

**THINKING ABOUT STARTING
AN ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE
IN YOUR PARISH?***

GOOD!

Take a deep breath. And relax! It's not rocket science. It's merely bringing people together who want to care for God's creation. And if there is anything that we do well as Episcopalians, it's committees! Here are some tips on starting and maintaining an Environmental Stewardship Committee, plus some ideas for possible projects and activities.

To start, some do's:

- **Volunteer to schedule an exploratory meeting and make a list of others who might be interested.**
- **Appoint a convener to schedule future meetings, take notes, and lead discussions.**
- **Consult the rector about an appropriate "home" for the committee. A natural fit would be the Outreach Commission.**
- **Establish a clergy liaison if possible, your deacon, for example.**
- **Strive for diversity in the committee. Recruit men, women, youth, college students, professionals, and retirees.**
- **Meet monthly as you're getting started.**
- **Collect a list of ideas, then set some broad goals from which to plan activities: Here are some examples:**

A. Goal: Increase energy efficiency in the facilities your church maintains.

1). Invite the Junior Warden to a meeting to find out what is currently being done.

2). Get an energy audit of your buildings through NC Interfaith Power and Light [www.ncipl.org] to discover what more you can accomplish.

3). Appoint a subcommittee to work with the Junior Warden to follow through with suggestions from the energy audit.

B. Goal: Develop Educational Programs on the Topic

1). Organize a Sunday school class [see, for example: www.episcopalchurch.org, then search “A Catechism of Creation: An Episcopal Understanding” and “To Serve Christ in All Creation.”].

2). Schedule a series of Adult Forums with guest speakers.

3). Study a book.

C. Goal: Build Channels of Communication to Discuss Environmental Stewardship

1). Start a resource table with a lending library of books, CDs and DVDs.

2). Put regular announcements and interesting facts in the church newsletter.

- **Submit your plans to the vestry for their knowledge and approval.**

Some Don'ts:

- **Don't spin your wheels laboring over a well crafted mission statement. Your parish probably already has a mission statement. Any work being done by the Environmental Stewardship Committee no doubt will fit into that mission statement.**
- **Don't get too ambitious, especially in the first year. Nothing burns out a committee faster than asking the same eight people to work on twenty projects.**

****In 1991, the Episcopal Diocese of North Carolina adopted a resolution encouraging all parishes to start “Earth Stewardship Committees.” Progress has been made throughout the diocese. But if you belong to a parish that still needs to step aboard, this list of guidelines will help you get started--developed by the Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry. For more information on “Continuing Work of Environmental Stewardship Committees” and other helpful resources, please see the Diocesan website: www.episdionc.org, search “Chartered Committee on Environmental Ministry.***