

Reduce Use of Single Use Plastics – Outreach Tools

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❖ Pledge

Take the Pledge to Make a Difference

There are many things you can do to reduce your plastic and trash footprint. Check the actions you are already taking as well as the actions you are committing to starting.

I pledge to reduce my dependence on single-use disposables and take action to reuse. I will:

- Carry a reusable water bottle
- Pack a waste-free lunch
- Bring my own food container and utensils
- Bring my own cup
- Say no to disposable straws
- Bring my own reusable straw
- Bring a reusable napkin
- Avoid heavily packaged foods
- Bring my own shopping bag
- Reduce the use of plastic bags for produce & bulk items
- Share these tips with friends

First Name Last Name

Congregation Town

- Share Your Commitment!** Check this box if you would like your name added to the list of congregation members on our website who have pledged to ditch plastic.

- **Outreach Tool:** This pledge aims to help individuals commit to refuse disposable plastic, reduce their plastic footprint, and choose reusable items. (**Commitment**) It can also be shared with friends and congregation members. (**Social Diffusion**) Once people take the pledge, encourage them to add a Facebook frame to their profile picture that shows their commitment to reduce use of plastic.
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - Sign a pledge and commit to changing your habits around single use plastic. Create a challenge and share this with friends and family.
 - While eliminating single-use plastics from our daily lives can seem like an overwhelming task, even a few simple changes – such as bringing reusable bags when shopping or skipping single-use water bottles and straws – can make a big difference.¹
 - Take the pledge! By signing this pledge, you agree to reduce your use of disposable plastics, such as plastic water bottles, plastic utensils, and plastic bags.
 - Share with your friends! Encourage your friends to sign the pledge as well so you can share tips for developing new habits, like remembering to bring along reusable water bottles and bags. Keep each other accountable!
 - Sign a pledge and commit to changing your habits around single use plastic. Create a challenge and share this with friends and family. Post on social media using selfie frame.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - In a Word format, this pledge can easily be tailored by the congregation to add/remove habits that will resonate with each congregation.
 - Consider adding a visual element to the pledge to make it more engaging.
 - Create a downloadable form and/or an e-form that can be submitted for easy access and to tally participation. The pledge could also be printed and filled out by hand.
 - Create a widget for the congregation website that tallies in real time the number of participants committed to reducing their plastic consumption.

¹ <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/plastic-free-challenge/about/>

- Consider designing a frame that could be used on Facebook by congregation members who have taken the pledge.
 - Facebook instructions: [How to Create a Frame](#)
 - Water Bottle Graphic Credit: <https://www.istockphoto.com/vector/reusable-water-bottle-vector-illustration-gm1097565624-294743263>
 - Reusable Bag Graphic Credit: <https://www.istockphoto.com/illustrations/reusable-bag>



- **Additional Options/Examples:**

*Please note, as these are additional examples, we did not request permission for use. Consider reaching out to the organizations or designing new images with similar visuals or messaging.



- Click [here](#) for the reusable shopping bag pledge example.
- Click [here](#) for the 'say no to plastic' pledge example.
- Click [here](#) for the '#skipthestraw' pledge example.

❖ Audit

Audit Your Plastic Footprint²

Start ditching single-use plastics by first assessing where you stand with the audit below.

Circle the plastic items that you have used in the past month, place a check by the frequency of use.

| Plastic Bags | PET Plastic | Plastic Straw | Plastic Cups |
|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |
| Plastic Food Bags | Plastic Utensils/Food Containers | Single Serve Plastic Packaging | Balloons |
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month | <input type="checkbox"/> Daily <input type="checkbox"/> Once a week <input type="checkbox"/> Once a month |

From your responses above, answer the following questions:

- How many single-use plastic items have you used in the past month? (1-3, 4-10, More than 10)
- Which is the most common source of single-use plastic for you?
- Where does most of the plastic you use eventually end up?

² Audit modified from the Plastic Tide Turners Challenge Badge Toolkit
<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28007/ChallengeBagdeTkt.pdf>

Audit Your Plastic Footprint³

Start ditching single-use plastics by first assessing where you stand with the audit below.

