

Share these tips with your family, friends, and congregation. Choose any or all. Forward them to someone you care about.

- For a few days, keep a tally of all the single-use plastic items you encounter. Become hyper-aware of plastic bags, excess packaging, water bottles, disposable cutlery, straws, and cups that litter your life before they stay in landfills or oceans for eons. Share your count with at least one other person. Awareness is the first step to positive change.
- Treat your family to alternatives to the usual single-use plastic items in your home. For example, consider bamboo toothbrushes, shampoo bars, aluminum water bottles, and reusable silicone baggies. You can also visit a refill store. Move away from “throw-away.”
- Tell your friends what you are doing to reduce the plastic waste in your life. Talk about why that change is important to you. Recount your changes as steps on a journey and invite them to join you in tackling the problem. Encourage them and avoid creating any embarrassment.
- At work, check out the coffee station. Styrofoam cups and plastic stirrers get thrown away but never go away. Look for non-plastic alternatives for coffee cups. Buy a package of linguine pasta, break the strands in half, and use them to stir the coffee or tea. The pasta-stirrers can be composted or thrown away without the same harm that plastic generates.
- Plan an Earth Day (April 22) opportunity to educate and encourage your church family about choosing the planet over plastic. Consider a display, “This — Not That,” showing alternatives to single-use plastics. Plan a special Sunday school program. Arrange to clean up a nearby stream or roadway as a service project. Weigh and report the results. In worship, include prayers for the planet. Hand out reusable bags imprinted with a reminder to care for God’s creation.
- Donate to organizations that are addressing the plastic problem on a larger scale. Your financial support enables them to reach far and wide. Check out these examples: [EarthDay.org](http://EarthDay.org), [Plastic-Free July](http://Plastic-Free July), The Story of Stuff Project, specifically, [The Story of Bottled Water](http://The Story of Bottled Water).
- Push your state or city to ban specific single-use plastics. Already, more than 500 cities have ordinances against plastic bags. Twelve states have bans in place, and two more are working in that direction. The number is growing, and [the bans are working](#). Get your local policymakers on the “ban-wagon.”
- Money talks. Boycott companies that use excessive plastic packaging. Purchase from businesses that are committed to environmentally friendly practices and plastic-free products. Look for [B Corp certification](#). Read the “About” tab on websites. Complain if you receive something with plastic packaging. Buy food not wrapped in plastic.
- Currently wending its way through Congress is the bill [H.R. 6053](#): “To amend the Solid Waste Disposal Act to reduce the production and use of certain single-use plastic products and packaging, to improve the responsibility of producers in

the design, collection, reuse, recycling, and disposal of consumer products and packaging, to prevent pollution from consumer products and packaging from entering into animal and human food chains and waterways, and for other purposes.” Contact your representative to advocate for its passage.

- Approach this Earth Day — and every day — with gratitude. Our Creator God has gifted us with an amazing planet — not wrapped in plastic. Our faithful response is to cherish and care for this treasure.

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