

Environmental Stewardship

Tips to preserve God's creation, increase energy efficiency, save money, and decrease our carbon footprints

In *The Ecological Crisis: A Common Responsibility*, his 1990 World Day of Peace Message, Pope John Paul II wrote, "Today the ecological crisis has assumed such proportions as to be the responsibility of everyone. . . . [I]ts various aspects demonstrate the need for concerted efforts aimed at establishing the duties and obligations that belong to individuals, peoples, States and the international community." Excerpted from the U.S. Catholic Conference of Bishops pastoral statement on the environment, *Renewing the Earth*, 1991, <http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/bishopsstatement.shtml>

Please consider the following:

- In winter, set your thermostat lower during the day and even lower at night, if health permits. Layer clothing and bedding for warmth. In summer, set your thermostat higher. Consider installing a programmable thermostat or get in the habit of adjusting the thermostat. Adjust the thermostat when you leave.
- In cold-weather months, keep blinds or drapes of sun-exposed windows open during the day to bring the natural heat indoors. In hot-weather months, keep blinds or drapes of sun-exposed windows closed during the day to block heat from coming indoors. In all seasons, close blinds or drapes at night.
- Buy and replace incandescent light bulbs with compact fluorescent lights (CFLs). Note that CFLs contain mercury requiring proper handling in case of breakage and for disposal.
- Turn off lights as you leave a room. Activate sleep mode or turn off computers when not in use. Unplug electronic equipment (microwaves, TVs, radios) or place them on power strips and turn off the strips when not in use.
- Change furnace filters regularly, clean air registers, baseboard heaters, and radiators. Consider a contract for regularly checking and maintaining the furnace and air conditioner.
- Seal leaks between doors and frames with weather stripping. Fill leaks between a window frame and wall with caulk.
- Proper insulation of your home or apt. can reduce your heating usage up to 30%. Check the R-value when purchasing insulation. The higher the R-number, the more effective the insulation.
- Unplug and dispose of unused appliances.
- Consolidate living space and close vents and doors in unused rooms.
- Elect green (alternative) energy from your energy company.
- Walk, bike, and use public transportation more; drive less. Carpool more.
- Buy fuel efficient cars and vehicles.
- Buy energy efficient appliances and windows.
- Wash clothes in warm or cold water, not hot.
- Run your dishwasher only with a full load, and use the energy saving setting to dry dishes.
- Turn down your water heater thermostat (120 degrees is usually hot enough).
- Reuse and recycle plastic bags. Better yet--carry groceries and other purchases in reusable cloth tote bags.
- Reuse and recycle. In Montgomery County, you can recycle newspapers; unwanted mail and envelopes; magazines; cardboard; glass bottles and jars; aluminum and steel/tin cans; aluminum foil products; narrow neck plastic bottles that contained milk, juice, soda, water, salad dressing, cooking oil, shampoo or hair conditioner, and cleaning and detergent bottles; butter and margarine tubs; yogurt, cottage cheese, sour cream, whipped topping containers; mayonnaise and peanut butter jars; prescription bottles; deli containers and trays; ice cream buckets; plastic beverage cups; laundry detergent tubs and buckets; kitty litter tubs; paint buckets up to 5 gallon in size; plastic lids; and flower pots.
- Avoid or be cautious about fertilizer and pesticide applications. They get washed into storm drains and pollute natural water ways.
- Never litter.
- Participate in scheduled (and unscheduled) clean-ups of the environment.
- Plant trees.
- Use double-sided copying when possible.
- Use muscle and a rake instead of a leaf blower.
- Use muscle and a broom to clean sidewalks and pavement instead of a hose.
- Contact representatives of government to lobby for environmental issues.
- When using the gas oven, prepare more than one meal for use at a later time.
- Conserve water. Turn off the faucet when brushing teeth.
- Be aware of how you invest your money and time. Invest in companies or funds that uphold environmental values. Choose recreational and leisure activities that have low environmental impact.
- Pray for wisdom and knowledge to protect God's creation.
- Please clip and save.