

Godspacelight Free Resource



Simple Ways to Care for Creation



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Introduction



Welcome to “Simple Ways to Care of Creation”! At Godspace, environmental issues and creation care are two things we are passionate about. God has given us an amazing planet to live on, and we invite Christians to care for it and treasure it by being good stewards to creation. This document is designed to help you celebrate Earth Day by making a positive impact on the environment. It can be easy to feel overwhelmed by the scale of environmental issues facing our planet, but by taking small, simple steps, we can all make a difference.

We offer here a selection of fun and accessible tips for caring for the environment. These ideas are designed to be manageable for everyone, regardless of age or background, and can be implemented a variety of ways to make the most sense for you. By incorporating a few of these tips into your daily routine, you can reduce your environmental impact and help protect the planet for future generations. We invite you to leave behind guilt when reading these suggestions, and come with a sense of hope and positivity. What looks intriguing or even fun? What step might not only reduce waste, but make your life easier or cheaper?

So whether you’re looking for ways to reduce your carbon footprint, conserve water, or limit your use of plastic, this document has something for everyone. By taking the time to care for creation, we can all play a part in building a more sustainable and resilient world!



50 Simple Ideas for Creation Care and Reducing Waste



Adjust Your Shopping Habits

1. **Shop for clothes secondhand** and donate your old clothes if they are still in good condition!
2. **Find second hand items like housewares and recreation equipment at sites like OfferUp and Facebook Marketplace.** Buying used is a great way to reduce overall consumption and waste.
3. **Be part of your local Buy Nothing Group.** Buy Nothing Groups are a place to offer items no longer needed to your neighbors for free. If you have a Facebook account, look up your neighborhood [Buy Nothing Group](#) or [click here](#) for more information about these groups.



4. **Buy refurbished electronics** - it's often much cheaper, and the quality is likely equal to a new product.
5. **FIFO - First In First Out.** When putting groceries in the fridge, move things in the back to the front, and put new groceries in the back. This can reduce food waste by making sure you use old food before the new groceries.

Swaps to Reduce Waste and Energy Use

One major way to lessen our environmental impact is to replace disposable products with reusable ones. Using reusable products reduces energy usage for production and waste from disposable products. Often the primary barrier to this are our habits. If you can take a moment to plan ahead, that can accumulate into significant change over time!

6. **When going out to eat, bring a takeout container to use for leftovers.** One easy way is to stash a set in your car so you don't forget it when you go out.
7. **Put a set of reusable cutlery in your car or purse** to use instead of plastic cutlery when getting takeout.
8. **Bring your own cup when you go out to get coffee instead of using a disposable cup.** Starbucks and most other coffee shops will accept a clean, reusable container.
9. **Replace plastic water bottles with reusable water bottle.** Nalgene and REI have plastic liter bottles, but there are plenty of other brands including Kleen Kanteen, Camelback, and Hydro Flask. If you prefer to drink filtered water, grab a Brita Pitcher and use it to filter tap water.
10. **Make your coffee and tea hour more sustainable.** Replace plastic K-Cups with [reusable K-Cups](#), or try loose leaf tea instead of tea bags.
11. **Try using reusable alternatives to plastic wrap and sandwich bags.** [BPA-free reusable sandwich bags](#) or [beeswax wraps](#) are two possible alternatives to disposable products!
12. **Mesh produce bags** can really help eliminate the plastic produce bags from the supermarket that you take home.

13. **Use dryer balls instead of dryer sheets.** They can reduce drying time by 10-25%, decreasing energy usage for dryer loads. [Here's a link to making your own!](#)
14. **Replace plastic straws with bamboo or metal.** There are larger sizes for smoothies and boba as well.
15. **Use bamboo or wood toothbrushes instead of plastic.**
16. **Replace single-use parchment and foil with silicone mats.**
17. **Use menstrual cups instead of tampons or pads.**
18. **Use cloth towels to clean up messes in the kitchen** rather than paper towels and napkins, which cannot be washed and reused.
19. **Use cloth napkins instead of paper.**
20. **Change Light Bulbs to Eco-Friendly Types:** CFL and LED bulbs can emit 25-80% less energy than traditional incandescents, plus they last longer! Consider this greener alternative when it comes time to replenishing those bulbs.

Sustainability in the Kitchen

21. **Cook One-Pot Meals:** By using one pot to cook your meal, you save on electricity, gas, and water, which reduces your footprint and may even give you leftovers for the week!
22. **Make freezer meals** to reheat when you need the quick meal. A big pot of chili or soup can be frozen and quickly warmed up when you just don't feel like cooking for the night, and uses less plastic and waste than traditional freezer meals.
23. **Buy bulk for things like rice, flour, and sugar.** To make space in your kitchen, transfer bulk items into smaller containers and keep larger containers in the garage or pantry room.
24. **Make more things from scratch** such as fermentable foods. Simple things like bread or yogurt are a good start. There are lots of resources on how to brew your own kombucha or beer. Yogurt is another one that is easy and requires little extra effort to [set up and ferment on your own.](#)

25. **Make one meat-free meal a week** - decreasing red meat, specifically beef and meat consumption goes a long way to decreasing your individual carbon impact.
26. **Frequent your local Farmers market** or join a CSA to get fresh vegetables. Eating food from local sources reduces shipping and packaging outputs and supports local businesses.
27. **Start a herb garden on your kitchen windowsill.** Herbs such as basil, parsley and rosemary are pretty easy to grow and hard to kill. Green onions can also be easily grown by just putting the root end of the onion into some soil.

