapping is a pretty simple one because all you're gonna start with is a wrapped gift just in a solid or printed paper. So I've already done that here. It's a pretty smallish box. And what I like to do to either highlight another color gift wrap or start using some different materials is to do a belly band, which is where you're putting a wide or thin sash of another material over your wrapped package. And this is nice if you have a really pretty printed pattern paper that you don't have a lot of you can use a solid wrap and then do a belly band. And for us, we're gonna use wax paper. I've cut a long piece of wax paper and you can see that one side is wonky but in the spirit of not wasting anything I actually really like what it looks like when you fold it over and you get an organic line down the center with a really crisp edge on both ends. And you can use that as a belly band either horizontally or vertically in this case and then you would just tape it in the back. There's another version that's a little bit thinner. I can also see. And I just like the really like subtle gradation there. So the other thing you can do is take a much wider piece of wax paper and pleat it in the center. So with my thumbs, I'm just bringing that center portion up. Kind of need to hold it down until you crease it in place. You can see how it's translucent, look at our table. So if you're working with a patterned paper you get all of those little details showing through. So now I can see those layers. Let's actually use this one. So I just wanna get it sort of centered or semi centered in the back. Like I mentioned before I'm using a washi tape, which is paper tape. Then still recycle your gift wrap. And I just trim this to the edge and then just do a little fold. And then with this pleat, you can actually tuck something in here. So if you had a photo, a little gift card, your to and from tag can get tucked into this pocket that you've just created by making your pleat. You can continue to work on this if we go with this more natural theme using hardware store twine. So when you're selecting how much of a ribbon or twine you wanna make sure you have enough for these two sides. And the full side here, if you're just going twice. If you're going all the way around, you need four times as much. And then I always do like a little bit extra. I think because we have this band going this way I think I only want this going in one direction and I'm gonna tie it on the top. So I place it at the bottom here and give myself a little extra. And then this is where you can start to add some other elements. So let's just tie a knot to keep this in place before we tie it, bow or anything. So hold that down with one finger, center it and we can add something like an orange slice. I dehydrated these in my oven. You could add something like a pine cone and an orange slice. You could also use something like your evergreen and just do a simple knot. Let's use the orange slice. This one has a natural hole so it's very easy to just slip the twine through and you can tie it like this in a bow but because this hole in the middle of the orange is larger you can also take both ends, put it through. And this is how I often do stuff with like buttons or found items. I'll tie another knot here and then a bow and then everything's like very centered and exact and square. You can adjust these tails until you like the size of your bow and then trim. And if you're working with an orange slice that has a much smaller hole this is where I would use a tapestry needle with my twine or ribbon or floss. So now you have a package that has all natural elements. This can be composted, this can be composted. Wax paper can be composted or recycled. Wax paper is biodegradable, but if you want to compost it you need to make sure that it is coated with bees wax or soybean oil. The petroleum based ones are not compostable. You're using a natural gift wrap. It doesn't have to be this plain craft paper. It could be colored but if it's not metallic, shiny, glittery then you can recycle it. Here's a piece of deli paper, which is just a thin sheet of food, safe paper that's cut into a square. And sometimes I like to just rewrap things I've purchased. Let's say these were cookies you made, or in my case cookies I bought. I'm gonna be gifting a really beautiful tea that I wanna just put a little

cookie with as well. And so I wanna change the packaging. Now this envelope style works best with things that are small and even ideally more flat than these cookies. But let's see how this goes. You're gonna place them in the center (paper crumpling) starting your envelope. And I'm lightly creasing here with my hands, folding that over so this creases parallel or right lined up with the bottom of the envelope. Same thing on this side. You can just kind of tuck that behind. And then I like to rotate this and you wanna make sure that your cookies are not falling out too much because you need to have enough of this envelope top to wrap back over your package. So you might need to tuck them in. (paper crumpling) And then if you've left enough space here, you can actually tuck this, if it was a real envelope, this would be called the lapel, back into the folds that you've made, like that. So you can see I'm tucking it back into there and it just makes like a nice tidy little package. And you don't even need any tape if things line up well. You can work with a larger square if you have a larger item that you're trying to wrap. Flatter ones work really well if you're doing something that's not even food based necessarily, because this is food. I'm gonna just tie it. Oops, I'm just gonna tie it with a little bit of baker's twine. And you wanna tie going perpendicular to where this opening is, just so nothing pops out. And this is just like a handy little thing to know how to make this style envelope because you can use it any time of year for packaging up a sandwich that you're gonna take in a lunchbox for non food items. Just knowing how to fold that square into a loose envelope with this little tucked in flap is really sweet. I think this style of wrapping I also often use for stocking stuffers because it just is a nice way to create a little bit of special presentation for a smaller item. Here's another little package that also uses a similar sort of natural aesthetic and kitchen items. This is just a little bit of thread and a salt dough ornament. And instead of doing a single hole to hang it I did a double hole, like a button and that allowed me to tie it in the middle to create this cute presentation. Now we have this trio of packages that all have a very similar look and feel. They use natural elements that are mostly found in the kitchen, so this is a good way to wrap things that are food or food related. You can also use things like herbs here as a package topper as well.

