

Green Suggestions for Church Groups and Events

The Sustainable Sanctuary Coalition offers the following list of ideas for making your events more sustainable. We invite you to save and refer to this list of ideas as you plan and execute activities. You might also refer to the list as you plan non-church events.

Tableware:

- **Mugs**—Instead of using Styrofoam cups, invite participants to bring a mug from home or organizers can provide mugs. Perhaps the church can have a supply of mugs for general use.
- **Cups**—For cold drinks, use mugs or provide bio-degradable paper cups instead of plastic.
- **Tableware**—For events involving food, ask participants to bring silverware, drinking utensils, a plate or bowl and a cloth napkin. They can choose to wash them at home or hosts can set up a dish-washing and drying station.

Food-Related:

- **Food scraps**—Bring a small bucket or large covered container for the non-meat food scraps. Someone with a compost bin in their back yard can take the scraps home with them. Or your church or faith group might purchase a small food composter.
- **Plastics**—If people bring purchased food to potlucks, remember to wash and recycle the plastic containers.
- **Napkins**—
Ideally, the church will have a supply on hand that can be used for an event, washed at home, and returned to the church kitchen.
- **Cloth table coverings**—If it's possible, use cloth table coverings that can be laundered instead of paper or plastic ones
- **Packaging**—When buying food products for events, consider products with less packaging or packaging that can be recycled.
- **Vegetarian**—Consider more vegetarian or vegan meals, potlucks, snacks or options at festivals, parties, etc.
- **Local food**—Buy locally-grown food and less processed food
- **No waste**—Think in terms of having “zero-waste” events if possible
- **Coffee**—Use fair-trade coffee

Recycling:

- **Use bins**—Use the recycling bins around your facility. If none are readily available, please take appropriate materials home to be recycled.
- **Recyclables**—Remember to recycle paper and cardboard, as well as aluminum and metal cans, and various types of plastic.

Energy-Related:

- **Lights**—Only turn on lights that are truly needed. Where possible, open blinds and let in natural light and forgo the use of electric lights
- **Temperature**—Be aware of the temperature in the room and whether it's warmer or cooler than necessary. Adjust the thermostat or open windows.
- **Doors**—Don't needlessly prop open doors, which makes the furnace or air conditioner work harder.
- **Carpool**—share rides to events at church or your group's activities
- **Room Use**—for your activity, use the smallest room that will meet your needs. This will save heat, lights, etc.

General:

- **Cloth bags**—Remember to use cloth bags when buying supplies or food for church events
- **Disposables**—If you have to buy disposables, considering getting them from a store that has more biodegradable products or products made of recycled material
- **Paper**—Cut back on the use of paper. Consider using email notices instead of mailed ones where possible. If you are using sheets of paper at your event, use both sides of a sheet, and recycle the used paper.
- **Cleaners**—If you are using cleaning products at your event, consider using more eco-friendly cleaners.