

What You Can Do To Help the Environment

Review the following list and see how many of the suggestions you already incorporate into your life. Some of the recommendations are quite easy; others require some research and long-term commitment, and so are goals to work toward. (List is From “Renewing the Face of the Earth,” A Resource for Parishes.)

1. Recycle newspaper, paper, cardboard, glass, tin, and aluminum.
2. Buy recycled products.
3. Use low- or phosphate-free detergent.
4. Wash clothes in cold water.
5. Use old clothes and cloth to wipe up spills and for cleaning instead of paper towels.
6. Reduce use of nonessential appliances (e.g., electric can openers and pencil sharpeners).
7. Reuse paper grocery bags.
8. Use reusable containers for sandwiches and leftovers instead of plastic wrap, baggies, and foil.
9. Install low-flow aerators on faucets and water-saving showerheads.
10. Do not leave water running when showering, shaving, brushing your teeth, washing dishes or your car.
11. Place space-occupiers in toilet tanks. (Do not use bricks or rocks, as they can damage pipes.)
12. Insulate water heater, and set it at 130 degrees (cool enough to save energy, but hot enough to kill bacteria).
13. Fix leaky pipes.
14. Tune up your furnace.
15. Lower thermostat one degree for every hour you will be away or asleep.
16. Turn off lights and appliances when you leave the room.
17. Replace incandescent bulbs with energy-efficient bulbs.
18. Insulate and weather-strip your house.
19. Donate unwanted clothing and household items to charity or to a thrift shop.
20. Buy and use rechargeable batteries.
21. Educate children about sustainable-living.
22. Avoid purchasing products that contain halocarbons (e.g., Halon fire extinguishers, aerosol cleaners for electronic or photographic equipment) and other ozone-destroying chemicals.
23. When CFC-free refrigerators and automobile air conditioners are available, switch to these products.
24. Let your elected representatives and relevant officials in the U.S. government know that you want production of all ozone-damaging products ended.
25. Survey hazardous waste production and disposal in your community. Identify any especially dangerous problems and work for their clean-up.
26. Support efforts by low-income communities to address their toxic pollution problems and to avoid receiving an unfair share of society’s environmental hazards.
27. Learn about the dangers of everyday household products. Reduce the damage you do to health and the environment. Then educate others on how they can do likewise.
28. Use cloth diapers, or instead of just using disposal diapers, alternate between cloth and disposal.
29. Support and work with national organizations that help local communities address toxic pollution and hazardous waste problems.
29. Use cloth diapers, or instead of just using disposal diapers, alternate between cloth and disposal.
30. Write letters to the editor expressing your concern about environmental and social justice issues.
31. Plant a tree.
32. Start a compost pile in your yard, or take yard clippings and debris to a yard debris recycler.
33. Invest your money in environmentally and socially conscious businesses.
34. Use organic pesticides and fertilizers.
35. Do not over-water your lawn or garden.
36. Return reusable items to merchants (e.g., plastic and rubber pots to nursery, hangers to dry cleaner).

37. Remove yourself from mailing lists you do not want to be on by contacting the offending organizations/ companies.
38. Share your knowledge with others.
39. Avoid buying Styrofoam.
40. Reduce use of disposable products, or, if you must buy disposable, buy paper or glass products instead of plastic.
41. Buy locally produced items when possible.
42. Adopt a highway or waterway.
43. Support work to empower the poor.
44. Use reusable shopping bags.
45. Contact trucking and cab companies whose vehicles spew black smoke and complain. Black smoke usually means their vehicles are not burning fuel completely, thereby costing them money.
46. Keep your car tuned, tires properly inflated, and the air conditioner well maintained and only service them at repair facilities that recycle CFCs.
47. Recycle engine oil.
48. Drive the speed limit, and accelerate and slow down gradually.
49. Try to eat a vegetarian diet once a week.
50. Encourage your community and region to support mass transit and other alternatives to single-passenger gasoline-powered cars for commuting.
51. Carpool.
52. Use public transportation when possible.
53. Bike or walk for short trips.
54. Encourage the U.S. government to support international efforts to combat the threat of global warming.
55. Do not litter.
56. Oppose toxic chemicals on fruits and vegetables.
57. Monitor workers' exposure to hazardous products and conditions (consult local trade unions).
58. Support efforts to preserve natural habitats in the United States.
59. Participate in clean-air and clean-water programs.
60. Encourage the U.S. to play a strong international role in researching and preserving bio diversity worldwide.
61. Learn how to lobby local, state, and federal officials.
62. Suggest and help organize an environmental awareness day at your parish.
63. When purchasing a car, select an energy-efficient model.
64. Volunteer with an environmental group.
65. Join a local or national pro-life group to stand up for unborn human life.
66. Conduct an energy audit of your church, and identify ways to reduce energy use.
67. Air-dry laundry whenever possible.
68. Support governmental policies that promote energy efficiency and renewable energy.
69. Collect rainwater and gray water (i.e., water from tub, sink, or wash) for use in gardening.
70. Contribute to international hunger relief efforts and programs to improve agriculture in developing countries.
71. Explore alternative energy sources (e.g., solar, wind).
72. Urge officials to begin/expand curbside recycling.
73. Enjoy recreational activities that use renewable rather than nonrenewable energy (e.g., hike instead of watching television).
74. Educate others on the links between agriculture and the environment.
75. Buy organic produce to support sustainable agriculture in the United States.
76. Buy products that will last, and rent items you do not use very often.
77. Encourage increased U. S. government support for sustainable agriculture.
78. Start a community garden.
79. Ask candidates for public office what they are prepared to do to pursue environmental justice.
80. Contribute to international relief efforts to provide clean drinking water in developing countries.