

ALABAMA FAITH COUNCIL
ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP ACTION ITEMS
ADAPTED FROM Introduction to Ten Things You Can Do to Help Save the Earth
by Katie Lambert at [://science.howstuffworks.com/save-earth-top-ten.htm/printable](http://science.howstuffworks.com/save-earth-top-ten.htm/printable)

Going **green** is easier than you think. There are little things you can do every day to help reduce greenhouse gases and make a less harmful impact on the environment. Taking care of the Earth is not just a responsibility -- it's a privilege. In that spirit, HowStuffWorks came up with 10 things you can do to help save the Earth. *Note that links to web pages are underlined or shown in color.*

- 1.** Pay attention to how you use water. The little things can make a big difference. Every time you turn off the water while you're brushing your teeth, you're doing something good. Got a leaky toilet? You might be wasting 200 gallons of water a day [Source:]. Try drinking tap water instead of bottled water, so you aren't wasting all that packaging as well. Wash your clothes in cold water when you can. Run full loads in wash machines and dishwashers. Upgrade to low flow toilets and other water-savers ([://www.epa.gov/watersense/](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/)). Run faucet water and water lawn only as needed. Set up sprinkler system moisture sensors. Better yet, replace lawn with drought resistant plants. Use grey water for watering non-edible flowers and plants. Try [River Alliance's Save and Share Campaign](#).
- 2.** Leave your car at home. If you can stay off the road just two days a week, you'll reduce greenhouse gas emissions by an average of 1,590 pounds per year [Source:]. Combine your errands -- hit the post office, grocery store and shoe repair place in one trip. It will save you gas and time. If you will be parked and sitting for 10 seconds or longer... turn off your car's engine.
- 3.** Walk or ride your bike to work, school and anywhere you can. You can reduce greenhouse gases while burning some calories and improving your health. If you can't walk or bike, use mass transit or carpool. Every car not on the road makes a difference.
- 4.** Recycle. You can help reduce pollution just by putting that soda can in a different bin. If you're trying to choose between two products, pick the one with the least packaging. If an office building of 7,000 workers all of its office paper waste for a year, it would be the equivalent of taking almost 400 cars off the road [Source:]. Bring reusable bags when shopping.
- 5.** Compost. Think about how much trash you make in a year. Reducing the amount of solid waste you produce in a year means taking up less space in , so your tax dollars can work somewhere else. Compost makes a great natural fertilizer. is easier than you think.
- 6.** Change your light bulbs. Compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) last 10 times longer than a standard bulb and use at least two-thirds less energy. If you're shopping for new appliances or even home electronics, look for [STAR](#) products, which have met EPA and U.S. Department of Energy guidelines for energy efficiency. Americans, with the help of ENERGY STAR, saved enough energy in 2007 alone to avoid greenhouse gas emissions equivalent to those from 27 million cars — all while saving \$16 billion on their utility bills. [Source:]. ([more about proper disposal of CFLs.](#))
- 7.** Make your home more energy efficient (and save money). Clean your air filters so your system doesn't have to work overtime. Get a programmable thermostat so you aren't wasting energy when you aren't home. When you go to bed, reduce the thermostat setting -- you won't miss those extra degrees of heat or air conditioning while you're asleep.
- 8.** Maintain your car. Underinflated tires decrease fuel economy by up to three percent and lead to increased pollution and higher greenhouse gas emissions [Source:]. Underinflation also increases tire wear, so it will save you money in the long run if you're good about checking your tire pressure.
- 9.** Drive smarter. Slow down -- driving 60 miles per hour instead of 70 mph on the highway will save you up to 4 miles per gallon. [Source: [Guide Automotive](#)]. Accelerating and braking too hard can actually reduce your fuel economy, so take it easy on the brakes and gas pedal.
- 10.** Turn off lights when you're not in the room and unplug appliances when you're not using them. It only takes a second to be environmentally conscious.

ALABAMA FAITH COUNCIL Advanced Study and Action on Environmental Stewardship

Note that links to web pages are underlined or shown in color.

Study –

- Read the Statement on Environmental Stewardship that is on the Alabama Faith Council's web site: [://www.alafaithcouncil.org](http://www.alafaithcouncil.org)
- Arrange to show and discuss the video *Renewal* at a faith group meeting or meetings. ¹
- Go to the [Protection Agency Web site designed for congregations](#) and review the opportunities there, including the guide for congregations, [Energy Into Stewardship](#); references to what others are doing; and the links to other programs of interest to congregations. ²
- Learn more about environmental concerns in Alabama by following the links to [Environmental Organizations](#) on Black Warrior Riverkeeper's web site.
- Review the *Watersheds and Warming Curriculum Guide*. ³

