



How to Get Your Congregation Involved

- * Gather a group of people interested in environmental issues from your congregation. This could be as few as two or three people, or as many as 10 or more. If you don't know who to ask, try people from some of the committees in your church - perhaps property, education, worship, women's groups, vestry, or trustees. You can also put an announcement in your congregation's newsletter, bulletin, or website.
- * Set up a meeting to discuss people's interests. Let your first meeting be a listening and sharing meeting rather than a decision-making meeting. Gauge where the interest and excitement is.
- * Think about ways to incorporate Earth care into existing programs in your congregation. Don't think of this as a separate mission group or project, but as something that should become integrated into the entire faith life of the congregation. This means thinking about ways to include it in worship, education, property and facilities, mission and outreach, individual action, and policy and advocacy.
- * Plan a follow-up meeting to start discussing specifics. Narrow down your interest (for now) to one area around which there is the most energy.
- * Meet with clergy and lay leadership to discuss your ideas and get their blessing. They do not have to become members of your group, but you do need their support.
- * Pick a project to start with. This project should be something that your group is excited about, that is visible and easily understood, and that has a measurable and reachable goal. By starting with a sure-fire winner, you will not only help boost your group's morale, but you will also have an opportunity to share your success with your congregation, which can bring new people on board.
- * Celebrate your success!
- * Offer education to the congregation - whether through classes, film showings, educational displays, or other ideas - about the importance of caring for the Earth as a matter of faith. Don't expect everyone to immediately jump on board, but use every opportunity to emphasize the connection between environmental sustainability and your faith.
- * Pick a next project to focus on. This could be a bit more of a stretch, but should still have measurable and attainable goals. Don't forget to celebrate!
- * Develop an action plan for incorporating Earth care into the entire life of the congregation. Consider how both your work and your group can be environmentally and spiritually sustainable.
- * Talk with nearby congregations to see if there are people with similar interests. Brainstorm ways that you could collaborate on projects or programming.



Starter Project Ideas

Education

- ✿ Host a speaker from Iowa Interfaith Power & Light or another environmental organization
- ✿ Attend a “Cool Congregations” Workshop with your Green Team
- ✿ Show a film and have a discussion - try Kilowatt Ours (www.kilowattours.org), Renewal (renewalproject.net), or Fighting Goliath (www.fightinggoliathfilm.com)
- ✿ Lead a book study
- ✿ Use flyers, bulletin announcements, and newsletter articles about environmental issues

Congregational action

- ✿ Have your Green Team attend an Iowa IPL Cool Congregations workshop
- ✿ Have an energy audit of your congregational facility
- ✿ Change old exit signs to high efficiency LEDs
- ✿ Change incandescent light bulbs to compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs)
- ✿ Put up reminder signs about turning off lights and fans
- ✿ Install programmable thermostats and set them
- ✿ Set up recycling for bulletins, paper, plastic, cans, and bottles
- ✿ Start using fair-trade shade-grown coffee and reusable mugs for coffee hour

Worship

- ✿ Include Earth care in prayers and sermons
- ✿ Use recycled paper for bulletins
- ✿ Host a Green Worship service with hymns, prayers, and sermon about Earth care

Individual / Family action

- ✿ Ask representative families to use the Cool Congregations carbon calculator, and track their results to share with the congregation
- ✿ Host a park clean-up, and recycle materials as you are able

Mission / Outreach

- ✿ Do a light bulb swap in a low income community - switch out one or all of the incandescent bulbs in residents' homes with a CFL
- ✿ Outfit your next Habitat for Humanity house with energy efficient appliances and light fixtures

Advocacy

- ✿ Call, visit, or write your state legislators and Members of Congress in support of climate policy, energy efficiency, and renewable energy

Always make sure to advertise and celebrate what you do