



How to Start (or Upbuild) an Ecology Ministry in Your Congregation/Ministry Organization

BEGINNING STAGES (Year One)

1. Announce start-up of new ministry via annual congreg. meeting, newsletter, bulletins, etc.
 - a. Key people to involve in initial planning:
 - Pastor (because this is a spiritual issue as well as an administrative issue)
 - Head of property committee (because they have information about the building and property and make decisions regarding upkeep)
 - Janitor/cleaning person or representative from cleaning service company (because they have knowledge of and make decisions regarding the building, cleaning supplies, pesticides, waste removal and recycling, etc.; and because decisions made will directly impact their work)
 - Council representative (because Council should be aware of what's happening and a voice from the Eco Ministry should be represented at meetings, especially regarding policy decisions)
 - Youth representative (because young people often have interest in these issues and can be recruited to help with projects)
 - Representative from budget/finance committee (because they have information regarding how much money is spent on paper products, energy use, office equipment and maintenance, etc.; and because they can create a budget line for the new ministry)
 - Representative from church school (nursery school, before/afterschool program); (because they use the building on a daily basis and will be affected by decisions made by this ministry)
 - Individuals who have interests/skills/training in ecology areas (naturalists, master gardeners, waste management workers, etc.)
2. At first meeting:
 - a. Gather names, contact info for interested persons
 - b. Introductions and opening prayer
 - c. Hand out [Environmental Audit](#) Guide  for congregations to begin assessing your congregation's/ministry's current level of ecological stewardship
 - d. Begin brainstorming short-term and long-term goals
 - e. Decide on regular meeting days/times
3. Complete [Environmental Audit](#) Guide  for congregations.
 - a. Identify most pressing issues/projects to address.
4. Begin drafting a mission statement (sample available at ??).
5. Plan Ecology Worship Service to bless and inaugurate new ministry; share mission statement with congregation via bulletin, newsletter, etc. (can be close to Earth Day, or in September near start-up of program year, or in Epiphany near start of calendar year). Sample worship service available at ??
6. Join the Southeastern PA Synod Green Team on Facebook.

INTERMEDIATE STAGE (Years Two to Five)

1. Designate specific areas for ecology ministry projects and issues. Suggested areas:
 - Educate and inform
 - Recycling and resource management
 - Community outreach
 - Environmental advocacy
2. Plan annual Ecology Ministry Festivals and worship services (usually around Earth Day)
 - Choose uniting theme
 - Invite speaker from local arboretum, wildlife preserve, master gardener's club, environmental advocacy group, etc.
 - Have interactive booths, activities and exhibits for children and adults
3. Conduct a "waste audit" with janitorial staff to determine how much and what types of trash are produced. This will be helpful for determining which recycling programs to pursue.
4. Begin (or step up) church's recycling program
 - Talk with waste management company about recycling options
 - Contact Abitibi Paper Retriever about paper recycling bins for fundraising
 - Other possibilities include: inkjet/toner cartridges, eyeglasses, cell phones
 - Be aware that there will be space and upkeep issues with any recycling program you undertake.
5. Create "ecology station" with bulletin board and updated displays on environmental issues.
6. Print "eco-tips" in Sunday bulletin.
7. Plan movie night events around ecologically themed movies (e.g., *An Inconvenient Truth*, *WALL*E*, *The 11th Hour*). Perhaps begin with a pot-luck supper. Invite community to attend. Have discussion afterwards.
8. Plan some Adult Forums on earth stewardship topics.
9. Switch to recycled paper in church office.
10. Consider ways to reduce paper in bulletins, or avoid bulletins altogether by switching to worship screens (printing only announcements and flyers for take-home/sign-up use).
11. Conduct energy/water use audits. Go through bills from previous two years to determine church's energy/water use pattern. This will provide a baseline for measuring effectiveness of energy- and water-saving endeavors in the future.
12. Go on field trips! Arrange tours of local arboretums, waste management plants, landfills, trash-to-steam plants, electric companies, nature preserves, etc.

ADVANCED/LONG-TERM (Years Five – Ten)

1. Plan building renovation for energy efficiency upgrade (or ask for “green building” standards if planning any new construction).
2. Consider solar power for church.
3. Review cleaning products for safety and effectiveness.
4. Install energy efficient lighting.
5. Consider ways to advocate for environmental issues in your area (be aware that there are political and economic issues as well, which may be off-putting to some church members).
6. Consider ways to preserve natural habitat on church property.
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