

15 WAYS YOU AND YOUR FAMILY CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

1. Stop often to give thanks to God for everything. Include Creation in your everyday prayers, asking God for His help in caring for it. Consider reading the encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, or one of many fine summaries. Discuss it with your family and friends. You can download it for free at: http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html See what Bishop Rojas has to say about the need to care for God's Creation in this 5 minute video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zadVWDD-ffY>.
2. Consider joining our Creation Care Ministry! We meet two times per month for prayer and learning and a third time for a local service project. You could also sign up to receive Creation Care News and Inspirations via Flocknote or help us with a service project. Or, start a creation care project in your ministry. Visit us at the parish website: <https://theholynameofjesus.org/creation-care>.
3. Learn about the intersection of faith and the environment. Several good books and films are available, including *The Letter* (2023 movie with Pope Francis), and *RENEWAL* (an inter-faith documentary film), *The 10 Green Commandments of Laudato Si'* (by Father Josh Kureethadam), and *The Earth Cries Out*, by Gary Gardner (books).
4. Go single-use plastic-free and reduce packaging everywhere possible. Hint: It's sometimes easiest to start by making simplified drink choices. Skip bottled water, premixed juice and soda to reduce plastic waste and Green House Gases. A 501c called Eco-Cycle makes a helpful workbook for reducing single-use plastics; it's available free at: <https://tinyurl.com/24w3mdf9>. But why does it matter, aren't plastics recycled? Check out this website to find out <https://oceanconservancy.org/trash-free-seas/plastics-in-the-ocean/>
5. Be energy efficient. During the summer months, close your curtains to block daytime heat and raise the thermostat. During the winter, open your curtains when the sun's up, and lower the thermostat. Even 2 degrees on the thermostat helps, and 5 degrees helps even more! The EPA advises no lower than 78 degrees in the summer, and no higher than 68 degrees in winter. <https://www.epa.gov/environmental-topics/greener-living>
6. Adjust your driving routine. By combining multiple errands into one trip, you'll reduce the amount of fossil fuel you use, as well as wear and tear on your vehicle. Go the speed limit, accelerate and decelerate smoothly, and don't idle your car. Walk, bicycle, carpool, or telecommute when possible. <http://greendrivingamerica.org/>
7. Don't waste food. Purchase, cook or order only what you can reasonably eat since food production requires a lot of energy and water. Also, food thrown out creates a high amount of methane, a Green House Gas, which contributes to global warming. Also, wasted food is food

that someone or something else in our world could have eaten.

<https://letstalkscience.ca/educational-resources/stem-in-context/environmental-impact-wasted-food>

8. Go meatless on Fridays all year-round and try to eat “lower on the food chain” regularly. It can help reduce water, land, energy, chemicals, transportation, refrigeration, and packaging. It can also help reduce stress on our livestock and its handlers and keep us in solidarity with people with less means. According to Conservation International, livestock production accounts for 14% of global greenhouse gases. A pamphlet by the Sisters of Mercy helps explain and is posted here: <https://tinyurl.com/3p6hd52c> (Don't forget to give thanks to God for the plants and animals that nourish us and for everyone who raised or cooked our food!).

9. Calculate your carbon footprint. Understanding which activities are carbon-intensive allows you to know where you can take action. Reducing carbon reduces Green House Gases. Try <https://www.conservation.org/carbon-footprint-calculator#/>.

10. Purchase fewer "things" What will happen to items when you're through with them? Will they go to the landfill? Can they be shared or donated to someone else? Consider the 5 “R”s – Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Rent and Recycle, in that order if at all possible. Reducing the number of things we buy saves resources for future generations, reduces pollution and fuel and water usage, decreases what ends up in landfills or as litter, and reduces wildlife impacted by truck, rail and ship transport. (Think about all the trains and trucks we see right here in the Inland Empire!) When you purchase, consider second-hand, sustainably made, or recycled items that didn't have to travel far to get to you.

11. Find ways to make holidays and celebrations “highly joyful, lowly wasteful.” Skipping plastic decorations and items like confetti, balloons, and fireworks can help protect wildlife by preventing litter and toxins from entering their habitats and harming them. Using washable plates, cups, flatware, and tablecloths rather than throw-away items helps.

12. At home, try to stick with natural cleaning agents, such as baking soda, vinegar, and plant-based soaps. You can start here: <https://www.ecocycle.org/ecocycleguidex/effective-planet-friendly-cleaning-recipes> . Many cleaners on the market today contain harmful chemicals like phosphorous, nitrogen, toluene, and ammonia. These don't break down completely in water treatment facilities and instead wash into rivers and streams where they harm eco-systems. EWG cleaning product ratings can be found at <https://www.ewg.org/>

13. Re-think water use. Water is, of course, a precious resource in California. Even its processing accounts for approximately 3% of energy use in the U.S., according to the EPA. Aside from taking steps like shortening showers (hang up a timer), and installing low water use appliances, consider landscaping decisions and diet. Also, repair even small leaks, and consider ways to recycle home water. Check out these websites to learn more: <https://www.watercalculator.org/> and <https://water.ca.gov/water-basics/conservation-tips> .

14. Nurture the native plants, insects and birds in our area. Planting native species conserves water and helps the local eco-system thrive, keeping our air and soils healthier. Try to only use organic pest controls and fertilizers. The UC Master Gardeners offer a free advice via a hot-line and classes (<http://mg.ucanr.edu/>). Ways to improve biodiversity in your own yard can be found here: <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/faq-2/getting-started>.

15. Petition policymakers. Our elected officials have the power to take action on waste and pollution, which contribute to poverty and harm all of God's creatures. Write to policymakers to tell them that you want them to Care for Creation. Consider writing a letter to your newspaper. Letters published by news editors have effects beyond your local community because legislators assign their staffs to read letters to the editor as an important barometer of constituents' interests. For tips, write to programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org.

16. BONUS: Sign-up for newsletters from the Catholic Climate Covenant. Since 2006, this 501c has been helping US Catholics fight pollution and waste and Care for Creation: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/newsletter>.