Circle the plastic objects that you have used in past week. Write down the number of items you find in your recycling bin or trash over the course of seven days.

| Plastic Bags | PET Plastic | Plastic Straw | Plastic Cups |
|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |
| Plastic Food Bags | Plastic Utensils/Food Containers | Single Serve Plastic Packaging | Balloons |
|  |  |  |  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

From your responses above, answer the following questions:

- How many single-use plastic items have you used in the past week? (1-3, 4-10, More than 10)
- Which is the most common source of single-use plastic for you?
- Where does most of the plastic you use eventually end up?

³ Audit modified from the Plastic Tide Turners Challenge Badge Toolkit
<https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28007/ChallengeBagdeTkt.pdf>

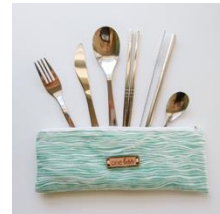
- **Outreach Tool:** A simple home or congregation audit to count disposable plastic use and waste sparks people’s awareness and serves as a starting point for goal setting. The audit can be done by one person or a group. With a few people involved, the activity often triggers a robust discussion of use and commitments to reduce use going forward. Working as a group can also be more motivating. (**Commitment**) (**Social Diffusion**)
- **Accompanying Messages:** (*Messages for the audit can be coupled with messages for the pledge.*)
 - Start your plastic free journey by first assessing where you stand with a plastic audit. Use the checklist for a day, three days, or one week to gain a clearer picture of your plastic use. Record items as you toss them into the trash or recycling bin.
 - Record an item immediately after disposing of it, so you don’t forget.
 - While eliminating single-use plastics from our daily lives can seem like an overwhelming task, even a few simple changes—such as bringing reusable bags when shopping or skipping single use water bottles and straws—can make a big difference.⁴
 - Share with your friends! Encourage your friends to take the audit and then sign the pledge so you can share tips for developing new habits (e.g., bringing reusable water bottles and reusable bags with you) and keep each other accountable.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - All of the Images in Audit Tables (Except Plastic Food Bag Image) Source/Credit: <https://wedocs.unep.org/bitstream/handle/20.500.11822/28007/ChallengeBagdeTkt.pdf> (Requested permission to use tools in the toolkit on 2/3/21 from tideturner@ceeindia.org and did not hear back as of 2/10/21. These images can be replaced with standard clip art images.)
 - Plastic Food Bag Source: <http://www.recyclingadvocates.org/tag/coffee-cup-reduction-campaign/> (\$2.50 for use of small JPEG.)
 - Create a one-time audit by rearranging the visuals and instructing participants to go through their recycling bin after three days and conduct an audit.

⁴ <https://www.ecoactionarlington.org/community-programs/plastic-free-challenge/about/>

❖ Plastic Free House of Worship Challenge Checklist

Use this checklist to help your house of worship go plastic free!

- Reusable Bottles and Cups:** Encourage congregation members to bring their own reusable water bottles and let them know the house of worship will not be purchasing drinks in single use plastics. Provide reusable cups as needed in the house of worship's kitchen.
- Reusable Utensils:** Switch from using plastic cutlery to reusable cutlery in the kitchen and at congregation events where food will be served.
- Reusable Bags:** Remind congregation members to bring their own bags, when needed, versus distributing disposable plastic bags.



- **Outreach Tool:** The plastic free challenge checklist will encourage congregation members to replace all disposable plastics used within the religious buildings with reusable items, such as reusable water bottles, cups, cutlery, and bags. This may be a great place to start for members who are not ready to reduce plastic consumption in their homes. (**Convenience**) (**Social Norm**)
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - Take the Plastic Free Congregation Challenge! Use this checklist to reduce single use plastics in our congregation. Doing so will help congregation members form new habits of using reusable items instead of disposable plastic.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - No Disposable Cups and Utensils Photos Credit: <http://www.recyclingadvocates.org/tag/coffee-cup-reduction-campaign/> (Approval received on 1/28/21 from Brittney Wendell, President of Recycling Advocates, to use the materials/images.)
 - Bag Photo: (Permission granted to use the photo by photographer Mimi Shah on 2/4/21.)

