

Ideas for Green Team Initiatives

Recycling

Have a campaign to get all church members to recycle. Provide recycling bins and a list of things the local trash pick-up will accept.

Have a glass collection once a month. Many cities won't pick up glass in the recycling bins, so it requires gas and effort to drive to the recycling centers that accept glass. To make it convenient for folks and to save energy, get a couple of volunteers with a pick-up truck or van who are willing to collect the glass and take it to the recycling center the next day.

Make sure the church has recycling bins at various places in the church, especially the office area and the social hall where food is served.

Education/Worship

Have a green film series and provide popcorn and time for discussion afterwards. Or sponsor a speaker series about practical ways to go green.

Have an Earth Stewardship column in your church bulletin or newsletter, combining practical tips, inspiration and motivation. One church has a monthly "Green Star Award," and acknowledges a church member who is doing some action for the earth.

Do a Lenten program centered on caring for God's earth. Encourage members to adopt various green practices as their Lenten discipline. Provide a list of possibilities. Include a prayer for the earth as a part of each service in Lent, and have copies for people to pray at home. Have sermons include some aspect of earth care. Perhaps do a prayer service for the earth or a musical program featuring music about creation.

Sponsor a "Simple Christmas" program at your church. Distribute or sell the booklets, *Whose Birthday is it, Anyway?*, published by Alternatives for Simple Living. Have a speaker on the subject. Encourage church groups that have parties to make them simpler. Replace gift exchanges with donations for charity or encourage gifts of prayer or service.

Earth Day activities. Have a worship service that centers on earth care. Get the children involved in varied ways, such as creating posters and singing earth songs. Display an earth flag (not only on this weekend, but all year long if possible).

Energy Reduction

Energy audit. This can be a bigger project, done by a professional company. Or it can be simpler and less expensive. As a result, take energy saving measures such as caulking, upgrading, replacing windows, etc.

Have a Bike or Walk to Church Sunday. Encourage those who are able and within a reasonable distance to walk, bike or carpool to church. Make sure your church has a bike rack. Give participants a green sticker as they arrive at church. Have a drawing for green prizes after the service. Encourage them to continue this practice.

Encourage church members to use compact fluorescent light bulbs in their homes. Have the youth group sell the bulbs and make a small profit. They can also offer to replace bulbs for the elderly. Make sure the church is using CFLs.

Saving Resources

Green supplies. Buy post-consumer waste, recycled, process chlorine-free office paper. Use environmentally friendly cleaning products. Use recycled content, process chlorine-free paper towels and toilet paper.

Sell reusable shopping bags. Can have some green saying or design printed on them if desired. One church had the children decorate cloth bags and then auctioned them off as a fundraiser.

Church Grounds

Get a community garden going, perhaps at your church if you have the land.

Natural landscaping at the church. Use native plants and plants that require little watering. Cut down on the amount of grass that needs mowing. Do butterfly and humming bird gardens created by the youth group. Eliminate pesticide use on the grounds of your house of worship. Do a rain garden.

Less Waste

Use fair trade coffee at church events and replace Styrofoam cups with reusable mugs.

Reducing junk mail. Provide cards at church for members to fill out to cut down on junk mail.

Encourage vegetarian, no-waste potlucks and dinners. Have people bring their own tableware and provide a place for people to wash their own dishes. Bring a bucket for table scraps that can be composted. Recycle any cans and plastic containers. Invest in a church compost bin if feasible.

Composting. Have the church purchase a small composter for food scraps. Encourage church members to have a compost bin at home. Provide materials and education.

Appreciating the Earth Outdoor Activities

Group hike. Hand out lists of hiking trails close to the church. Arrange a group hike some Saturday or Sunday, especially inviting families with children.

Camping and canoeing trip. Some people have never experienced these activities, and providing it through the church is a great way to make it easy for them to participate. Can have a storytelling or prayer time around the campfire that focuses on the earth and faith.

Miscellaneous

Fair trade chocolate. Can make a good fundraiser.