

Greening Sacred Spaces

Waste Reduction Workshop for Faith Communities

Working Towards Zero Waste 2009-2012



“Zero Waste” is a design, production, lifestyle and ethical principle for the 21st Century. It is a holistic movement that takes into consideration the whole life cycle of each product or service and finds uses for every stage and for all energy and materials used. Manufacturing, transportation, usage, repairing, reusing, recycling and upcycling call all be conducted using minimal resources and creating minimal waste. It will require a thorough change of heart and mind about the natural world, our global economy and the way we live individually and in community.

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Step Five: Discuss video. Explore waste issues that relate to your sacred spaces and lives such as composting, packaging, repairing, reusing, recycling, consumerism and planned obsolescence, voluntary simplicity, buy nothing days. Consider other cultures that produce far less waste than 'the Western world'. What could we learn from countries in Asia, Africa or South America?

***** **Refreshment Break/Or New Session** *****

Part Two – Take Action

Step Six: What seems clear, even before an audit, that can be reduced, repaired, recycled, composted... around your faith community? Make a list using the form provided on pg 11. Decide if you want a professional waste audit or a DIY audit.

Step Seven: Organize a Waste Audit Team. They will: get approval from the faith leader and building management for an audit; set a date to announce the waste audit to the community; set a date for a waste audit; oversee the waste audit.

Step Eight: How to Conduct a DIY Waste Audit

Step Nine: Discuss follow-up waste reduction projects, campaigns etc... for the broader faith community members. See *GSS Zero Waste Project Suggestion List* at the end of this workshop.

Step Ten: Conclusion

"If the community cannot reuse, repair, recycle or compost it, industry shouldn't be making it – that's the position of Zero Waste."

Paul Connett, World Expert in Waste Management

Goals of the Session:

To explore how waste reduction is relevant to this faith community

To explore how our beliefs become concrete in our behaviour

To learn how to conduct an in-house / Do-It-Yourself waste audit

To form a core waste reduction team, create an action plan and set dates

Leader Preparation:

Take a moment to think about the connection between your faith and your sacred texts. In your faith's texts, what words of caution are expressed regarding wasting resources and/or creating pollution? Bring references from your sacred texts or other inspired sources to use in the workshop.

Read through the Green Rule Study Guide and display the Green Rule poster. Consider how a tree creates no waste. Be prepared to discuss this. If this interests you, see article by eco-architect William McDonough. www.mcdonough.com/writings/extravagant_gesture.htm

Prepare the meeting space:

Set out a circle of chairs, a flip chart or chalkboard and nametags. Set out local/organic minimally packaged food and/or beverages.

Organize equipment: Set up video and monitor to view video

Have ready prayers, poems, songs or other spiritual text relating to stewardship. Choose your own or choose from the following interfaith selection.

WORKSHOP

Step One: Welcome and Opening Prayer

Welcome everyone to the session. Open the session by offering a prayer, a line of sacred text related to the workshop, an inspired thought from your own heart, or simply ask people to gather for a moment of silence in this time of reflection and interaction with one another.

Baha'i *O God, guide me, protect me, and make me a shining lamp and a brilliant star. Thou art the mighty and the powerful.* Abdu'l-Baha

Buddhism *As a bee without harming the blossom, its colour, its fragrance, takes its nectar and flies away, so should the sage go through a village.* Dhamapada

Christianity *Do not be conformed to the world where you live but rather be transformed through the renewal of your mind. You must discern the will of God, what is good, what pleases, what is perfect.* Romans

Hinduism *Peace be to the Earth and to airy space. Peace be to heaven, peace to the waters. Peace to the plants and peace to the trees. May all the powers grant to me peace.* Atharva Veda XIX

Indigenous Spirituality *Give us the strength to understand, and the eyes to see. Teach us to walk the soft Earth as relatives to all that live.* Sioux Prayer

Islam *"Waste not by excess for God loveth not the wasters."* Qur'an 6:41

Judaism *A key value of Judaism is 'bal tash'hit', meaning, "do not destroy". This 'mitzvah' commands humanity not to waste or destroy natural resources.*

"Of all that the Holy One created in His world, He did not create a single thing that is useless." Talmud

Sikhism *Nights, days, weeks and seasons; wind, water, fire and the nether regions in the midst of these, He established the Earth as a home for Dharma - righteous duty.* Guru Granth Sahib

Taoism *I have three precious things that I hold fast and prize: The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third, humility which keeps me from putting myself before others.* Lao Tsu

