

Suggestions for Honoring God's Creation

SCHOOLS



*Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass,
like abundant rain on tender plants.*

DEUTERONOMY 32:2, NIV

- Reduce paper usage. About half of the waste produced by schools comes from paper. Using both sides of office paper is an easy way to lessen the waste. Set printers to double-sided default, and get in the habit of thinking before you print. If an electronic copy will suffice, don't waste paper on printing. When you do print out research from the Internet, cut and paste only the parts you really need into a word-processing document so you don't end up printing out unnecessary pages.
- Recycle used paper. In one year, the average school throws away 38 tons of paper. That's more than 8 million sheets! Your school could save 646 trees per year by recycling its paper.
- Recycle burned out CFL light bulbs. Concerned about what to do with your school's compact fluorescent lightbulbs once they burn out? Home Depot stores now collect used CFLs. Just take your used CFLs to the return desk, and the bulbs will be recycled responsibly.
- Install LED bulbs in all exit signs. LED bulbs cost just \$4 per year to operate and don't have to be changed for ten or more years—saving energy, labor, and money. Your school can save as much as \$450 over the life of the bulb for every exit sign.
- Appoint a student each week as the power ranger to make sure that lights, monitors, and printers are turned off when leaving the room and at the end of the day.
- Remind students to turn off the faucet while lathering the soap during hand washing.
- Encourage students to print work on paper that has been used on one side.
- Rely on natural sunlight and turn off the lights when the sun shines in the room.
- Collect used paper for students to use as scrap paper.
- Ask students to bring reusable thermoses or water bottles.
- Set your printer to double-sided default and assign fewer paper-intensive projects.
- Hand out fewer worksheets.
- Designate recycling bins for paper, plastics, and aluminum to encourage recycling in the classroom.
- Bring in live houseplants, and assign a student each week to keep them watered.
- Avoid single serving packaging. By eliminating individually packaged and disposable lunch products, you could save as much as \$250 a year!
- Pack lunches in a reusable container. A disposable lunch generates 4 to 8 ounces of garbage. If your child takes lunch to school on a regular basis, he can produce as much as 100 pounds of garbage in a year.
- A single elementary school can create 18,760 pounds of lunch waste per year. Only pack as much food as your child can eat, and encourage your child to take a reasonable amount from salad bars and self-serve lines. Studies have shown that food waste can be cut as much as 50 percent when all-you-can-eat cafeterias eliminate trays for carrying food.



- Walk or ride the bus to school. If neither is an option, carpool. Among students who live within 2 miles of school, only 2.5 percent ride their bikes to school. Still, those 600,000 students save about 100,000 gallons of gasoline each day by not taking a bus or car.
- Always write on both sides of the paper. Use college-ruled paper (skinnier lines, more words per page).
- Use the draft mode on your printer, except on final drafts.
- Use both sides of poster board—ask teachers if you can have their extra student posters at the end of the year when they clear out their classrooms, and use the clean sides next year.
- Recycle all binder paper at the end of the year.
- Buy refillable pens instead of disposable ones, and use a couple of mechanical pencils that you really like.
- Do some investigative work. Does your school use paper towels and toilet paper with recycled paper content? Do they use recycled paper in the copiers and printers? Is double-sided printing the default on the printers? Do all lights and computers get turned off at night? If not, work with your student government or environmental group to suggest changes.
- Start a clothing exchange where students can drop off clothes in good condition that they no longer need, and others can pick some up. Do the same with binders, backpacks, and school supplies. When it comes time for prom and formal dances, ask girls to donate last year's dresses so someone else can go to school events without spending a fortune.
- Improve indoor air quality. Open windows in good weather. Ask bus drivers not to idle engines while waiting for students. Ask custodians to use nontoxic cleaning products. Levels of indoor air pollutants can be two to five times higher than outdoor levels. Asthma is the leading cause of school absenteeism. Annually, children miss about 15 million school days due to asthma.



OUR MISSION

Blessed Earth is an educational nonprofit that inspires and equips faith communities to become better stewards of the earth. Through outreach to churches, campuses and media we build bridges that promote measurable environmental change and meaningful spiritual growth.

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