

# Ideas for encouraging sustainable living

*The Season of Creation is a wonderful time to reflect on how our lifestyles affect the environment and to make a commitment to more sustainable ways of living. The good news is that making more sustainable lifestyle choices in just a few areas adds up to a big difference overall.*

## Reduce your carbon footprint

Encourage your community to reduce its ecological impact by joining the Living the Change initiative during the Season of Creation. [Living the Change](https://www.livingthechange.net) is a multi-faith initiative that helps diverse people of faith around the world put their beliefs and values into practice by reducing their personal carbon footprint. Together, these efforts add up to a collective effort to limit global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Ultimately, reducing global warming is an important way to protect the plants and animals who are affected by the bigger deserts, warmer summers, and changing rainfall associated with climate change.

Here are some suggestions for ways to join Living the Change:

- Pledge to put your beliefs and values into practice by reducing your personal carbon emissions at [www.livingthechange.net](https://www.livingthechange.net).
- Make a concrete lifestyle change commitment in one of the three high-impact areas of transportation, diet, and energy.
- Learn about how making personal changes in response to climate change is part of our Christian faith through Living the Change webinars.
- Host a Living the Change Supper to discuss the Christian faith and climate-friendly lifestyles with members of your community.
- Organize a Time for Living the Change event to encourage and celebrate meaningful reductions in carbon footprints.
- Information and resources for the activities above can be found on our website: [www.livingthechange.net](https://www.livingthechange.net) or at [info@livingthechange.net](mailto:info@livingthechange.net)

## Eliminate single-use plastics

Plastic items are deeply woven into our everyday life. Although plastics have made life-saving advances in medicine and clean energy possible, their overuse is a symptom of our culture of disposability. As Christians, plastics



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confront us with the question of our commitment to creation in our day-to-day lives.

Humans now produce nearly 300 million tons of plastic every year, according to the Worldwatch Institute, with much of it used only once. Many of these plastics will take decades or centuries to disappear. In the meantime, they break up into ever smaller pieces, which end up in the digestive tracts of marine animals, and they leach petrochemicals into the soil and water.

Take a plastics-free pledge to give up using one single-use plastic item for 40 days (or more!). Every single-use plastic item we save is one less thing in a landfill site, ocean or incinerator—or one less thing shipped overseas for another country to dispose of.

Single-use plastics are plastic items that are only intended to be used once, such as soft-drink bottles. The most common items include disposable cups, bottles, non-recyclable packaging, wipes, and female hygiene products. Finding alternatives to these plastics is easier than you might think, and it can be very satisfying to know that you are walking that little bit lighter on the Earth.

*Seven ways to cut down on your plastic waste:*

- Switch to using a reusable coffee cup (stainless steel or bamboo cups are best).
- Carry a reusable water bottle with you and refill it at home or work (the most long-lasting and easily recyclable types are made from stainless steel or glass).
- Cut down on plastic packaging by buying fruit and vegetables loose.
- Refuse the use of straws in restaurants.
- Use soap and shampoo bars instead of liquid products in plastic bottles.
- If you have young children, think about switching to reusable nappies—even switching for daytime wear will make a big difference.
- For women, consider whether you can switch to more sustainable period products, such as menstrual cups, reusable sanitary pads, or period-proof pants.

More information on taking a plastics-free pledge is available from [TearFund](#).

