



Faith & the Common Good

Seeking Common Ground for the Common Good



Greening Sacred Spaces

Living Faithfully – Living Green



Facilitator Information Kit

Greening Sacred Spaces Waterloo Region, Waterloo Region Green Solutions

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Thank you for participating in the Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) project. Your place of worship is one of the growing number of faith communities in Ontario that will take action to become more energy efficient and ecologically sustainable. This letter provides you with all the information you will need to successfully implement the GSS project within your place of worship. As the link between **Waterloo Region Green Solutions** and your faith community, you are considered a **Greening Sacred Spaces Facilitator** and will have direct support from your regional coordinator and other GSS Facilitators in Waterloo Region. It is our hope that the GSS Facilitator will be able to find a group of 5-6 volunteers from within their faith community to assist with the implementation of this project, especially with Steps 3 and 4.

The resources provided by Faith and the Common Good are meant to assist you in involving the families and individuals within your congregation. This initiative is meant to be flexible in order to allow your ideas and specific concerns to become part of the project. These steps are meant to be guidelines that help you coordinate your thoughts and efforts most effectively. Funding may also be available to help with the GSS Steps outlined below.

Step-by-Step Path to Greening Your Sacred Space

Step 1: Reflection

In order to generate faithful concern for the environment, issues such as climate change cannot be separated from our belief systems and worldviews. As such, the first step to making positive environmental change is to reflect on our concerns within the context of faith. Why do people of faith care for the earth? How are we called to be stewards of the earth and reduce our ecological footprint? These questions and others can be discussed by looking within your faith tradition for scripture, prayers, and songs that help us understand the faith connection to the natural world.

Thus, the first step to the Greening Sacred Spaces project is to catalyse this faith concern by reflecting on the environment within a worship service. This may take the form of an Environmental Sabbath devoted to this theme, or it may simply be an offering of prayers for the earth. Please consult with the leader of your faith community as to what possibilities are the most suitable. You may wish to couple this step with some of the steps below by making an announcement during the worship service to introduce this project and invite families to sign on to the GSS program during coffee or community time.

Step 2: Education

Once you have established a faith connection to the environment, you may wish to organize some type of activity that provides education about the specific issues of climate change and introduces the Greening Sacred Spaces project. This may take the form of an evening or afternoon meeting. You may wish to invite a guest speaker, show a video, or simply discuss these issues in a small group. Faith and the Common Good can provide suggestions for activities and copies of videos that would be suitable for this type of activity. You likely have many environmental experts within your congregation who may be willing to speak at this type of activity. Some ideas currently underway in other faith communities include: an evening play about climate change put on by youth; and, an afternoon video on Greening Sacred Spaces with demonstrations of green products and possible actions. There is also a workshop template available from your local GSS Coordinator.



Faith & the Common Good

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Step 3: Action

The main 'action' for this project is getting individuals to participate in the Energy Action Planner and encouraging them to follow through with their commitment. There are many ways to provide members of your congregation with the opportunity to sign up such as setting up a booth during coffee time, handing out sign-up sheets at the education event, sending out e-mails to individuals who you think may be interested, etc. Please keep a list of all individuals who agree to take part in the GSS project so that you can check in with them at a later date.

Each participant should receive the 'Green Guide' and the 'Energy Action Planner.' The Guide is a brief explanation of the faith connection to environmental issues and suggested action steps (if you wish, these can be made available to all members of your community via an information rack or at an event). The Energy Action Planner is the tool that allows people to identify a variety of actions they can undertake to become more green and track their progress. By taking measurements, it becomes easier to see how much one has improved over time. Each participant should read the introduction to the Energy Action Planner, fill in the checklist of planned green actions, and then notify the Facilitator or another volunteer of their commitment. Our goal is to find 25 individuals at each place of worship to take part of the Energy Action Planner. You may wish to create Commitment Cards (little business cards or certificates acknowledging participation) for everyone involved in the GSS program.

