

Everyday Approaches to Care for Creation

Simple Steps for the Home

1. Recycle – everything from traditional recyclables, like old newspapers and used beverage containers, to high-tech ones, such as printer cartridges and cell phones. Extensive recycling programs mean that the amount of energy needed to recycle an already-processed article into something new is far less than the energy required to mine or log all new materials and then process them for the first time. Many states offer free or low-cost recycling services and ten states even offer refunds for turning in your used beverage containers. Buying products that are recyclable and contain post-consumer materials also helps save energy.
2. Wash clothes in cold water. Not only will cold water help remove stains, but the energy savings will help lower both your energy bill and your emissions.
3. Use reusable containers and utensils for leftovers and bring-your-own lunches. Plastics production uses lots of energy, so sticking to containers that you can reuse again and again will reduce emissions and actually be cheaper for you.
4. Fix or replace leaky pipes, heaters, generators, and appliances. When not functioning properly, these items can use large amounts of energy and increase your already-pricey power bill.
5. Consider replacing incandescent light bulbs with more energy-efficient ones. New technology means that ugly, glaring fluorescent bulbs are a thing of the past, and new fixtures are up to 66% more efficient and last thousands of hours more than incandescents. Also, just by replacing the five light sources you use most with more efficient ones, you could save \$60 in energy costs.
6. Buy local. Today, the average meal travels 1,500 miles from farm to table, a trip that can produce tremendous amounts of fossil fuel use from packaging and transportation in diesel-run vehicles. Buying local, seasonable foods for your family means that you enjoy healthier, riper, more environmentally-friendly foods and that you help support your local farm community.
7. Carpool – when you drive, share rides with your family, friends, and neighbors. Not only does carpooling decrease the amount of emissions from private vehicle transportation, but you also face less stressful traffic on the roads and pay less money for gas. Many states provide carpool or

“High Occupancy Vehicle” lanes to help speed up the commute for people who share rides.

8. Take a walk. Instead of driving to the local post office or grocery store, or across the parking lot, stretch your legs and walk there. Although it might take a few minutes longer, you’ll get great exercise, save gas, and reduce your greenhouse gas emissions.

9. Eat your vegetables. While getting a sufficient amount of protein is important, cutting back even slightly on meat consumption will help decrease the greenhouse gas emissions used in its production. Meat production is an energy-intensive process; large quantities of energy are required to cultivate, harvest, and ship animal feed, to transport animals to slaughterhouses, to slaughter animals, to process and package meat, to refrigerate meat, and to transport meat to stores. Also, many who live in poverty, especially in the Third World, almost never consume meat because it is too expensive, so by cutting back on our consumption, we can stand in solidarity with our impoverished brothers and sisters.

10. Plant a tree. Planting a tree in your backyard or neighborhood can provide shade, a playground, fruit, and a sense of community, as well as acting as a carbon “sink,” which means that it absorbs carbon. Just one tree can absorb thirteen pounds of CO₂ per year, and an acre of forest will sequester, or take in, about 2.5 tons of CO₂ annually, which can make a big difference. (http://www.treelink.org/docs/29_reasons.phtml)

11. To help you assess your home energy use and learn how you can reduce energy costs and benefit the environment, [Home Energy Saver](#) is a helpful web-based tool developed by the Department of Energy.

5 Simple Steps at School or Work

1. Buy energy efficient equipment. Computers, printers, copiers, and even water coolers are available in energy efficient models that will help your business or school save money and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

2. Set up recycling bins for paper, plastic, glass, and cans at accessible places. Paper receptacles near printers and copiers and beverage container receptacles in kitchens and dining halls will help collect lots of recyclable “waste” and save energy.

3. Suggest that those responsible for the building (i.e. facility manager) perform an energy assessment of your building – how much energy could you be saving and at what cost? Find out how much money you could save in the long run by replacing older equipment and appliances and the easiest steps you could take to do so. Often power companies will offer free or low-cost assessments, or you can calculate

your own energy use online at

https://www.energystar.gov/istar/pmpam/help/Portfolio%20Manager%20Tour/Portfolio_Manager_Tour.htm

4. Turn the lights off when you leave an empty room. If a room is going to be empty for more than 10 minutes, it saves more energy to turn it off and then on again later than to simply leave it on. Installing automatic light sensors, to turn on and off at certain times, with certain lighting levels, or if the room is occupied, could also help save money and eliminate wasted energy.
5. Turn off individual computers at night and set network systems to low-power sleep modes to save energy. Just one computer and monitor system in sleep mode can save up to \$100 annually.

Simple Steps for my Parish or Community

Suggest to the responsible parties (i.e. pastor, facility manager, administrator), the following for consideration:

1. Use more efficient and area-appropriate lighting. Many new types of lighting are available that use up to 75% less energy than the traditional incandescent light bulb and that can help light each area of your parish the best. New lighting styles save energy, money, and time, and can add to the mood of each part of the parish.
2. Conduct an energy audit of your church, and identify ways to reduce energy use. For an easy starting survey, check page 12 of the EnergyStar.gov's congregation aid: [Putting Energy into Stewardship: EnergyStar for Congregations Guide](#) (http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations)
3. Incorporate climate awareness into your volunteer efforts by organizing farmers markets and local goods bazaars, educating inner-city youth about climate change, collecting cans and bottles in an area that does not have curbside recycling service, or planting a community garden.
4. Focus on no-cost or low-cost opportunities to save on your parish's energy bill, such as adjusting the thermostat during unoccupied times, using e-mail alerts instead of paper memos or bulletins, installing timers on electric water heaters and similar equipment, installing awnings or shades to block the hot summer sun and keep the church cooler, and caulking and weather-stripping doors to keep the bought air in. These are

among many easy ways to lower the utility costs of your parish while exhibiting stewardship.

5. Educate parishioners about the easy ways to save on energy costs and the many reasons we are called to do so. As stewards of creation, we should consider the simple things that we can do, such as reducing our energy use and dependence on fossil fuels, to help safeguard our climate and our brothers and sisters in Christ.