

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation

WATER



*You visit the earth and water it, you greatly enrich it; the river of God is full of water;
PSALM 65:9, NRSV*

10 WAYS TO START

1. **Reclaim Water.** Collect water that has been used for bathing, washing dishes, and other household duties, and use it to water your plants. Water savings: up to 300 gallons per month.
2. **Use a Nozzle.** To prevent waste when the water is turned on and your hose is not being used, fit your garden hose with a shut-off nozzle. Water savings: up to 6.5 gallons per minute.
3. **Drink the Tap.** About 80 percent of plastic waste ends up in landfills—including 60 million plastic water bottles a day. Try tap water instead, using a filter if necessary.
4. **Catch Rain.** A 2,000-square-foot home can collect as much as 36,000 gallons of rainwater in one year by using rain barrels to capture water from downspouts—more than enough to meet the average American family's water needs.
5. **Mulch.** Mulching your plants reduces the amount of water lost through evaporation, limits weed growth, and improves soil conditions. Water savings: 70 percent of water typically lost through evaporation.
6. **Double Flush.** Install a cheap (\$25) double flush toilet insert into your existing toilets. This gives you the option of a "big flush" and a "small flush."
7. **Fill it Up.** Only do full loads when using the dishwasher, clothes washer, and dryer.
8. **Lower the Flow.** About 25 percent of the water supplied to the average American home is used for showers. Installing a low-flow showerhead can save a family of four 350 gallons of water each week—about \$73 per year.
9. **Turn it Off.** Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth. If every American used one gallon of water less per day, we would save more than 100 billion gallons per year.
10. **Plant a Native Garden.** Conserve water by replacing little-used grass areas like your front yard with a native garden. A native garden can reduce street noise and offer more privacy for you and your family. Water savings: up to 75 percent of the water typically used. Growing indigenous plants with low water requirements could save you up to 550 gallons of water per year.



More Tips

- In many regions, only an inch of water per week is necessary to maintain a healthy lawn. Keep a cat-food-size can outside to monitor rainfall. If rain fills it to the brim each week, you don't need to water at all.
- Use drip irrigation. Instead of using regular sprinklers, water your flowerbed and garden using drip irrigation or a soaker hose. This method saves water by minimizing evaporation and watering only the base of your plants. Water savings: up to 70 percent of the water typically used.
- Reduce shower time by at least two minutes.

- When you're not going for a swim, cover your pool to reduce water lost to evaporation. Water savings: 90 percent of water typically lost through evaporation.
- Plant trees. Trees and other vegetation help reduce water runoff.
- Use dishwasher soap that is phosphate free. When phosphates end up in rivers and coastal areas, they can "fertilize" algae populations, leading to large algal blooms, which in turn can choke out plant and animal life in aquatic ecosystems.
- As much as 40 percent of our drinking water is flushed down toilets. Flush once less per day and you will save as much water as the average person in Africa uses all day for drinking, cooking, bathing, and cleaning.
- Make sure your faucets have aerators installed (most modern ones do). These can reduce water flow by half without reducing water pressure.
- Fill dishwasher into a small basin or bowl instead of filling the entire kitchen sink.
- Baths use three times more water than showers. Take them sparingly. When you do take a bath, plug the drain before you turn on the faucet and reuse the water afterward to water household and garden plants.
- Conserve water at church by fixing leaks, installing low-flow toilets, and landscaping with native plants. Use the money saved to help dig wells in Africa.
- When shaving, only turn the water on when rinsing your razor.
- Ask your local car-wash manager if they recycle the water; if they do, it's more efficient to use a commercial car wash—provided you don't make a special trip to get there. If you wash your car at home:
 - Use a biodegradable soap like Simple Green Car Wash or Gliptone Wash 'n Glow. Or make your own eco-friendly car wash by using a few squirts of biodegradable liquid dishwashing detergent or laundry detergent mixed with a bucket of water.
- Water the lawn during the morning or evening to minimize water loss to evaporation.
- More and more hotels are becoming eco-friendly because it saves them money. Wherever you stay, use the same linens and towels during your visit. Washing fewer sheets and towels can save up to 40 percent of a hotel's water use.

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit inspiring faithful stewardship of all creation



www.BLESSEDEARTH.org