Support Sustainable Practices and Protect Ecology

28. **Prevent window collisions on glass doors and windows** by turning off lights inside your house at night and putting up a bird deterrent to block reflections during the day. One option is [Birdsavers](#), there's also a [DIY method here](#).
29. **Protect birds from cats by keeping them indoors.**
30. **Choose bird-friendly coffee.** Shade grown coffee provides habitat for birds and promotes more ecologically sustainable production. The Smithsonian offers a [guide to bird friendly-coffees](#) but you can also look for shade grown labels.
31. **Make your own "bee hotel"** to provide spaces for local bees i.e. carpenter and mason bees. [Here's a guide](#) with plenty of design suggestions and explanations for why bee hotels are good for the environment.
32. **Plant native species in your garden or in the median to provide habitat for bees.**
33. **Do a clean up walk in an area of your neighborhood** or a park that you frequently visit. Plan to visit once a month or whenever makes sense for you.
34. **Collect rainwater in a rain barrel** to use for watering plants in the garden.
35. **Make [seed bombs](#) and scatter them around your garden and the neighborhood** to beautify parking medians or bare spots. Make sure to avoid spreading them on public property, and check what the rules are in your area before you start distributing them.

36. **Craft birdseed ornaments** to attract local birds.

Miscellaneous

37. **Put aside an evening to organize bill delivery online** and set up necessary reminders for it.

38. **Print double sided when you can** and put a recycle bin near where you work to collect used paper and recyclable office materials.

39. **Rethink your car usage and if possible, get rid of a vehicle.** Having multiple cars is the norm among most American families regardless of financial status, but often with some planning and research it might be possible to only rely on one! As Hilary writes in her Godspace post [6 Ways to Start Living Sustainably on a Tight Budget](#) "We used to own two cars ourselves. Granted, living in Seattle there are more options for transportation, but we realized that having a second car wasn't necessary for our family of four. My husband and I drove most places together and when we individually needed a car, we would schedule accordingly so one could either walk where they needed to be or take another form of transportation like the bus or an Uber. Yet, this rarely happens and we have been without two cars for almost two years now...Most of the time, using one car for a family comes down to organization and forsaking your comfort rather than an actual need of two cars."

40. **Switch to a bidet** - it can save both trees and water! A single person uses on average 384 trees of toilet paper in a lifetime, and a single roll of toilet paper uses 37 gallons of water in manufacturing. Using a bidet uses just 1/8 of a gallon per visit, and decreases the strain put on your plumbing system.

41. **Wait to run dishwasher and laundry machine until it is full.**

42. **Wash laundry in warm or cold water.** Switching the washing machine from hot water to cold can reduce the amount of energy used by 90%. If you prefer warm water, switching your laundry from hot to warm can also decrease amount of energy used by a load of laundry.

43. **Dry clothes outside on a clothesline** when it is sunny. This reduces energy use from running the dryer, and can prolong the life of your clothing.

44. **Use public transit when possible**, or check out carpooling and ride sharing options.
45. **Put a compost bin in your backyard**, or make a smaller one for the porch or balcony if you have outdoor space.
46. **Recycle your electronics through electronics recycling programs.** Many cities have free electronics recycling programs, and hardware stores often have recycling programs for batteries. Computers and cell phone contain toxic metals which can accumulate in the food chain and cause ecological harm. Recycling electronics responsibly can prevent such contamination and reduce the need for dangerous mining operations to collect such materials.
47. **Set your thermostat at 68F for heat in the winter and 75F or higher in the summer** for air conditioning. Layer up in the winter with sweaters and blankets instead of using more energy.
48. **Vote for policies and support initiatives** that support sustainable and environmentally friendly practices.
49. **Donate to environmental organizations** such as [Young Evangelicals for Climate Action](#), [Eloheh](#), [A Rocha](#), [Circlewood](#) or [Earth Ministry](#).
50. **Take a nature walk around the neighborhood with family or friends!**



Links and More!

Gardening

[Practical Earthkeeping: The Benefits of Native Plants](#)

Our free resource, [Creating a Faith-Based Community Garden](#), is full of links, liturgies and ideas for creating both your personal garden and a faith-based garden in your community or church.

[Freerange Friday: Babystepping into Creation Care](#)

Reducing Plastic Use and Green Cleaning

The site Hey Hannah has a list of ways to replace disposable plastics we use in our everyday life with other reusable materials as listed in [Switch Out the Plastics - Simple Swaps](#).

If you want to get a jumpstart on reducing plastics in your home, join the [Team for Plastic Free Ecochallenge](#) by YES! Magazine.

[Blessed Earth](#) posted a downloadable tip sheet on [Green Cleaning](#) for better stewardship and creation care for Earth Day.

