

GREEN - Summer

PRAYER:

1. In daily personal prayer spend contemplative time outdoors or looking out a window praying with and for the EARTH.
2. Allow current issues, like climate change, mountaintop removal, Keystone XL Pipeline to be a spur to prayer.
3. When you are leader of corporate prayer include EARTH in spoken intentions/petitions; or design a weekly prayer for EARTHs needs.
4. Choose a location and time of day that can accommodate you or your group and which has immediate access to the outdoors (weather permitting).
5. If your gathering space is indoors, plan to include EARTH elements in the setting—especially, EARTH, Air, Fire and Water
6. In your ministry--within parish, school, family or volunteer activities raise up EARTH concerns when you are gathered for prayer.

PERSONAL PRACTICES:

1. Buy no bottled water. Instead buy a metal or glass water bottle, fill it from the tap and keep it in the refrigerator to use for outings.
2. Instead of running water from the tap until it is cold enough to drink, keep a jug of water in your refrigerator
3. Combine trips to town/store/doctor, etc. for yourself and/or carpool.
4. If your destination is a mile and a half or less, walk instead of driving
5. Take public transportation or bike for local trips whenever you can.
6. When traveling for vacation, consider going by car or train rather than plane to cut down on carbon emissions.
7. While staying in a hotel or even at home, consider reusing your towels
8. Look for eco-friendly products like clothing, swimsuits, sandals, towels, and skin care
9. Mend clothing when you can, or ask a seamstress friend to help.
10. Dry your clothes on a clothesline
11. Limit the use of all plastics to emergencies.
12. Use reusable bags at the grocery store or choose paper over plastic
13. Go shopping in mid-afternoon, the hottest part of the day, and enjoy the air-conditioned stores.
14. Shop at garage sales and thrift stores
15. Spend the summer outdoors when you can: gardening, walking/hiking, reading, etc.
16. Avoid overexposure to the sun by wearing hats and using eco-friendly skin protection products
17. Take your car to a car wash that recycles its wash water. If washing your car at home, use a bucket of water and sponge. Rinse quickly at the end. Never allow the hose to run continuously.
18. Avoid recreational water toys that require a constant flow of water
19. Maintain tools and equipment for safety and efficiency.

MEALS:

1. As you say grace before meals (and after) include thanking not only God but the EARTH and all who till and care for her for the food you have.
2. Barbequing - Use propane which burns cleaner than wood or charcoal.
 - a. If you're wedded to charcoal try a more natural charcoal product.
 - b. When you're done grilling, use natural cleaning products such as an organic grill cleaner
3. Perhaps consider a solar oven
4. Use a cloth napkin and remember why you do so. Be grateful for the trees saved by not using disposables.
5. Choose locally-grown foods whenever possible—shopping at Farmers' Markets, or buying through a CSA or buying club.
6. Cook at least one meal “from scratch” each week, taking the time to be creative, learn new recipes, expand your taste buds and support your health.
 - a. Try to eliminate processed foods
 - b. Use leftovers
 - c. Ask for locally produced food
7. If you eat meals prepared by others—whether a food-service, in-house cafeteria, or even a local restaurant (NOT fast food) ask kitchen staff/manager to utilize fresh, in-season fruits and vegetables whenever possible. Be sure to compliment them when they do—and eat heartily!
8. Read labels—note country of origin, number of long-syllable chemical ingredients, whether it contains GMO ingredients (or proclaims that it **doesn't** since the US doesn't demand fair labeling), as well as looking for Organic items.
9. Don't buy products with excess packaging (eg. wrapped “single-serving” items) or use single use paper and plastic ware, etc. Avoid Styrofoam always. If you must use disposables, take the time to locate recycled and compostable products—then do it!
10. Never use hot, running water to defrost frozen foods. Plan ahead and place frozen items in the refrigerator overnight or use the microwave oven
11. Rinse vegetables and fruits in a sink or a pan filled with water instead of under running water.

LAWN/YARD CARE:

1. Use EARTH Friendly products on your lawn and garden
2. If installing a lawn, select a turf mix or blend that matches your climate and site conditions.
3. Set lawn mower blades one notch higher since longer grass reduces evaporation. Leave grass clippings on your grass, this cools the ground and holds in moisture.
4. Water your lawn and landscaping before dawn or after the sun sets when there's less evaporation. Early morning is better than dusk since it helps prevent the growth of fungus.

