

Green Corner: Five Spring Cleaning Tips for One Healthier Planet

As your church and members of your community start their spring cleaning, consider making these small but meaningful changes toward a greener, brighter future:

1. Switch from harmful cleaners to environmentally-friendly products.

Read the labels on your cleaners. If the ingredients include caustic chemicals, you can replace them with gentler brands that are just as effective. You may even find that you can make your own all-natural cleaning products from items you have in your kitchen, such as vinegar, baking soda, and dishwashing liquid. Look online for instructions on concocting homemade products that get the job done.

2. See if unwanted items can be recycled.

A big part of spring cleaning is getting rid of things. Before you toss them in the trash, though, check to see if they can be recycled. For example, old electronics such as VCRs or tube TVs as well as old fabrics can be recycled by specialized companies. Find out what resources are available in your community.

3. Begin a compost heap.

Spring cleaning initiatives can take place outdoors as well as indoors – and the time to plant is just around the corner. Gather kitchen scraps, especially items that are particularly good for gardening, such as coffee grounds and fruit and vegetable scraps, and begin to cultivate a compost heap that can be used to fertilize outdoor plants. The more you compost, the fewer plastic garbage bags you fill up and throw out.

4. Install a rain barrel.

Put those spring showers to use later in the season! Install a covered rain barrel to capture gutter runoff, and water your garden with excess rain year-round.

5. Do one thing to reduce your community's environmental footprint.

Drink from coffee mugs instead of Styrofoam cups, purchase biodegradable disposable utensils instead of plastic, or use a washable table cloth instead of a disposable one.

Even one of these small changes can make a big difference. Here's to a green spring!