[Zero-Waste Swaps](#) by Almost Zero Waste offers a huge range of green alternatives to essential daily products.



Recycling

[Recycling Center Search & Recycling Guides](#)

[Guide to recycling smartphones](#)

[Guide to recycling batteries](#)

Getting Ready for Earth Day

Earth day, one of my favourite celebrations, is April 25th. 2021 is the 51st Anniversary so I thought it was time to remind you of some of the resources that we make available through Godspace each year.

[Circlewood](#) offers a variety of resources for your Earth Day experience. Whether you listen to their [Earthkeepers](#) podcast or read their blog and newsletter articles through [The Ecological Disciple](#), you will be immersed in the connection between Creator God and the created world.

The [official Earth Day website](#) shares opportunities to get involved either in person or online with others that are celebrating Earth Day. The theme for 2021 is "Restore Our Earth".

[A Rocha Canada](#) once again invites us to celebrate [Good Seed Sunday](#) on April 23rd with them.

Resources from Faith Based Organizations

Australian Religious Response to Climate Change is a multi-faith network committed to action on climate change and offers [Climate Action Kits](#) in five different religions: Buddhist, Christian, Hindu, Islamic, and Jewish. They are available as a free download.

[GreenFaith](#) offers resources including multi-faith [eco-spirituality prayers](#), liturgies and music that would be a great addition to your Earth Day celebration.

[National Religious Coalition on Creation Care](#)'s resource list is worth looking over as it contains literature, prayers, and other resources on Climate, Energy, Forests, etc.

[The Green Good News](#) share insights on how to “integrate sustainable living and Christian discipleship”. Check out their [local initiatives](#) page for ideas to implement in your neighborhood and church.

[Let All Creation Praise](#) has links to a number of great resources.

Interfaith Power & Light has many resources available including a list of [Climate Prayers and Sample Sermons](#).

Nurya Love Parish has put together an excellent resource entitled [The Christian Food Movement](#).

A local Seattle group called [Earth Ministry](#) offers resources for Earth Day as well as other holidays too.

Resources for Churches

[Hunting Park Film Series](#) is a six-week study designed to help you faithfully engage and confront the climate crisis in church groups, youth groups, community organizations, and more.

Check out the detail from [Blessed Tomorrow's Carbon Offset Program](#) and see if your house of worship would consider participating.

Creation Justice Ministries has [resources for churches and individuals](#) alike on a range of topics related to faith, climate change, and creation justice.



A Few Books to Read

The complete list of books we have gathered can be found in this post: [A Prayer and My Favorite Books for Earth Day](#). We have listed a portion of the books from the post below, but check out the link for the comprehensive list.

Creation Care, Ecology and Climate Change

Refugia Faith: Seeking Hidden Shelters, Ordinary Wonders, and the Healing of the Earth by Debra Rienstra explores how Christian spirituality and practice must adapt to life on a climate-altered planet.

Believers: Making a Life at the End of the World by Lisa Wells. Her book "introducing trailblazers and outliers from across the globe who have found radically new ways to live and reconnect to the Earth in the face of climate change."

Worshipping in Season: Ecology and Christ Through the Liturgical Year by Joseph E. Bush Jr. "Following the liturgical calendar and maintaining a Christocentric emphasis, Joseph E. Bush Jr. aligns earthly seasons with the liturgy and suggest readings, songs, and other acts of worship to amplify an ecologically informed Christology."



Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee is a collection of essays on our relationship to the environment and the sacred nature of creation.

Creativity, Contemplation and Gardening

Inheriting Paradise: Meditations on Gardening by Vigen Guroian. A delightful collection of garden meditations from an Orthodox Christian perspective.

Cultivating Sacred Space - Gardening for the Soul by Elizabeth Murray. This book invites us into sacred gardens at every season giving inspiration and ideas for our own sacred spaces.

Walking in Wonder: Eternal Wisdom for A Modern World by John O'Donohue. A treasure that celebrates the beauty and mystery of everyday things.

Reclaiming the Wild Soul: How Earth's Landscapes Restore Us to Wholeness by Mary Reynolds Thompson. A journey into five great landscapes of our world that reconnects us to a rich source of wisdom, healing and wholeness.

Morning Altars by Day Schildkret. The best process I have found for contemplative practice with nature.

Food, Faith and the Spirituality of Gardening

Food and Faith A Theology Of Eating by Norman Wirzba. This is my favorite go to resource about creation, food and eating.

Making Peace With the Land: God's Call To Reconcile With Creation by Fred Bahnson and Norman Wirzba. A great introduction to our responsibility for the earth God has given us.

Introducing Evangelical Ecotheology by Daniel Brunner, Jennifer Butler and A.J. Swoboda. A great resource that is biblically rooted and historically informed. It enables us to deepen our witness on behalf of creation.

Spiritual Ecology: The Cry of the Earth edited by Llewellyn Vaughan-Lee. Broad collection of essays from many faith traditions.

Bringing It to the Table: On Farming and Food by Wendell Berry. Another classic from one of my favourite authors challenging us to become more conscious of the lives of those who produce our food and the world from which our food comes.



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