❖ Plastic Free Individual Challenge Checklist

Use this checklist to help you go plastic free!

- Reusable Bottles and Cups:** Bring your own reusable water bottles when you leave the house. Consider keeping one in your bag or car.
- Reusable Utensils:** Switch from using plastic cutlery to reusable cutlery when you grab takeout. If you're in a restaurant that uses plastic cutlery, grab a small pouch and bring your own.
- Reusable Bags:** Bring your own bags. Leave them in your car and/or in a place you'll see them as you're leaving the house.



- **Outreach Tool:** The plastic free challenge checklist can be used by the individual congregation member to encourage them to reduce their disposable plastics consumption and use reusable items, such as reusable water bottles, cups, cutlery, and bags. (**Convenience**) (**Social Norm**)
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - Take the Plastic Free Congregation Challenge! Use this checklist to reduce use of disposable plastics. Doing so will help you form new habits in using reusable items instead of single use disposable plastic.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - No Disposable Cups and Utensils Photos Credit: <http://www.recyclingadvocates.org/tag/coffee-cup-reduction-campaign/> (Approval received on 1/28/21 from Brittney Wendell, President of Recycling Advocates, to use the materials/images.)
 - Bag Photo: (Permission granted to use the photo by photographer Mimi Shah on 2/4/21.)

❖ Bag Reminder – Visual Prompt



- **Outreach Tool:** This visual prompt will help people remember to bring a reusable bag to avoid having to use disposable plastic bags. In addition, the prompt includes messaging to remind people to put bags in different places so there's always one available. (**Prompt**) (**Convenience**)
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - Print out this helpful reminder and stick it next to your door so you think to bring your own bags when you go to a store.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - Ensuring the prompt is visually pleasing, easy to read, and has clear and direct messaging, will increase the likelihood the users will place it in a location that will help them remember to bring a reusable bag.
 - Grocery Bag Graphic Credit: <https://www.dreamstime.com/set-colorful-stickers-eco-friendly-slogans-illustrations-composting-trees-planting-eating-local-food-bring-your-own-image190535928> (Free download.)

- “Keep Bags” Graphic Credit: <ftp://ftp.dec.ny.gov/dpae/press/PlasticBagBan/ftp://ftp.dec.ny.gov/dpae/press/PlasticBagBan/plasticbagban33.jpg> (Received permission from PlasticBags@dec.ny.gov on 2/3/21 to use and tailor the materials as needed.)
- Grocery Bag Photo Credit: <https://www.gettyimages.com/detail/photo/woman-shopping-fruits-and-vegetables-with-reusable-royalty-free-image/1170466795?adppopup=true> (Stock image, licenses can be purchased.)
- **Additional Options/Examples:**
 - *Please note, as these are additional examples, we did not request permission for use. Consider reaching out to the organizations or designing new images with similar visuals or messaging.
 - BYOB Bag Sticker for Purchase: <https://greenbusinesshq.com/shop/bring-your-own-bag-large-circular-sticker/> (\$5 each)
 - Bay Area Recycling Photo Credit: <https://bayarearecycling.org/bring-your-own-bag>
 - Bring Your Own Bag with Grocery Bag Photo Credit: <https://www.facebook.com/NewYorkDepartmentOfState/photos/a.265532256921494/1871992286275475/?type=3>



❖ Congregation Communications

Creation Care Corner

Bring Your Own! Join the growing movement of people who already make the daily choice to B.Y.O. water bottle.

Using your own reusable water bottle and mug saves money, reduces waste and helps the planet. It's simple!

DID YOU KNOW?

- In 2019, plastic bottles and bottle caps ranked as the third and fourth most collected plastic trash items during beach cleanups in more than 100 countries.⁵
- Microplastics – the small pieces of plastic debris less than five millimeters in size that result from breakdown of consumer plastics and industrial waste – have been found in all water samples taken at nontidal stations in the Chesapeake watershed.⁶ This means microplastics are in our bay, rivers and streams. Eliminating or limiting your use of single-use plastics, including plastic water bottles and to-go cups, can help reverse this.

Let's work together on this. Commit to new, healthier habits for the planet.