Zoroastrianism *This I ask Thee, tell me truly O Ahura; Who determined the paths of the sun and the stars? Who, but Thee, so arranged the moon to wax and wane? Who so balanced the earth and heavens to keep them apart? Who created the waters and the plants? Who yoked swiftness to the winds and motion to the clouds? So may we be like those healing the world toward perfection.* The Avesta

Environmentalism *Consider the cherry tree. Each spring it produces thousands of blossoms, only a few of which germinate, take root and grow. Who would see cherry blossoms piling up on the ground and think, "How wasteful?" The tree's abundance is useful and safe.* Eco-architect William McDonough

Step Two: Ask people to introduce themselves and state one reason they have come to this session. Begin by introducing yourself and giving your reason for coming to this session (you are modeling for people how to briefly introduce themselves). Go around the circle. Send a sheet of paper around to collect names and contact information.

Step Three: Use the Green Rule poster as a way to begin conversation about faith and caring for creation. Why is it important for faith communities to conserve resources and reduce waste? Our buildings are visual representations of what we believe. With our help they can be examples for the broader community of our engaged action and care for creation.

Step Four: Show a video **1. GSS Video -Reasons to Green** **2. Renewal - GreenFaith** and/or *Compassion in Action* segments **3. Story of Stuff** or a video of your choice.

Tell people that you are going to show them a short video about eco-spirituality and waste reduction and briefly describe the video that you select. The GSS video, *Reasons to Green* segment, www.faith-commongood.net/resources/index.asp explores what various faith traditions have to say about why we need to rethink our patterns of consumption, how an eco-spiritual approach can help mitigate pollution, loss of diversity and climate change, what can be done, and how to begin. *Renewal*, available through www.renewalproject.net, is a series of segments showing what religious communities in the USA are doing to respond to the environmental and climate change crisis. Its *GreenShift* segment shows how one church conducted a DIY waste audit. The *Compassion in Action* segment shows how a Buddhist community started a campaign to reduce paper consumption and save trees. *The Story of Stuff* www.storvofstuff.com/ looks at the cycle of consumption and waste and is good for youth .

Step Five: Discuss the video. Explore waste issues that relate to your sacred spaces and lives such as composting, packaging, repairing, reusing, recycling, consumerism and planned obsolescence, voluntary simplicity and buy nothing days. Consider other cultures that produce far less waste than ‘the Western world’.

***** Refreshment Break or Reconvene at a Second Meeting *****

Only when the last tree has died and the last river has been poisoned and the last fish been caught will we realize that we cannot eat money. Cree Proverb

Step Six: What do you think is best for your faith community? A professional waste audit? (See list of service providers below.) A DIY / self-audit? (Instructions below) Or begin by starting a recycling and composting system? Brainstorm suggestions on flipchart paper.

Step Seven: Organize a Waste Reduction Leader and form a Waste Audit Team. These may be members from your existing Green Team. Determine who will speak to your faith leaders, property committee, board of directors, janitorial service... to get permission to conduct a waste audit and/or begin/enhance reuse/recycling and composting programs.

Ask: Who would be willing to: **a)** Organize a waste audit of your place of worship?

b) Organize reuse, recycling and/or composting programs.

Step Eight: How to Conduct a DIY Waste Audit

Much like an energy audit, a waste audit is a systematic process of measuring what, where and how much is being wasted around your building. Rather than looking for leaky windows or old furnaces, however, you will be assessing how much trash your facility is generating, how it's disposed of, and how much of that could actually be refused (i.e.: stop packaging at its source), reused, repaired or recycled.

- 1.** Review the Waste Audit Data Worksheets at the end of this Workshop Guide. Make any obvious changes to suit your faith community and buildings. Ask someone to photocopy your revised version of the Data Worksheets
- 2.** Ask for permission from the relevant authorities, such as the faith leader, office manager, building superintendent, to hold a formal Waste Audit event.
- 3.** Assign a leader to tour the facility and note all waste collection locations.
- 4.** On a day just prior to garbage / recycling collection, align other willing members of your green team / faith community to help assemble all garbage and recycling receptacles in a designated Waste Audit spot, just before garbage collection day.
- 5.** Have everyone involved protect themselves with gloves, a mask, and suitable work-clothes. Then, spread a tarp or some such protective covering on the floor or landscape.
- 6.** Begin sifting through and sorting the contents of all recycling bins and garbage containers.
- 7.** Estimate, for every type of material such as plastic, paper, food scraps, aluminum, glass... the percentage it comprises in the total volume of waste in that container
- 8.** Once the trash is sorted, make notes of what is going in the garbage that could be reused, recycled or composted. Assign someone to fill out the Data Worksheet provided below
- 9.** Once the waste has been assessed, it's time to consider what waste can be eliminated at its source. Hold a meeting with your core Waste Reduction /Green Team to examine purchasing suppliers. If a company over-packages its product, contact them and explain your concerns.
- 10.** Note where surplus supplies are ordered as overstocking can lead to waste.
- 11.** Identify supplies and services that can be replaced with eco-friendlier options. *GSS Health and Sustainability Daily Operations Guide-Greening the Office* section has a list of green resources, suppliers and services
- 12.** Question each product. Which items could be discontinued altogether? Do you really need bound notepads or Stickies that could be made from scrap paper?

