

Celebrating Earth Sunday and Having Fun Being Stewards of Creation

This is a basic lineup of ideas for Earth Sunday. Some of these are initiatives that can be kicked-off on this Sunday to be followed throughout the year. Others are awareness actions.

WEAR GREEN - Encouraging everyone to wear something green for Earth Sunday! In one parish a lady bought a "bug" shirt to wear each Earth Sunday!

RECYCLED GROCERY BAGS – Most grocers have reusable grocery bags for sale for \$.99. Consider purchasing some to hand out and ask for a trade-in of plastic grocery bags in return. One small parish collected several hundred bags doing this. Check your local grocer for Earth Day promotions on reusable bags and recycling plastic ones.

FLOWER SEEDS - Hand out a packet of flower seeds to every household that shows up this Sunday. Place a computer printed label on them that reads: The Episcopal Church - Good Stewards of God's Creation! Consider marking a few of these packets with an "X" marked on them for a special Earth Day gift of garden gloves!

PLANT a TREE - The youth group and/or another ministry can plant a tree in the church lawn. This helps reduce CO2 and it will provide shade for the building for years to come - reducing energy consumption in the process!

PLANT a BEAN – The younger children can plant a bean in a small clay pot and hear a lesson on Stewardship of Creation. They will take the bean pot home with them to care for it and watch it grow!

RECYCLE BINS - Purchase recycle bins from a recycling bin supplier. One such company with nice attractive bins can be found at www.recyclingbins.com. Place one in your Parish Hall and one in your Youth Room for Cans and Plastics. We chose the one with a mountain photo laminated on the sides for an even deeper message that this is about Creation!

GO CERAMIC - Put Styrofoam and paper cups to rest – replace them with ceramic coffee mugs with the church name and motto. Yes, you will have to wash them, but that is part of the cost of authentically proclaiming the fullness of the Gospel message. It also uses less energy and water than producing paper and/or compostable cups. If you have a high speed commercial dishwasher in your kitchen that can do it in about 2-3 minutes, so for 100 cups it won't take too long.

GREEN CORNER – Put a Green Info spot in your monthly newsletter that gives tips on how you can live greener lives at home. Plan to have an info sheet available with these on Earth Sunday.

GREEN LIVING – Many newspapers publish a pull-out section on Earth Sunday on how to live greener lives at home and work. Consider ordering extra copies of this section to

be delivered to the church and pass those out. Request to receive all of the local neighborhood extras that are not sold that Sunday, from your distributor on the next Monday to have available for those who miss the Sunday event!

RECYCLE INFO - Have information available about what can be recycled locally and what you are willing to collect to facilitate the ease of recycling for our members.

SERMON FOCUS – This is an issue which needs to be addressed from the pulpit. It is part of the Gospel imperative to love one’s neighbor as ourselves and taking care of Creation is a ministry to which we are called in the first chapter of Genesis! What we do as a church makes a statement about what we believe in our faith. If we don’t take care of God’s Creation what does that say to the world that we think about God?

BUTTERFLY GARDEN - Create a butterfly garden or maintain one your church has. This is a great activity with smaller children!

PROMOTE the LOCAL FARMERS’ MARKET Make sure to inform about thinking globally, buying locally!

COMPOST – Promote composting and consider starting a compost bin at the church if you don’t have one. One youth group in a congregation has developed and maintained a Compost Ministry and has sold the compost (for donations) and funds part their youth mission trips with the proceeds!

DEVELOP a COMMUNITY GARDEN – If your church even has a small sunny space you can start a micro-community garden. One congregation has done this in about 150 square feet and it uses the produce in its feeding program ministry.

CREATE an ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP MINISTRY if your congregation doesn’t already have one.