Step 4: Follow-up

After the individuals have signed on to the program, it is important to check in with them about their progress. The first check-in should be done two-weeks after signing up and a final check-in should be done three months later. You (and other volunteers) may wish to send an e-mail, make a phone call, chat after the service, or even arrange a personal visit. A community discussion meeting is an excellent way to bring members of your congregation together for a fun activity to reflect on their progress and any challenges they may be facing. By sitting down with other families involved in the same project, the community can support and encourage each other. The community discussion meeting can be a simple sit-down discussion after a worship service or it can be a pot-luck dinner, picnic, or outing...the possibilities are endless!

The final step is to evaluate the progress of the participants. There is an electronic tracking sheet to help you and your volunteers assess what actions have been taken. You can share the final results with the entire congregation as well as the local GSS Coordinator. Over the duration of the project, you may have developed some ideas about future activities that could be undertaken by your place of worship. Please share with the GSS Coordinator and other Facilitators any possible ideas for change in later months such as starting an environment committee or undertaking an energy efficiency project. Faith and the Common Good can support your future initiatives should you have the time and resources to pursue them.

Timing of the Project and Support

The timing of the project is flexible, but many faith communities are following a similar pattern. The four steps outlined above can be undertaken over several months with Reflection in the first month, Education and Action in the next two months, and Follow-up in the fourth and fifth months. The project timeline runs from November 2006 to March 2007. Distribution of Action Planners should be complete by January 2007 and follow-up discussions and reports should be completed by March 31, 2007. There will also be quarterly Faith and the Common Good meetings where you can share your successes and challenges with other GSS Facilitators.

Thank you for taking part in the GSS project! For more information please contact:
Greening Sacred Spaces Waterloo Region Co-ordinator: Jane Snyder 519-747-5139 janesnyder@thereep.ca



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GSS Facilitators FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

Who are Greening Sacred Spaces (GSS) Environmental Facilitator?

GSS Facilitators are those people that work with the Greening Sacred Spaces program who are 'keen to green' their faith community. They act to facilitate the changes in attitudes, behaviours, policies and structures that will help their community, and the rest of society, move further along the green path to eco-harmony.

What do GSS Facilitators do?

The Facilitator can do a variety of things to promote greening at their local places of worship. This may include:

1. Reflection

Incorporate concerns for creation in faith practices and worship

- prayers for restoring the earth and preventing degradation (ie Climate Change)
- music to celebrate the earth and inspire individuals to action
- meditation, sermon, or discussion during worship to reflect on the earth

2. Education

Raise awareness about Climate Change and other environmental issues (causes, impacts, and solutions)

- Environmental bulletin board or web-page about GSS
- newsletter tips
- videos and presentations
- workshops, study groups
- events

3. Action

Initiate activities that move your faith community further down the green path.

- distribute the Green Guide to members of the community
- find 20-25 participants for the GSS Energy Action Planner
- follow-up with participants and discuss what priorities the faith community could be taking to move forward
- develop long-term strategies such as environmental/energy audits, retrofits, renovations, adopting green policies, and green investment.



Faith & the Common Good

Seeking Common Ground for the Common Good



4. Networking

Provide and receive information and support for greening actions

- form a 'green team' or environmental committee at your place of worship
- meet with other Facilitators and F-CG members at monthly meetings
- sign up to GSS email list
- join green organizations

5. Fundraising

Obtain resources for greening initiatives

- hold a green fundraising event
- sell compact florescent lights or other green products
- apply for grants

6. Advocacy

Get government and corporations to become more green

- letter writing or petitions
- submit news articles, opinion pieces or write to the editor
- shareholder advocacy

What materials and resources are available?

The following materials are available from your GSS Coordinator:

1. overview of the Greening Sacred Spaces program
2. two copies of the Green Rule poster and study guide
3. two copies of the GSS Sacred Balance poster
4. two copies of the GSS Practical Guide to Greening Your Sacred Space
5. multiple copies of the GSS Green Guide and Energy Action Planner
6. 'Introduction to GSS' workshop guidelines.
7. a copy of the GSS video on DVD

What do I have to do to become a GSS Facilitator?

Contact your local GSS Coordinator and arrange to meet with them. They will explain how the program works and provide you with all the materials you'll need to get started. You'll be expected to make a formal commitment to participate for at least six months, and will be encouraged to attend bi-monthly meetings with other Facilitators, and otherwise communicate your progress.

Greening Sacred Spaces Waterloo/Wellington/Dufferin Regions
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