Action –

- Join with Interfaith Environmental Initiative of Alabama (IEIA) as a way for engaging faith and science to sustain and enhance the life of Earth. ⁴
- Invite local or state environmental groups to our places of worship to present programs on the environment and share ways to conserve water and energy. Join with [local or state group](#) already involved in these issues. ⁵
- Consult with the Green Resource Center for Alabama for sustainability guidelines. [://www.greenalabama.org/index.html](http://www.greenalabama.org/index.html). ⁶
- Become a member of Alabama Interfaith Power & Light and do an “energy audit” and a “water use” audit. ⁷
- Contact the Alabama Environmental Council for local and state recycling programs and possibilities. [.aeconline.org](http://aeconline.org)
- Take the EPA energy pledge at [://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=globalwarming.showPledgeHome](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?fuseaction=globalwarming.showPledgeHome)
- Learn about the environmental stewardship perspectives of your local, state and federal elected officials and share yours views with them.
- In your faith community, celebrate your commitment to stewardship of creation. ⁸

There are members in all of the Alabama Faith Council groups who would like to be involved in the effort to be good stewards of our environment. If you have ideas on how to reach these people or would like to help, please contact Judy Cullinan, the Environmental Issues Workgroup Chair: @aol.com

[AFC Statement on Environmental Stewardship](#)

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- ¹ “RENEWAL (<http://www.renewalproject.net/>) is the first feature-length documentary to capture the vitality and diversity of America’s religious-environmental movement. Made up of eight individual stories, RENEWAL captures the efforts of men, women and children who from within their Christian, Jewish, Buddhist and Muslim traditions, are finding ways to become caretakers of the Earth.”
- ² On the EPA website, see the following links to other programs of interest to congregations:
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations
[Coalition for the Environment and Jewish Life](#)
[Episcopal Ecological Network](#)
[Evangelical Environmental Network](#)
[The Forum on Religion and Ecology](#)
[Interfaith Power and Light](#)
[Islamic Foundation for Ecology and Environmental Sciences](#)
[National Association of Evangelicals](#)
[National Council of Churches](#)
[National Religious Partnership for the Environment](#)
[Presbyterians for Restoring Creation](#)
[Quaker Earthcare Witness](#)
[Unitarian Universalist Ministry for Earth](#)
[U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#)
- See <http://www.webofcreation.org/Links/denominational.htm> for a more extensive list of faith community contacts.
- ³ See <http://www.stewardsforcreation.org/watersheds.htm> for the Episcopal Diocese of Alabama Task Force for The Stewardship of Creation *Watersheds & Warming: Six-Week Adult Christian Education Curriculum Guide*.
- ⁴ The Episcopal Diocese of Alabama Task Force for The Stewardship of Creation and the **Alabama Faith Council** have worked with Vulcan Materials Center for Environmental Stewardship and Education to form IEIA. Email vnbrown@samford.edu, with IEIA in the subject line, to receive further information.
- ⁵ The Five Mile Creek Partnership, winner of the regional 2007 Phoenix award for excellence in brownfield redevelopment, is an inspiring example of collective action to improve the environment. Watch the video that tells the story of the creation of the Birmingham Area Five Mile Creek Greenway Partnership at <http://www.cawaco.org/fivemilecreek/index.html> and find and help create success stories in your watershed.
- ⁶ The mission of the Green Resource Center for Alabama is “to enlighten and educate the public, industry professionals and policymakers about design, construction and maintenance practices for environmentally sensitive, sustainable living, inspiring them to action.” See http://www.greenalabama.org/events_sow.html for information on their March 2008 conference, Saving Our Water.
- ⁷ For further information, contact Susan Motes, Coordinator, Alabama Interfaith Power & Light, *a religious response to climate change*, susanmarie@bellsouth.net. See <http://www.theregenerationproject.org/> for further information about Interfaith Power & Light. See <http://www.theregenerationproject.org/statement.htm> for the IPL Interfaith Declaration on the Moral Responsibility of the U. S. Government to Address Global Warming. Join www.wecansolveit.org. See www.stewardsforcreation.org for an energy audit. Conduct a water use audit: <http://www.mde.state.md.us/assets/document/ResAudit.pdf> For a general environmental audit for congregations, schools and other organizations, see <http://archive.elca.org/advocacy/environment/envaudit.pdf>
- ⁸ Another example, on the next page, is adapted from <http://www.stewardsforcreation.org/watersheds.htm> , Session 6.

Commitment to Stewardship of Creation

God creates and loves the Universe
with all its marvelous order
and the infinite complexities of living creatures.

God gives humanity the gift and
responsibility of serving as stewards of creation.

Alabama encompasses
a fragile ecosystem of surpassing beauty
with an unusually rich diversity
of plant, animal and aquatic life.

Therefore, from this day forward
I will be a good steward of creation.

I will educate myself,
my family, friends, and neighbors,
those with whom I work,
and the members of my faith community.

I will advocate for wise and just environmental policy.

I will provide and engage in opportunities
for service in the stewardship of Earth.

This is my commitment to Stewardship of Creation.