



# PROTECT THE PLANET

Suggestions on Service and Community Outreach  
on Plastic Reduction



## RESPECT, REFUSE, REDUCE, REUSE, RECYCLE

The following guide has suggestions on service projects that can be implemented around the issue of plastics

<b>1. Identify issue(s)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plastic debris laden shores, streams, other waterbodies, neighbourhood</li><li>• Plastic grocery bags at food-markets</li></ul>
<b>2. Inventory needs &amp; decide on type of initiative/activity</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify headwaters, shores and neighbourhoods that are affected by plastic pollution</li><li>• Identify grassroots organisations hosting any clean-up events</li><li>• In absence of organised clean-up event, assess the needs and plan to organise one where the public could participate as well</li><li>• Develop an awareness program/campaign to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>o educate the community on present status of plastic pollution and how it is affecting fragile ecosystems and threatening marine life</li><li>o promote more sustainable lifestyle, free of, or with less-dependence on, single-use plastic items</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>3. Check local laws and regulations</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To organise a clean-up event, prior to the activity, find out about local directives, laws and regulations, and necessary approvals/permissions by contacting appropriate authorities, such as townships/boroughs/localities</li></ul>

- To gather public support on ban of plastic grocery bags, review local directives, see if there is existing regulations that could be utilised, or learn about the legislative measures or the process that other states/countries instituted to successfully enforce a ban on plastic bags or reduce their consumption (for e.g.. Steep tax on plastic bags; legislation requiring the reduction, reuse, and recycling of checkout bags)

#### 4. Take Action & Inspire

- Local civic groups, environmental organisations, township, or environmental commissions conduct clean-up activities throughout the year. Centres may coordinate a group clean-up activity by contacting the local community or environmental organisations for logistical planning and **either organise the clean-up event for the group and public, or join the one hosted by others**. For information on clean-up programmes and registering at a local community clean-up event on behalf of Centre/Group, refer to the below section
- **Promote awareness and education** on plastic pollution and preventive measures through the **Walk For Values** Programme, talks or workshops, sharing of quotations etc.
- **Get involved!** Promote advocacy/legislature on banning of plastic bags or regulating use/enforcing recycling, as described in Section 3 above: 'Check local laws and regulations'
- Encourage local and national businesses to carry alternatives to single-use plastics (especially large chain stores such as Wal-Mart or CostCo). Consumers will be more willing to purchase if they are readily available in stores where they shop frequently.

#### Waterbodies/Neighbourhood/Highway Clean-ups & Campaigns

1. **Participate in a stream or river clean-up or organise one.** Many organisations organise clean-ups or support groups in organising clean-ups. One such example globally is Ocean Conservancy.  
Existing clean ups: <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/clean-up-locations.html> Organising your own clean up:  
<http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/do-it-yourself-cleanup-tool.html> .
2. **Beach Clean Up Scavenger Hunt.** Organise a beach clean up cum scavenger hunt in your locality. This can be organised for kids or adults. You will need to pick an area of the beach and mark it. Have a list of scavenger hunt items that can be gathered from beach trash (e.g. plastic bottles, plastic bags, spoons, etc). <http://www.mykidsadventures.com/cleanup-scavenger-hunt/>

3. **Clean up your local park/area.** Organise a litter picking day out in your local park or area.
4. **Adopt-a-highway clean-up programme.** Such programmes are run by State Departments of Transportation (<http://www.adoptahighway.net/>) in the USA or could be run by similar governmental bodies in other countries. Volunteer groups and individuals 'adopt' a two-mile or longer stretch of roadway and make a two-year commitment to pick up the trash at least four times a year. Children can participate with adult supervision as long as the adopted road is not an interstate or interchange. The Department of Transportation provides the signs, trash bags, bright orange vests and safety information, and picks up the bags along the side of the road.

*"You are under the mistaken notion that you are rendering service to others. You should give up such a feeling. Only then does the service you perform become real service in the strict sense of the term. Service does not merely mean helping others. The best way to love God is to love all and serve all. Your acts of service should be suffused with the spirit of love."* (Divine Discourse, Jan 1, 2003.)