For more information, visit the Plastic Free Guide (<https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/get-involved#guides>). This resource provides step-by-step actions for schools, cities and towns, and individuals.

People are a vital part of the Chesapeake Bay ecosystem. Actions we take today can revive the Bay's health tomorrow and into the future.

Environmental Ministry



"I made a commitment to bring a reusable water bottle with me every day for one week. Now I don't leave my home without it! Plus, it saves me money because I don't have to buy bottled water when I am away from home." ~ Julie Adams, Congregation Member.

- **Outreach Tool:** This message can be used in the congregation's newsletter, Facebook page, or on the congregation's website to communicate information and tips to reduce use of single use plastics, such as plastic water bottles. (**Communications**) (**Social Diffusion**)
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - The messages included in the above example newsletter article can be tailored for your congregation.

⁵ <https://oceanconservancy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Final-2019-ICC-Report.pdf>

⁶ https://www.chesapeakebay.net/news/blog/small_plastics_are_a_big_problem

- Ask a member of your congregation if he/she would like to be featured with a photo and a quote in the article. Shifting the influencers by featuring a member of the congregation who might not be thought of as an “environmentalist” could help surprise people, catch their attention, and provide inspiration.
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - Reusable Water Bottle Photo Credit/Source: <https://www.10best.com/interests/travel-gear/best-water-bottles-to-keep-you-hydrated-in-2019/> (Permission to use this photo was not obtained since the intent is for the congregation to take a photo of a member of the congregation using a reusable water bottle and use that photo in its place.)
 - **Optional Photo:** Child Reusable Water Bottle Photo Source: <https://www.shutterstock.com/image-photo/ecofriendly-lifestyle-concept-smart-looking-asian-1404092969> (License available for purchase.)



❖ Social Media Messages

Creation Care Habits

Bring Your Own! Join the growing movement of people who already make the daily choice to B.Y.O. By bringing your own reusable water bottle and reusable mug you can save money, reduce waste, and help the planet.

#BYOBottle #zerowaste #ditchtheplastic

THE STORY OF PLASTIC | PLASTIC BOTTLES

Engineer Nathaniel Wyeth patented polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles in 1973. The first plastic bottles able to withstand the pressure of carbonated liquids, they were a much cheaper alternative to glass bottles.



It takes at least
450 years
for a plastic bottle to completely degrade.



1,000,000

Usage

Globally, more than a million plastic bottles are sold every single minute.



Recycling

In the U.S., only 30% of these bottles are recycled; Norway recycles 97%.



x2,000

Did You Know?

Bottled water requires up to 2,000 times the energy used to produce tap water.

MONICA SERRANO, NGM STAFF; KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI
SOURCES: EUROMONITOR; LEMELSON-MIT; PETER GLEICK AND HEATHER COOLEY, PACIFIC INSTITUTE; NOAA; INFINITUM; EPA

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/08/plastic-bottles/>

Creation Care Habits

Happy Spring! Don't forget to pack your reusable cutlery in your picnic basic and ditch the plastic utensils to save money, reduce waste, and help the planet. #BYO #cutoutplasticutensils #ditchtheplastic

THE STORY OF PLASTIC | UTENSILS

Plastic utensils were introduced in the 1940s but did not start being mass produced until the 1950s. A decade later, along with the growth of the fast-food industry, they became widely used.

Usage

In the United States, more than 100 million plastic utensils are used every day.

Recycling

Their size, inconsistent materials, and shape make them more difficult to recycle.

Did You Know?

France is the first country to ban plastic cutlery, plates, and cups. The ban takes effect in 2020.