Step Nine: Action Plan.

Following worship service (ideally a stewardship-themed service), organize someone to make an announcement to the faith community about beginning a waste audit and any waste reduction projects that you decide upon, such as composting.

See the *GSS Waste Reduction Project Suggestion List* at the end of this Workshop.

Step Ten: Conclusion, Commitment

Thank everyone for coming and for sharing his or her ideas, concerns and time. Ask if there are further comments or questions. Invite participants to another meeting. Set a date.

Ask people to bring in helpful, inspiring resources such as videos, books, website addresses or magazine articles that could inform a Waste Reduction Project or Campaign.

The average North American throws out about 1,700 lbs of trash each year. A Waste Audit will sort all that so-called garbage into what can be refused, reused, repaired and recycled. You can reduce your garbage by up to ninety percent. Or Go For Zero Waste!

Waste Audit Resources and Service Providers

Ecovert is a Canadian company with expertise in sustainability consulting, energy, waste and water audits. Its auditors help building owners use the most sustainable building resources and operate with minimal waste www.ecovert.ca/Ecovert/Home.html 905-815-9300

GreenShift is a Canadian distributor of eco-sustainable/biodegradable tableware and other office/hospitality products. It also offers full-facility waste audits and waste management recommendations in accordance with City By-Laws and provincial regulations www.greenshift.ca 416-925-9655 e: info@GreenShift.ca

Immacutec implements environmentally responsible and cost-beneficial waste minimization programs for the commercial, institutional and industrial facilities across North America. Its waste audits and reduction programs maximize a facility's ability to reduce various waste streams in a cost-beneficial and environmentally sound manner. It will provide a detailed assessment and innovative program to address the waste generation trends particular to a facility's daily operations. www.wasteaudit.ca/immacutec.htm 416-778-8017

Turtle Island Recycling - highly trained Environmental Recycling Specialists design a customized waste reduction and recycling programs, and will conduct professional waste audits and help prepare monthly recycling progress reports, all suited to your organization's needs. It guarantees improved recycling rates, lower disposal costs and can recommend joint venture programs where possible. www.turtleislandrecycling.com

Waste Reduction Week in Canada (WRW) takes place every year in the third week of October. Its aim is to inform about the environmental, economic and social impacts of wasteful habits and suggest reuse, repair and recycling activities. www.wrwcanda.com

WSG TriSorter Recycling System is a garbage chute collection bin for new or existing buildings. It allows garbage, recyclables and organics to be sorted from the chute room. Designed to reduce garbage collection fees and increase recycling www.wastesolutions.ca

See also: Multi Material Stewardship Board of Newfoundland/Labrador www.mmsb.nf.ca ; Clean Nova Scotia www.clean.ns.ca ; Island Waste Management Corporation (PEI) www.iwmc.pe.ca ; Recycling Council of Ontario RCO www.rco.on.ca ; Reseau des Reseauressourceries du Quebec www.recycleries-ressourceries.org ; Conservation Manitoba www.resourceconservation.mb.ca ; Saskatchewan Waste Reduction Council www.saskwastereduction.ca ; Recycle Council of Alberta www.recycle.ab.ca ; Raven Recycling Whitehorse www.ravenrecycling.org ; The Recycling Council of British Columbia (RCBC) www.rcbc.bc.ca ; Regional District of Kootenay Boundary www.rdkb.com Inuvik Recycling Society www.yellowknife.ca/City_Hall/Departments/Public_Works_Engineering/Recycling.html .

Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul Author /Activist Edward Abbey

Waste Reduction Projects and Campaigns Suggestion List

1. One of the most effective waste management projects you can initiate at your sacred space is switching from Styrofoam, plastic and paper cups, plates, and cutlery to china, glass, aluminum and other reusables. Hold a *Cutlery, Cup and Plate Collection Party* and ask faith community members to bring in any extra mugs, tea cups, glasses, plates, cutlery and serving dishes they have at home (or buy some second hand from Goodwill and Salvation Army. Mix and match china with creative abandon. If your sacred space already has reusable tableware, invite your entire faith community to carry a travel cup/mug for tea, coffee, water or juice, and a reusable shopping bag wherever they go, see www.reusablebags.com
2. Hold a gently used Clothing Collection Event at your faith community. Donate clothing to a charity. Exchange lightly worn items with other peoples cast offs to refresh your wardrobe or send old jeans and other worn clothing can be recycled into insulation. See Twin Maple's UltraTouch Insulation www.twinmaplemarketing.com Toll free 1-800-663-8898 or Green Jeans Insulation www.greenjeansinsulation.com Also, contact The Freecycle Network, a grassroots, not-for-profit movement of people who give away good things they don't need (and get things they do) for free. Groups located across Canada are keeping huge amounts of things out of landfills. Membership is free, and everything posted is legal and appropriate for all ages. www.freecycle.org/group/CA/?noautodetect=1
3. Make a list of all the repair shops in your neighbourhood: shoe repair, electronics, tailors, upholsterers... and post it in your place of worship. Announce where it is posted. And /or make a list of the organic grocers, farmers markets and retailers who deal in local / Canadian,

organic and/or fair trade products. Post it in your place of worship. Announce where it is posted.

4. Start a Save the Trees – Green Paper Products campaign. Hand out rolls of recycled toilet paper and have folks sign up (on a sheet of recycled, chlorine bleach-free paper) to help save the Boreal Forest, Temagami, the Amazonian Rain Forest and other old growth trees that help greatly to reduce soil erosion and climate change. www.kleercut.net/en/theproblem

5. Join Canada Post's eco-friendly *Consumer Choice Program* to reduce waste by stopping junk mail at its source. See Canada Post's new Green Choices Program and the upcoming campaigns "Forests Not Flyers" and "Forests Not Phone Books". www.reddotcampaign.ca See ForestEthics' report on junk mail and climate change. www.ForestEthics.com

6. Organize a community clean-up to pick up litter in the streets, parks and other public places around your place of worship and homes. If needed, ask your municipality for recycle / waste diversion bins for the street that separate materials for recycling and compost. See **Waste Service Providers**, listed above. Join the Pitch-In Canada campaign and prepare a litter collection event for April – Earth Week. See www.pitch-in.ca

7. Recycling Council of Ontario's *Take Back the Light* is the first full-service fluorescent lamp recycling program for businesses and institutions in Ontario to keep mercury-containing lamps out of landfill. www.takebackthelight.ca/ .

8. Green Gifts: Rather than celebrating special occasion with a product consider offering a gift of time and/or talents. Where could you go with the special person to celebrate them? Out for a nice meal? To the theatre or galleries? Maybe a train ride to another town or city? What chores could you do for someone or what crafts can you make?

9. Explore other cultures that produce far less waste than 'the Western world'. What could we learn from countries in Asia, Africa or South America? For instance, areas in Africa are known for making very inventive toys from refuse. Invite youth group to research this topic and report back with inspiring ideas from around the world on being creative with "waste".

10. Start a Green Garden Project that reduces waste, grows food and creates beauty. Consider replacing a lawn with fruits, vegetables and herbs. See www.torathateva.org/kavanah.htm . TerraCycle www.terracycle.net is an innovative Canadian company that considers waste a commodity, using refuse to make products such as garden pots, bird feeders and rain barrels made from 100% e-waste and pop bottles.

*Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich,
one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.*

New Testament, Luke 12:15

DIY Waste Audit Data Worksheet

Location: _____ **Date:** _____

Material	Source	Recycle	Compost	Disposal	Comments
Computer - Printer Paper					
Mixed Paper					
Corrugated/ Cardboard					
Newspaper					
Books / Magazines					
Glass					
Aluminum Cans/					
Tinfoil					
Steel Cans					
Plastics					
Styrofoam					
Food					
Wood					
Batteries					
Electronics					
Scrap Metals					
Carpets/ Textiles					

Yard Waste

Other

Collection Cost Assessment Form

Location / Receptacle Type / Percentage Filled / Collection Dates / Monthly Cost

Offices

Kitchen

Bathrooms

Women's

Men's

Sanctuary/
Prayer Hall

Lounges

Vestibule

Halls

Stairwells

Library

Classrooms

Basement

Garden

Other