

Action Ideas

Reduce consumption. We in the United States use more than our share of the world's resources. Curbing our consumption is an important step to aiding the environment. Online sources for future reference include: Ad Busters (www.adbusters.org), Catholic Relief Services (www.catholicrelief.org), Catholic Campaign for Human Development (www.usccb.org/cchd), and Global Issues (www.globalissues.org).

- Turn off lights and appliances and electronics you are not using.
- Do not run water unnecessarily.
- Turn down the heat. Wear an extra layer of clothing to keep warm.
- Carpool, ride a bike, use public transportation.
- Print on both sides of the paper.
- Use compact fluorescent light bulbs.
- Select the "power saver" option in your computer.
- Turn off your computer monitor when it is not being used.
- Drive a fuel-efficient car.
- Limit your use of lawnmowers and snowmobiles. These vehicles emit large amounts of pollution for their size.

Reuse items. We live in a "throw-away" society. Disposable products are often convenient, but the environmental impact is damaging.

- Return your paper and plastic bags to the store, and reuse them.
- Bring your own glass, cup, or mug to meetings and events rather than using disposable products.
- Donate your old clothes to a thrift store or social service agency.
- Start a compost pile.
- Do not litter.
- Do not use commercial fertilizer on your lawn.
- Support the use of renewable products.
- Plant a tree.

Recycle. Recycling products takes a little extra time, but doing so is taking a step toward achieving sustainable consumption.

- Take advantage of the curbside recycling program in your town, or take your recyclables to a local collection site.
- Purchase products made from recycled materials.
- Sponsor an aluminum can or newspaper drive at your church or school.
- Use recycling as a fund-raising opportunity, or donate the money raised to an environmental protection project.
- Make your church or school a recycling collection site. Check with your area recycling service about hosting a collection container, or visit www.paperretriever.com.
- Buy used items rather than new ones.

Advocacy. Advocating policies to protect creation or to change the structures and systems that cause damage to the environment is a proactive and powerful action step.

- Support the protection of wild spaces and endangered or threatened animals by learning more and writing letters to your elected officials.
- Shop "green." Visit www.responsible shopper.org for a list of retailers that are environmentally friendly.
- Make a donation online. Support the rain forest by visiting www.the rainforestsite.org and make a donation to protect land in the rainforest. Support other environmental projects by visiting www.earthshare.org.
- Learn more from organizations that support the environment. Visit www.gristmagazine.com, www.greenpeace.org, the Environmental Protection Agency at www.epa.gov, or www.earthday.net.
- Celebrate Earth Day on April 22 by taking part in community activities.