

Could you give up single use plastics for Lent?

What is it?

WUC in the World invites you to take the challenge of using no ***single use plastics*** or reducing your use of plastics in your household during Lent, starting Wed. Feb. 26 to Thursday, April 9

****single use plastics** or disposable **plastics**, are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. These items are things like **plastic** bags, straws, coffee stirrers, soft drinks and water bottles, cutlery, foam trays and takeout containers, and most food and consumer product packaging, cigarette filters.*

Why do it?

Some facts about plastics: (from UNESCO)

- The United Nations Environment Programme estimated in 2006 that every square mile of ocean contains 46,000 pieces of floating plastic.
- Once discarded, plastics are weathered and eroded into very small fragments known as micro-plastics. These together with plastic pellets are already found in the Yukon River and most beaches around the world. Plastic debris causes the deaths of more than a million seabirds every year, as well as more than 100,000 marine mammals.

Some facts from EcoWatch:

- We currently recover only 5% of the plastics we produce.
- The production of plastic uses around 8% of the world's oil production (bioplastics are not a good solution as they require food source crops).
- It will take 500-1,000 years for plastic to degrade.
- Cigarette butts, plastic bags, fishing gear, and food and beverage containers are the most common forms of plastic pollution found in the oceans.
- Some of these compounds found in plastic have been found to alter hormones or have other potential human health effects.

How to participate?

- Sign up as a participant on the bulletin board at church by Feb. 26
- Reduce your use of single use plastic in your household during Lent. Include restaurant or takeout meals such as plastic cups, straws, plates, cutlery, etc.
- Make a note of any things you notice about your use of plastics, any substitutions you find or tricks that you develop to deal with eliminating single use plastics. We'll share these with each other.

Tips for 44 days to reduce your single use plastics:

- **Groceries** – switch to buying loose produce or foods from the bulk dispensers; use cloth bags or boxes for grocery packing; bring your own containers like glass jars or cloth net bags for bulk foods; preorder meat in bulk and ask butcher to wrap in butcher paper or provide them with reusable, clean plastic containers; say “no thanks” to plastic bags, free promotional items and anything else you don’t need; avoid water or other beverages in plastic bottles
- **In the Kitchen** – replace plastic food wrap with beeswax or cloth food covers; home cook or bake things you’d normally buy like granola, salsa, salad dressing; give plastic wrapped pre-prepared or frozen convenience foods in plastic lined boxes; compost; freeze limp veggies or peels and make into veggie broth; use cloth napkins instead of paper; reusable rags for mopping up spills; coconut fibre scrubbing brushes. For parties replace plastic balloons with reusable or homemade decorations – tissue pompoms, banners, lanterns, fresh flowers, dried branches and leaves, etc. Use compostable or reusable cups, cutlery and dishes or borrow them for large events.
- **In the bathroom** – homemade or bulk bar soaps, shampoos and body lotions; shampoo bar soap; toilet paper wrapped in paper rather than plastic; bamboo handled toothbrush; natural loofah sponge; tear off laundry detergent sheets. Avoid facial scrubs and other personal care products with tiny plastic polyethylene beads. Replace plastic razors with stainless steel safety razor with replaceable blades.
- **On-the-Go** – prepare lunches and snacks in reusable pouches, beeswax wrap or jars; put together a “on-the-go” kit with re-usable cutlery, dish/bowl, cloth napkin, chopsticks, travel mug, water bottle and use for leftovers from restaurant meals or for potluck dinners.
- **Do It Yourself or Repair or Buy Used** – cut down plastic packaging by making things from scratch whether homemade soup, cleaning products, clothing and household goods or growing bedding plants for a garden. Watch for the mending and repair workshops offered by Zero Waste Yukon.
- **Recycle** – go to the Raven Recycling website (www.ravenrecycling.org) or phone 667-7269 to find out how to sort your recyclables. They will accept clean hard plastic containers/lids and white Styrofoam packaging. Also soft plastic bags and wraps all stuffed into a soft plastic bag and tied. No Styrofoam food trays.
- **Rethink** – Do you really need to buy it? Rethink gifts – give experiences, your time or second-hand gifts or contribute to a cause? Synthetic clothing and household goods are made from plastics and break down into microfibers during washing. This clothing often ends up in the garbage. If you need to buy new clothing consider organic cotton, hemp, and other natural fibers instead. What policies or practices at work impact single use plastics? (Coffee making? Lunch room recycling? Procurement process?)