

Ways to Go Green for Schools, Communities, Parishes, and Organizations

Sustainable schools and sustainable leadership both begin with a clear moral purpose. This moral purpose aligns to the need to preserve, protect and support the environment, as a living system, from the damage caused by modern living. Sustainable schools combine deep moral purpose with a central focus on learning. Sustainable schools put learning first but locate this learning within a sustainable development framework.¹ Preparing young people for a lifetime of sustainable living, through their educational experience will provide them with the tools, examples and opportunities they need to live in a reverential and sustainable way.

A school built on the core principles of sustainable development will encourage care:

- Care for oneself – our health and well-being
- Care for each other – across cultures, distances and generations
- Care for the environment – near and far

“The life of stewardship is an ongoing process of integration whereby we relate our whole person to the whole action of God...By acknowledging our dependence on God for all life, we are called to regard both material things and human capabilities not as private possessions or as the property of limited groups, but as God’s.”²

Area	Ideas	Additional Ideas
Food and Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to promote local foods and regional providers. • Plan a vegetable garden and teach students how to cook using fresh vegetables and fruits. • Provide organic produce in lunch options. • Invite local farmers to give a presentation to the students on sustainable agriculture and nutrition. • Partner with a local farm for produce purchases. • Identify Fair Trade products that can be served/sold in the dining hall (tea, coffee, chocolate, etc.). • Reduce use of bottled water by sports teams and students school-wide. • Encourage use of or provide for purchase BPA-free bottles for beverages and eliminate the use of bottled water. Turn it into a fundraiser. Have art students design bottle logo. 	
Local Community Partnerships & Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner with local community organizations and agencies that provide expertise and information. • Use experts in the area to educate the school community and partner in sustainability efforts. • Publicize your school’s efforts and educate the local community. 	

1 Hargreaves, A. and D. Fink, *Sustainable Leadership* (San Francisco, Jossey Bass, 2006) p. 266.

2 P. Dietterich, *New Perspectives on Christian Stewardship* (Chicago: Center for Parish Development, 1984) p. 10.



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Energy and Water	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a water audit and identify ways to conserve water – identify leaking faucets, low flow toilets, etc. Learn about water purification. • Initiate a rain barrel water collection system. • Explore feasibility of solar energy, solar ovens and solar panels. • Use recycled exercise bikes and an inverter, to create up to 150 hours of electricity – enough to power their Christmas lights. Turn the workout room into a power generator. • Provide educational opportunities that emphasize conservation and education. • Replace florescent lighting with Compact fluorescent light bulbs. 	
Travel and Traffic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage students to walk, cycle or bus to school rather than come by car. • Provide a secure bike rack at the school. • Establish Walk to School days. • Petition the city to install safe cross walks if your school lacks one. • Maximize school trips by planning team matches across sports – where feasible. 	
Purchasing and Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate a comprehensive recycling program and compost all food waste. • Have a Garbage Awareness Week – See and track the amount of waste generated by the school community. Set target goals for reducing waste and increasing recycling. Chart progress in school hallways. • Establish composting practices in the dining hall. • Purchase only recycled paper for school use. • Use only 100% compostable and re-usable products for the dining hall. • Refer to EPA's Energy Star assessment tools when purchasing appliances and electronics. • Encourage recycling of the following items and look for causes to support in these efforts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Cell phones o Electronics o Ink-Jet Printer o Clothing o Computers o Shoes 	
Building and Grounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan an orchard on the school grounds. • Build a PVC & Plastic sheeting Greenhouse. • Plant an organic garden. • Collect rain-water run-off and reuse for plant/landscape watering. • Purchase “green” cleaning products and tools and eliminate the use of hazardous chemicals in the building. 	





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Advocacy and Social Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow legislation on local land use, development, water rights, etc. and engage in letter writing campaigns and visits to political leaders. • Have students analyze zoning plans and attend hearings to give their input on land use and development issues. • Follow the United States' involvement in Climate Change negotiations. • Follow the UN Framework for Climate Change initiatives. 	
Campus Ministry– Prayer, Liturgies, Retreats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in global initiatives to address climate change and use prayer and liturgy to form the community's awareness. • Plan liturgies and prayer services using the resources available from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Catholic Climate Covenant - www.catholicclimatecovenant.org o The Global Catholic Climate Movement - www.catholicclimatemovement.global o CRS/USCCB: Catholics Confront Global Poverty - www.confrontglobalpoverty.org 	
School Celebrations (Assemblies, Graduation, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebrate the Feast of St. Francis (October 4) and focus on the spirituality of care for creation. • Have students on each grade level plan and facilitate school activities for: Earth Day (April 22) – Link up with community events and activities. • Use the occasion of Thanksgiving to look at food and agriculture issues • October is International Walk to School month – determine ways to educate and provide incentives for faculty, staff and students to walk where feasible and safe. • Schedule Assemblies with environmental themes • Plan Advent and Lenten observances that are connected to good stewardship and reducing consumption/consumerism. Create a calendar of daily activities and post on your website for parents and families to join in. 	
Large Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan a Fair Trade or “eco” awareness week. • Host an assembly on Fair Trade. • Calculate the carbon footprint of individual students and the school community as a whole. • Have an “All School Read” on a book about sustainability (Example: <i>The Omnivore's Dilemma</i>). • Participate in fund raising for an irrigation or agricultural project in a developing country (See Catholic Relief Services for ideas or potential partners and projects to support: www.crs.org). 	



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Large Activities (continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold an Environmental Film Festival – screen films and discuss afterwards. Invite stakeholders from the local community. • Tag and identify trees on the property – develop an arboretum. • Form a school partnership with a school in a developing country and foster awareness of their environmental realities. As a model of solidarity, connect your efforts at your school community with the needs of their school community. • Establish a “Year of Sustainability” as an all school effort - Provide a yearlong, focused educational experience, thus elevating our awareness of global environmental and sustainability issues. 	
Academic & Curricular Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at existing resources to assist you in planning integrated lessons: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Resources on <i>Laudato Sí</i> - http://bit.ly/2lfY9tn o Interfaith Study Guide: “The Cry of Creation: A Call for Climate Justice” - http://bit.ly/2lfYcVZ • Refer to the resources and lesson plans on the Education for Justice website to use in class - www.educationforjustice.org • Science class: design and make solar ovens and make solar panels. • Art class: promote engagement with the natural world through painting, drawing, photography, nature walks, gardening, cooking classes, technology lessons, clean-ups. • Theology class: explore the topic of Saints and Sustainability – how they related to the natural world around them – how it informed their writings and spirituality; focus on aspects of our spiritual relationship with the planet in theology and astronomy; • Economics class: provide an exploration of consumerism: “prophets not profits” • Biology/Earth Science class: Develop a project to track birds and animals as they migrate across a changing world and the dangers posed by climate change, research what is happening in staging posts and feeding areas and habitats as a result of development and climate change. • Geography class: learn about water as a precious global resource, the need for its conservation, and humanity’s personal responsibility to maintain clean water. • World History/Global Culture class: Consider geo-political issues. • Geography and Science class: learn about different sources of energy, the challenge of reducing pollution, and the energy crisis. • Earth Science and World History classes: explore why water is a key to making progress in developing countries. 	