MONICA SERRANO, NGM STAFF; KELSEY NOWAKOWSKI
SOURCES: PLASTIC POLLUTION COALITION; MINISTRY OF ECOLOGICAL AND SOLIDARITY TRANSITION, FRANCE; POLYMER PLASTICS; 5 GYRES

<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/environment/2019/06/carrying-your-own-fork-spoon-help-plastic-crisis/>

- **Outreach Tool:** These sample social media message can be used by the congregation staff on the congregation's Facebook page or by the congregation members on their personal Facebook pages to communicate information and tips to reduce use of single use plastics. **(Social Diffusion) (Communications)**
- **Accompanying Messages:**
 - The messages included in the above example posts can be tailored for your congregation.
 - Additional example messages that can be tailored for your use:
 - **Use reusable shopping bags to protect the environment.** Now, more than ever, people are bringing reusable bags from home. Reusable shopping bags are

available in many colors and styles. You also can buy them in various weights for different types of products, such as heavy cans and other weighty/bulky items. (social norm; stewardship⁷)

- **Reuse plastic bags to help future generations. If you have any plastic bags at home, reuse them.** Plastic bags can be difficult to recycle, so it is wise to reuse them for as long as you can. Instead of throwing them away, consider these uses: wrap and protect fragile items for a move or storage, wrap paint brushes and rollers in plastic bags for later use, or use them to cover and protect tender plants from overnight frost. Remember, plastic bags do not go in the recycling bin. Many supermarkets and other retailers accept plastic bags for recycling at no cost. If no stores near you accept plastic bags for recycling, throw these items in the trash. (stewardship)
- **Using reusable bags saves you money. Shop at stores that offer a credit for using reusable bags.** Some cities in the U.S. have passed plastic bag ordinances and more are doing so every year. Some stores, such as Target, will offer a cash credit for bringing reusable bags. The next time you are checking out, ask if you can get a discount for using reusable shopping bags. (incentive)
- **Being accountable makes you proud. Count the plastic bags brought into your home in a week.** When we actually count the number of bags we bring into our home each week, it can spur us to take action. Make a commitment to reduce the number of plastic bags you bring into your home. (responsibility; commitment)
- **We're all on Team Chesapeake. Spread the word.** One of the most common challenges with this new habit is remembering to bring the reusable bags to the store so you have them when you need them. Acknowledge this is a challenge with others by sharing tips that help you remember to bring your own bags and encourage others to share their tips with their friends and family. Getting more people talking about this habit, and the challenge of remembering to do it, normalizes the use of reusable bags, which encourages more people to make the switch.⁸ (social diffusion; cue)
- **Oysters don't need single-use sporks, and neither do we.** Plastic litter from takeout orders is a key source of the estimated 269,000 tons of plastic pollution swept into waterways and oceans. In water over time, they partially degrade into small plastic pieces, harming marine life and affecting human health.⁹ When these materials break down enough to reach the level of microplastics, even filter feeders like oysters can consume them.
- **Be on the cutting edge. BYO utensils.** In coming years, bringing your own utensils will be as common as bringing your own water bottle is now. Be a

⁷ Messages of stewardship, creation care, and legacy have been shown to resonate with congregational communities. Jonathan Haidt, Moral Foundations theory <https://moralfoundations.org/>, TED talk https://www.ted.com/talks/jonathan_haidt_the_moral_roots_of_liberals_and_conservatives, and http://righteousmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/ch07.RighteousMind.final_.pdf

⁸ <https://www.reusethisbag.com/articles/plastic-shopping-bags-environmental-impact>

⁹ <https://www.plasticpollutioncoalition.org/guides-eats>

leader in this environmental movement: use extra tableware you have at home instead of disposable plastic. Keep an extra set in your bag, car, or office.

- **Ordering take-out? Start by saying no to plastic utensils.** Plastic cutlery is one of those items that won't get recycled even when you put it in the recycling. It's too contaminated. It's too small. It's too lightweight. So those 40 billion plastic utensils per year are a complete waste.¹⁰
- **Notes to Designer:**
 - Plastic Bottle Infographic Credit: [The Story of Plastic: How the Plastic Bottle Went from Miracle Container to Garbage](#) (The infographic includes the name of the creator on the bottom and the website is also included in the post. Please include both items when reposting.)
 - Plastic Utensils Infographic Credit: [Why Carrying Your Own Fork and Spoon Helps Solve the Plastic Crisis](#) (The infographic includes the name of the creator on the bottom and the website is also included in the post. Please include both items when reposting.)

¹⁰ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/lauratenenbaum/2019/07/16/plastic-cutlery-is-terrible-for-the-environment-and-we-dont-need-to-have-it-delivered/?sh=33a5b6b54019>