### Using fabric

- Something else I love to use for wrapping is fabric. It could be a package topper, it could be used as a ribbon, and you can also use it to wrap an entire gift. I like it because it's reusable, and it's probably something you already have on hand if you're a crafter or a sewist. For fabric that is really precious, like this liberty print, I don't wanna use the entire piece to wrap a gift, even though that could be reused and re-gifted. Instead, I like to make a ribbon from a tiny strip of it and it's really easy. Determine the width that you want your ribbon, and make a little snip about an inch, and then you can tear it. Most woven fabrics you can tear. (fabric ripping) We'll save that for a bigger wrap or more ribbon. Now, because this is my first tear and when you tear fabric, it tears on grain. But when you get fabric cut from the store, it may not be cut on grain necessarily. So one end of my ribbon may be wider or narrower than the other. These actually look pretty even. So I think I'm fine with that. And what's nice about this is this piece of fabric can be used over and over again. And in this case I have a really nice plain box, and I can omit the paper wrapping entirely. So that's a little bit more eco-friendly. I think, actually, because we have a nice length of it, I might wrap it the other way. So we'll put the wrong side of our fabric face up, and just do a nice juicy bow here. I just love working with this fabric. Before I pull this tight, I'm going to open up the bow a little bit, and I'll sort of fiddle with it. I'll pull it out and then I'll take the tail ends, and pull them back in until I get sort of the right proportions. And also while doing that, tightening the knot down. Okay, almost there. I

think like that is good. And you can open these up a little more. And you can leave your ends like that, but you can also fold them. And if you cut from the fold out to the edge, you create that nice little point in the fabric. And because this is the selvage edge, that's especially nice. So you don't wanna cut in toward, you wanna go from the fold out toward the edge to get that V shape, which looks so nice. One more time adjustment. So pretty, I love like a juicy floppy bow out of this beautiful print. Another thing you can do is use scraps, like these happen to be fleece. You can also use felt because the edges won't unravel. You can cut out shapes or motifs. So something I'll do is cut out circles like two or three concentric circles. This, because this is so large, this would really work for a much larger package. And I can cut another circle out. And those were more oval shape. And that edge a little bit. Oh, that's too oblong. And maybe we'll do this bright one small mini guy. Just folding it in half so I can cut two sides at once. See how they stack. And then you just want, again, to fold it and cut a little knot. This will allow you to put your fabric ribbon through the center. You could probably cut all the layers together but it's a lot to kind of fold and manage. So I usually cut something as thick as fleece individually. And again, you could use felt too, because it also doesn't unravel. And then you can just pop this onto any package and pull your ribbon through. So if we did another one. Let's undo this bow. And if I was starting over, you'd wanna make a knot here so that this doesn't come loose. And you'd put your ends right through these little middle slits that we made. And then in this case, I wouldn't tie a bow. I would just make a nice clean knot on top and trim here. And it's just another way to add more color and texture. And I think it works really nicely with a solid ribbon. Here's a little one I did. And I like this combo where I have, again, fabric torn so you get a nice deckled edge on both edges, and then three fleece layers with a little bow on top. So that's another way to use fabric scraps. Another excellent use for fabric in gift wrapping is to create furoshiki, which is a Japanese wrapping technique. This actually started as a way to store and transport goods and not actually for gift giving. But because Japan has such a rich history of gift giving and something that is still used today, there has been a modern interpretation of furoshiki for gift giving as well as storage and carrying items. One of the largest sizes for furoshiki would be 36 inches. If you buy a piece of furoshiki cloth that's already finished on the edges and made specifically for furoshiki, it may be square, so 36 inches square, or it may be slightly longer in one dimension like 36 by 38. This I made, so I just got yardage. It's the liberty fabric also. So it's really nice, and I just hemmed it all the way around. Think of it as like a giant bandana or handkerchief. And this size works for larger packages, shoe boxes up to shirt boxes. So I'll grab my shoebox that I need to wrap. And if you're not sure about the proportions, in general when working with furoshiki, your package or the item that you're wrapping should be about a third the size of the longest dimension of your fabric. So can I fit sort of three of these boxes diagonally? Yes I can. So this should work. And you always start, or almost always, start with these at an angle. Give yourself some space. If you're wrapping something larger. This is what happens to me every time I'm gift wrapping. I have a very cluttered table. That's how I know I'm enjoying myself. For a basic furoshiki which is a single knot, we're gonna take this end that's closest to us, wrap it over, and tuck that little bit underneath the box. Then we're gonna take this corner and bring it to us. Now, sometimes you can just leave this floppy, but if it's pretty long, I actually like to just fold this back, and tuck it under and make like a nice clean edge here along the side that's facing me. And to get a really clean look on these sides which we're gonna bring together in a knot, you actually wanna take the edges and tuck them in a little bit. So we're loosely folding the edges. So this gets tucked in a bit, almost like you'd wrap with a piece of paper. And then this comes up, and you can see that it creates like a nice clean edge here. So we're making this side a little bit thinner. Bringing it up. And the nice thing is

