

An Earth-friendly Approach to Lenten Sacrifices

The observance of Lent is based on the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert fasting and praying about the journey before him. Christians of various denominations acknowledge this struggle by giving up a luxury for the 40 days of Lent. This spiritual discipline of self-denial and prayerful contemplation of Jesus' experience is intended to make Lent more meaningful and bring us closer to God. Today, our use of modern luxuries has impacted the very air we breathe and the balanced environment that God created to sustain us. Perhaps this year we should think about reducing or giving up a technological luxury for Lent, saving energy and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions in the process. The Earth Stewardship Ministry invites you to take at least one step to conserve energy and reduce CO₂ emissions as a Lenten sacrifice.

Top 10 ways to reduce your CO₂ emissions throughout Lent

1. **Reduce the amount of waste you produce** by recycling, buying minimally-packaged goods, and choosing reusable items over disposables. Avoiding one pound of waste saves at least one pound of CO₂ emissions (1100 lbs CO₂ per year).
2. **Hang out your wash to dry** rather than using the dryer; on rainy days, hang it indoors (1,000 lbs CO₂ per year assuming three loads per week).
3. **Turn off electronic vampires** such as chargers, computers, TVs, DVD players and video game boxes, or use a power strip (1,000 lbs CO₂ per year).
4. **Use less hot water** by installing low-flow showerheads (300 lbs/year for electrically heated water). They cost just \$10 to \$20 each and deliver an invigorating shower. Also, limit your showers to 5 min or less (500 lbs CO₂ per year).
5. **Drive at 55 mph instead of 65-75** whenever possible and keep the tires of your car inflated to the proper levels to increase your gas mileage (average 720 lbs CO₂ per year).
6. **Turn down the heat to 65-68 degrees during the day and 55-58 degrees at night.** This can be done most comfortably with a computerized thermostat. Lowering your thermostat just two degrees during winter saves 6 percent of heating-related CO₂ emissions (420 lbs CO₂ per year per 2°). If you're feeling chilly put on a sweater or use a comforter.
7. **Eat less meat on a daily basis.** Meat production produces more greenhouse gases than transportation with beef production being the largest contributor. One meat-free day per week saves 6.6 lbs of CO₂. There are plenty of delicious alternatives – think stir-fry! (350 lbs CO₂ per year)
8. **Replace incandescent bulbs for compact fluorescent lights (CFLs)** each day starting with the most-used lamps or fixtures until you've changed them all (260 lbs CO₂ per year per 100W bulb). CFLs use ¼ as much electricity and last 8-12 times longer.
9. **Wash your clothes in cold or warm instead of hot water** using a cold-water detergent (500 lbs/year).
10. **Make sure your dishwasher is full when you run it and use the energy saving setting,** if available, to allow the dishes to air-dry. You can also turn off the drying cycle manually. (100 lbs CO₂ per year).

2012 Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast

For those interested in saving even more CO₂, MACUCC is sponsoring an Ecumenical Lenten Carbon Fast. You can sign up to receive a different carbon saving tip during each day of Lent by email at <http://www.macucc.org/pages/detail/2410>.

An Earth-friendly Approach to Lenten Sacrifices for Kids

1. **Give up fast food.** This form of "dining" is responsible for producing mountains of trash each year and 7-14 lbs CO₂ emissions per fast food burger.
2. **Reject bottled water.** Filter your tap water and use re-usable bottles. This saves 0.2 lbs CO₂ per bottle.
3. If you do not ride the school bus, ask your parents about **walking or riding your bike to school.** It's good exercise and saves energy and 1 lb of CO₂ per mile.
4. **Use a power switch** to turn off electronic amusements such as video game boxes, TVs, DVD players, stereos, radios. Playstation 3 and Xbox consume 180 lbs CO₂ per year when left in idle mode. To relax, read a book, play outside or visit friends.
5. Tell the cashier at the store you would like to **refuse the bag.** Better yet, **bring your own reusable bags** to the store. The average American household uses over 1,000 plastic shopping bags per year resulting in approximately 62 lbs of CO₂ emissions. Paper bags have an even worse environmental impact. The hardest thing about using a reusable bag is remembering to bring it with you. Just keep them in the car so you're sure to have one on hand when you need it.