

HOW ORDINARY FAMILIES CAN LIVE OUT LAUDATO SI?

Top responses to Susan Vogt's June 2016 survey



SUCCESSFUL RECYCLING / ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIONS?

Common Responses:

- Recycling: plastics, cans, paper
- Composting
- Vegetable gardening (+ & -)
- Reusable water bottles
- Reduce paper (print on both sides, color on one, cloth napkins, grocery bags...)
- Reduce water when brushing teeth, showering, dishwasher & laundry frequency
- Differentiate needs vs wants
- Cleanup a beach, park, your street
- Use energy saving light bulbs & appliances
- Avoid excessive packaging

Best intergenerational, parish, community effort

Families with kids and grandparents take care of planting, weeding, cultivating the tomato patch behind the church garage. Tomatoes are given to food pantry. (Theresa Brennan, Louisville, KY)

Overcoming Christmas gift indulgence??

We make our large gathering Christmas presents typically out of recycled materials. Last year we made Santa jars (including a hat on the cap) out of recycled Spaghetti Sauce jars. With needing 50 gifts that aren't expensive, it was both economically and environmentally friendly. (Lisa Jachimiec, Milwaukee, WI)

Best use of garbage

We separate any aluminum into a separate clear bag and leave it on top of the recycle bin for the Hispanic man who comes by early on pickup day, thus helping him earn a bit of cash for his family. Also less degrading than for him to have to dig through garbage! Our Parish rectory and some friends now do the same! (Marilyn Mulcahy, Kankakee, IL)

Best electricity sustainability idea

We got off the grid and signed up for [Arcadia](#) wind power for our electricity (Tom Giardino SM, St. Louis, MO)

Best community electronics idea

The Eagle Scout project of the son of friends was to have a drive (through our church) to collect and recycle old electronics. I've never seen so many Radio Shack computer towers. (Ruby Peters)

Best example of letting our children lead the way

Our youngest is determined not to leave a carbon foot-print on our earth. She has taught us how to begin to recycle and reuse items in our home The best...we set-up & monitor a free recycle paper and electronic recycling day at our church. 8th graders help and accept tips for their class trip. (Jan Redle, Louisville, KY)

Best way to fill a recycling gap

Our family recycles glass because our city Omaha does not. It is simple. We put our glass in a paper bag and drop it off once a month at either whole foods or our city recycling center. It takes very little time and allows for us to be the change we wish to see in the world. (Lindsay Surdell, Omaha, NB)

FLOPS

Compost fiasco

I had a worm bin. I would feed my compost the little red worms. My kids were good at helping me recycle veggie compost from the kitchen. To aerate the worm bin, my husband drilled holes in the side...too low. Some worms crawled out. Also the worm juice seeped out and caused a very dark stain on our garage floor. It is a wonderful reminder, although I am still annoyed by it 20 years later. (Diane Boggs, Vancouver, WA)

Garden thieves

Our effort to grow our own vegetables has been a flop. I blame the woodchucks, but really, I haven't tried hard enough to outwit/get rid of them. (Steve Beirne, Portland, ME)

Messiest

Trying to wash our many empty peanut butter jars so they could be recycled (Mary Ellen Lynch- Alsip, IL)

The challenge of feeding large groups ecologically

We still struggle when there is a bigger family event about using or not using paper plates, plastic knives and forks and cups. (Kathy McGinnis, St. Louis, MO)

Most inhumane/humorous

Composting, our dog thinks it's his duty to tear everything up. still trying, we have a small flower and vegetable garden, though. (Frank Segura, El Paso TX)

WAYS TO HELP KIDS CURB CONSUMERISM?

Common Responses:

- Reduce TV & Commercials
- Model buying used stuff
- Gifts: Limit Xmas gifts, give experiences, 1 in-1 out
- Don't waste food; eat leftovers

Most energetic

Save the old shampoo bottle. Buy the same kind again. Pour ½ into the old bottle. Add water to both to fill. Do the same to the girls liquid body soap. (Therese Brennan, Louisville, KY)

Best lesson about avoiding yellow food coloring.

Use old dish-soap bottles for summer squirt guns and winter drawing on snow. For winter put food coloring into the water (we do not use yellow food color though) (Theresa Brennan, Louisville, KY)

Best use of plastic bags

Save plastic grocery or newspaper bags and give them to neighbors with dogs.

Best gift giving ideas

We give our grandchildren experiences such as a day with each grandchild doing something they like to do. For Christmas, all got certificates for shoes of their choice – consumerism for a necessity. One year they got certificates to try one new activity. Next year: haircut/styling certificates. (Beverly Hartberg, Madison, WI)

Best reduction of solicitations/commercials

Ban robocalls, junk mail and tv/electronic advertising. Mute all commercials. (Barbara Papp, Ann Arbor, MI)

Teaching kids to wait

I try to teach my children that they can't have the latest gadget when it comes out. They have to wait until it either comes down in price or they can afford it themselves. Just because their friends have a gadget, doesn't mean they have to have it too! – BUT it doesn't work when they have their own money. (Milanda Kelly, Louth Ireland)

FLOPS

Common Response:

- Being a grandparent, it's hard to refrain from giving our grandkids stuff

Learning from our kids

Adult flop: A few times something broke and I wanted to buy a new one and the kids said, let's fix the old one or "do you really need that." Humbling to say the least but gives me hope for the future. (Kathy Martin, Omaha, NB)

Test it first (Always make a prototype)

We made Christmas trees out of packing peanuts, old office folders, and clearance Christmas plates. After mass assembling the trees, I put them outside to spray paint and the foam pieces so carefully glued to the file folder cones disintegrated before our eyes... sadness! (Lisa Jachimiec, Milwaukee, WI)

Start Young

I should have been stronger on having my son save up to buy things and then to give away something away before he could get anything new. It is a never ending battle. (C. Koppenheffer, Anaheim, CA)

Rule: Buy it with your own money. Problem: They can buy what they want.

We would not buy a Nintendo game system for their birthdays (2 days apart). So my son talked our daughter into pooling their funds and buying it themselves. Then they fought over its use. (joe schmitt, Kalamazoo, MI)