

# How We Used Surveys Successfully in Our Congregation

By Carol Meyer, St. Pius Catholic Church

## We did 2 surveys at St. Pius with excellent results. Here's what we did in a nutshell:

- Got permission from our pastor to do the survey prior to a Lenten program focusing on Earth care
- Printed the following survey on a half sheet of paper and put copies at the ends of the pews along with pencils
- After the sermon, our priest asked people to fill out the surveys. He gave them a little time to do so and asked them to put them in the collection basket or at the ends of the pews.
- The Green Team gathered them up and someone from the team summarized the findings and we used the data as the basis for our efforts and programs
- About 80 surveys were filled out. In the bulletin the next week, we thanked people and gave a short summary of the results
- As we put their suggestions into practice, we often reported that back to the parish via the bulletin.

The value of doing the survey was that it made the whole church feel they were part of our green efforts, not just a small team, and that their opinion mattered. When the team initiated something, we would say it came from the suggestion of the parishioners, which gave it more weight than if the team just came up with it. The survey showed that there was group support for Earth care, which motivated more people to get on board. The survey engendered a sense of participation and ownership of green efforts.

## Here is a copy of our first survey:

The U.S. Catholic Bishops declare in their 1991 document, *Renewing the Earth*: **“The environmental crisis of our day constitutes an exceptional call to conversion. As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to save the planet for our children and generations yet unborn.”** In heeding this call, we plan to make *Environmental Awakening and Conversion* a parish focus this Lent and are soliciting your input. Thank you!

What are your highest concerns and interests regarding the environment? What would you like to know more about?

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Are there any environmental projects you'd like to see initiated and be willing to be involved in?

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We are considering various educational/spiritual programs that would help you make connections between your faith and care for God's earth. Rank those you would consider attending (1 for your first choice, 2 for your second, etc.)

\_\_\_ an evening environmental film series with discussion (which night or nights work best?)  
\_\_\_\_\_)

\_\_\_ speakers/program series between the Sunday masses

\_\_\_ a 10-minute presentation at the end of mass during the Sundays of Lent

\_\_\_ a Saturday morning workshop/retreat

\_\_\_ a half-hour program after daily mass one day a week during Lent

\_\_\_ a presentation to a parish group to which you belong

\_\_\_ a half-hour prayer service/program along with the Friday Stations of the Cross

Do you have any general suggestions or comments? \_\_\_\_\_

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## Second Survey

The Green Team did a second survey about a year or two later, much as we did the first one. A copy of it follows. In both cases, we got tons of suggestions, more than we could implements. We organized the suggestions into categories, figured out if other groups at the church would or could implements any of the ideas, made a list of priorities, and set about implementation in the months that followed.

### Earth Stewardship Survey '09

Thanks for your past suggestions that we've put into action:

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|---|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community garden        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Parish energy audit | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Film and education series       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Rain barrel workshop    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bike to church      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bulletin green tips             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Glass & other recycling | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Nature hikes        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Reducing use of non-recyclables |

What else can we do as a parish? (including education, advocacy, projects, nature experiences, energy reduction, spirituality, participation in community efforts, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

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How can we get more parish groups and parishioners, including children/teens, involved in caring for the Earth? -

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General comments or suggestions: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please join our **Green Email List** to receive occasional environmental notices and information.

Name and email here: \_\_\_\_\_

**For more information or an electronic copy of our surveys (which you are welcome to use and adapt), please contact Carol Meyer at 913-677-8672 or [carolm@ssckc.org](mailto:carolm@ssckc.org)**