5. If you're still using an old mower that's spitting harmful gases into the environment, it's time to upgrade to a newer model, that spews fewer emissions, and benefit the earth and increase safety and performance
6. Put water hoses in lawns, gardens, orchards on timers and all mended
7. Adjust your sprinklers so they don't spray on sidewalks, driveway or street.
8. Never hose down your driveway, sidewalk, patio or balcony, always use a broom or blower.
9. Water your lawn only when it needs it. Step on your grass. If it springs back, when you lift your foot, it doesn't need water. So set your sprinklers for more days in between watering. Better yet, especially in times of drought, water with a hose. And best of all, convert your lawn to native plants
10. Don't water the lawn on windy days. There's too much evaporation
11. Use sprinklers for large areas of grass. Water small patches by hand to avoid waste
12. Use sprinklers that deliver big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller water drops and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground
13. Cut down watering on cool and overcast days and don't water in the rain!! Adjust or deactivate automatic sprinklers.
14. Use a rain gauge, or empty tuna can, to track rainfall on your lawn. Then reduce your watering accordingly
15. Let your lawn go dormant during the summer. Dormant grass only needs to be watered every three weeks or less if it rains
16. Aerate your lawn at least once a year so water can reach the roots rather than run off the surface
17. Buy solar lights for your lawn
18. When the kids want to cool off, use the sprinkler in an area where your lawn needs it the most.
19. Wash your pets outdoors in an area of your lawn that needs

POOL CARE:

1. If you have a pool, use a cover to cut down evaporation. This will also keep your pool cleaner and reduce the need to add chemicals.
2. Use a grease pencil to mark the water level of your pool at the skimmer. Check the mark 24 hours later to see if you have a leak
3. When back-flushing your pool, consider using the water on your landscaping
4. Make sure your swimming pools, fountains, and ponds are equipped with recirculating pumps

PATIOS and DECKS:

1. Clean patio furniture with an eco-friendly and inexpensive cleaning solution: 2 cups white vinegar per gallon of water.

2. Stain or paint your wood deck every five years, depending on your local weather conditions. Use paints that meet these three requirements: low volatile organic compounds (VOCs), low biocides and natural pigments. Also, choose paint that has zinc oxide as the fungicide.
3. Use water-based stains and sealants without biocides.
4. Add potted plants or low-priced perennials to your deck or patio.

AIR CONDITIONING:

1. Get your air conditioning unit ready for the summer heat, especially if you live the hot and dry Southwest.
 - a. Rake all the leaves away from your unit and clean out the winter "gunk."
Schedule your annual inspection or do it yourself.
 - b. Check your indoor filters to see if they need replacing. Nothing messes up an air conditioner more than a filthy, gooey filter.
 - c. Inspect and clean your vents. Use a soft, damp cloth and your vinegar solution to wipe the area, so you don't blow a bunch of dirt and dust out of the vent.
2. If you don't have air conditioning, check your fans, blow the dust out of the motor area and clean the rotors (again, use your vinegar solution). Check the cords for any frayed areas and replace the fan if necessary
3. Use drapes/blinds on windows to keep out hot sun in summer
4. Raise the AC temperature in summer a couple of degrees
5. Get a programmable thermostat and set it so that the AC is regulated for when you and your family are there and adjusted for when you are at work or in bed. When out of your home for a prolonged time—out of town or vacation—adjust your thermostat.

HONORING EARTH:

1. Become an EARTH advocate by encouraging others to honor, celebrate and care for EARTH
2. Journal some experiences you've had with God's good EARTH
3. Try to spend some time outdoors on a regular basis to see and soak in the beauty of nature

ACTIVITIES:

1. Continue growing a garden.
2. Personally adopt a stretch of brook or stream or roadway and keep it litter-free. Check on a weekly basis

3. Make time to walk in a cool woods or a local park listening for the birds and alert for other denizens
4. Perhaps take a day for the beach and wet your feet in the water or enjoy a swim
5. Go fishing in the early morning or evening
6. How about paddling a canoe or rowing a boat?
7. There's always time for a picnic in combination with other activities
8. It's summer...get outdoors and enjoy what EARTH has to offer!

The above suggestions can be adjusted to your particular circumstances and needs. You probably have many other practices that you already do. Discuss with your local living group/family other ideas that you could do to raise awareness. Make changes in a step-at-a-time fashion—adding a new focus or practice each month. Be patient and persevering—the Planet is worth it. We are all in it for the long haul.