with the fabric, you can kinda work with it, unlike paper which creases, and then you're just gonna tie a square knot to finish this off. So you do left over right, and then right over left, and you can sort of with your fingers plump up these bows. And if you tie a square knot, what it'll do is it means that the edges of your bows will lie in a line as opposed to like that. So, and then you can just adjust them slightly. Now again, we're just gonna be inspired by furoshiki. So in my mind, I would gift this and the cloth would go with it. Traditionally, the cloth would be given back to the giver of the gift. So that's kind of our largest size. That's 36 inches square roughly. A really common size of a furoshiki cloth is 27 inches square, which is what I have here. And this again, is a piece of fabric that I cut down, and then just trim the edge. One end I left with the selvage just 'cause I like the way it looks. It's probably not super traditional, but I like it. This is my interpretation. And for this, I was actually gonna show you how to make a bag out of it. This size works well for wrapping things like this size box, or the box that we did earlier. So slightly smaller than a shoebox, a square gift box that you might get. This happens to be like a spice set but candy works well for this size. You can also do something like your lunch in a 27 inch square cloth. But I'm gonna show you how to make a bag. So again, we're gonna turn this on the diagonal, and fold it up into a triangle. And I've got the wrong side facing me. The weave of the fabric doesn't really allow you to see the right and the wrong, but I know this is the wrong side, because I can see where my hem is. And this is really simple. This is like the bag before BAGGU existed. You just take one corner and tie a single knot like that. You take this corner and you tie a single knot like that. So it should look like this single knot on either end. And this is sort of rolling up naturally. You have an open end here with your right side. Now you're actually gonna turn this inside out. So now your knots are getting flopped into the center. And here you're gonna tie a square knot. So before we were doing single knots, now we're gonna do a square knot. So left over right and right over left to tie your square knot. And now you have a bag. So this is really great for transporting your gifts or if you're giving something sort of that you've harvested. Let's say you're giving a bounty of Meyer lemons, or you've made a loaf of bread you wanna take to a neighbor's. This is a really nice way to package and transport your items. But you can also put smaller things in here. If you're giving somebody a lot of little things, this is the perfect. Let's see, this guy fits in here too. This is a really good size and you'd be surprised how much you can fit into this little bundle. You can also purchase for furoshiki wrapping cloth if you don't wanna make it, or you don't have fabric to do so. This one I bought online. This is the last size that's really common, the 20 inches square, which is good for small gifts. I wrapped a four inch square package with this. And what I love about the design is that it's intentional so that when you do your single square knot at the top, you get to see these really cute tigers. I think this would be adorable to gift to a child or anyone really. I would enjoy a package like this. These are just a few simple ideas for working with materials you already have. I love using fabric and things from my kitchen and my backyard in gift wrapping. You can use these along with ideas from our other gift wrapping classes. You could paint your own papers, do paste paper, make ornaments. I love that the wrapping can be part of a gift. It can tell a story and it can create a tradition. This is something that I do with my mom. I have since I was a little girl and I will continue to do it with my daughter. It's something I really enjoy and brings me a lot of peace during the season.