

Practicing The Practice

WHAT IS CARE FOR CREATION ABOUT?



The earth is warming faster than ever before. Extreme weather events have now become the norm. As sea levels rise, millions of people will be displaced from their homes. Rising temperatures mean changing ecosystems, which wreak havoc on agriculture systems, leading to increased food insecurity. Most of the changes disproportionately impact the world's most vulnerable people. Small consumer choices are only a small part of what our response to this crisis must be. We need big systemic changes in how we live, how we use our energy, and how we live with our global neighbors. Care for Creation is a spiritual practice that has far wider implications than pulling our recycling bin to the curb once a week. How do we share a gospel of hope in the face of such despairing realities? Can the good news of Christ's life, death, and resurrection provide us a way forward? These ideas for practicing this practice are probably not new to you, but this month, we claim these practices as acts driven by Christian faith rather than choices based solely on environmentalism. Intentionally reflect on your role as God's steward of creation in each activity presented here.

* A DAY WITHOUT A CAR

While most of us would find it difficult to do without a car, the reality is that emissions from cars do environmental harm. Spend a day seeing how you can get around without using a personal/family vehicle(s). Options include walking or biking, taking public transportation, carpooling with others, or choosing to plan needed outings and errands so that you can combine trips, thus eliminating the need for driving on your chosen day. Although foregoing a car completely may not be an option, consider with your household and/or friends what you have learned and consider how you can implement them in your regular routines.

* Prayer

Loving God, Creator of all, we are so grateful for the beautiful earth that we live on. As we enjoy the beauty and bounty of the world, may we also take on the responsibility to preserve and care for each part of creation that we come into contact with. Help us continue to learn about and to be good stewards of all that you have entrusted to us. Amen.

* FILTER OUT BAD WATER HABITS

Supplies: *internet-connected device, paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils*

Make a family water pledge. Go to bit.ly/FMWaterPledge to access a water-use pledge developed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. As a household, decide on a few steps that you can take to conserve water in and around your home. Create small signs and place them in the appropriate places to hold yourselves accountable to your commitment to conserving water. (Remember: bit.ly links are case-sensitive.)

NEW LIFE FOR TABLE SCRAPS

Supplies: *internet-connected device; commercially available composter or clean 2-liter plastic bottle, scissors, push pin, plate or tray; soil (not potting soil); old leaves; scraps of paper; food scraps*

Composting is a tangible way to care for creation. Composting helps keep items such as food scraps, yard waste, and paper out of landfills. It also has the benefit of creating good soil, which is then returned to the earth. If your family is new to composting, watch the video “Making a Homemade Composter!” (bit.ly/FMComposting) to learn about composting and a simple way to make a small composter.

MAKE SEED BOMBS

Supplies: *natural clay; potting soil or compost; flower seeds; bowl of water; measuring spoons; baking sheet*

Unkempt outdoor spaces are all around us. Think roadsides, deserted construction sites, and undeveloped urban plots. These spaces are ripe opportunities to plant native wildflowers, which both beautify and support pollinator species. To learn more about how to make seed bombs, visit wapo.st/43fi2n1.

HELPING SHELTER ANIMALS

Supplies: *used household items*

As we steward God’s earth, we cannot forget all of the animals that God has created, particularly those who are the most vulnerable, animals that are being cared for in animal shelters. Reach out to a shelter or rescue in your area to see if they have a wish list of needed items. (These are often found on their websites, too.) Common needed items in shelters include old bath towels, flat sheets, and blankets. Another bonus of this activity is that it is a way of reusing items that are no longer needed and might otherwise be discarded in landfills.

LIVING WATERS FOR THE WORLD

Supplies: *internet-connected device*

Living Waters for the World (LWW) is a ministry of the Synod of the Living Waters of the Presbyterian Church USA. FPC is part of that synod (regional body). LWW is focused on partnering with communities to send mission teams to provide water purification systems and health education to support sustainable water systems to produce clean water for communities. Visit their website at www.livingwatersfortheworld.org to read stories of their impact and to access materials for home-based activities and learning.

MEATLESS MONDAY

Supplies: *internet-connected device*

Eating lower on the food chain is a practice that has benefits for both our health and the environment. Consuming less meat reduces demand, thus impacting greenhouse-gas emissions, water pollution, and our carbon footprint. In addition, a more plant-based diet can have both health and money-saving benefits. As a family, make a commitment to eat vegetarian meals on Mondays for a defined period of time, or even indefinitely. Do an internet search for “meatless recipe using . . . ,” insert a fruit or vegetable as the main ingredient, and try out some new recipes. For additional information including recipes and other resources, visit www.meatlessmonday.com.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- Where is your favorite place to be in God’s creation?
- If you could ask God a question about one thing that God created, what would you ask?
- How would you rate the job that our household is doing in caring for God’s creation? What is one thing we can celebrate that we are doing well? What is one thing that we need to work on?
- If you could look 100 years into the future, what do you hope would have been improved by people caring for God’s creation?

For more ideas & resources about CARE FOR CREATION, visit fpclxformation.org/creation