

Lent Plastic Challenge



The following has been taken from the Church of England's [2019 Lent Plastic Challenge](#). The world has changed a lot since then, and not all the suggestions will be possible in a Covid lockdown and you may need to be creative. On the other hand, the pandemic has increased our reliance on disposable plastics (PPE, cleaning materials etc) and so the need has never been greater to wean ourselves off this unsustainable way of living. Perhaps have a go and see if you can at least manage two of the suggestions per week, and use the Sunday mini-reflections to help you think more deeply about how caring for the earth deepens faith, and how faith worked out in practice means caring better for our world.

For Anglicans Lent is the time when we remember the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness, facing challenge and temptation. It is a time when we reflect on God's purpose for our life. This year we challenge you to give up single-use plastics – to reduce the actions which damage God's Creation.

Over **8.3 billion tonnes** of plastic have been produced since the 1950s. That's enough plastic to cover every inch of the UK ankle-deep more than ten times over. Just **9%** was recycled.

'To strive to safeguard the integrity of creation and sustain and renew the life of the earth' The Anglican Communion's Fifth Mark of Mission.

17 February Ash Wednesday	Isaiah 24:4-5 'The earth dries up and withers, the world languishes and withers; the heavens languish together with the earth. The earth lies polluted under its inhabitants'
18 Thursday	Give up disposable cups & drinks in plastic bottles Carry a travel mug or water bottle. Get a reusable bottle, fill it up with tap water before leaving the house, and refill it wherever you happen to be.
19 Friday	Bring your own reusable bags Plastic bags and produce bags in particular are often used for minutes before being discarded. Most plastic bags are not recycled, ending up in landfills.
20 Saturday	Carry your own non-plastic cutlery Plastic disposable cutlery and straws are among the worst plastic pollution culprits. Get in the habit of carrying your own cutlery with you and leaving a set in the car.

Food and Drink	21 Sunday	<p>Psalms 104: 25-30 ‘There is the sea, vast and spacious, teeming with creatures beyond number—living things both large and small.’</p> <p>By 2050 we could have more plastic than fish (by weight) in the sea.</p>
	22 Monday	<p>Buy in bulk to minimize or eliminate packaging This goes for food and drink as well as cleaning supplies, toiletries, hardware items – anything that may come in plastic packaging.</p>
	23 Tuesday	<p>Avoid overpackaged, processed, canned and frozen convenience foods Stay clear of the three tomatoes sitting on a Styrofoam tray and covered in plastic cellophane.</p>
	24 Wednesday	<p>Buy fresh bread that comes in either paper bags or no bags This eliminates plastic wrapping waste from shop bought bread and you help support local businesses.</p>
	25 Thursday	<p>Choose milk in returnable glass bottles Many areas have local dairies that provides milk in returnable glass bottles rather than plastic or plastic- coated cardboard.</p>
	26 Friday	<p>Use non-plastic containers for food– lunches, leftovers, freezing, storage, take-out, travelling... Request takeaways use your container instead of their disposable one. Take a container when you buy meat, fish or cheese.</p>
	27 Saturday	<p>Shop at markets Fresh food markets are not only often cheaper and fresher than supermarkets but they sell fruit and vegetables loose. Don’t forget to take your reusable bags.</p>
Bathroom	28 Sunday	<p>Every day millions of microplastics enter the sea from toiletry products. Start a conversation or ask to talk about how you are taking action on plastics at church.</p>
	1 March – Monday	<p>Look around your bathroom and see what plastics you can replace Do you have plastic bottles sitting in the shower? Find a brand you like and try and get it in bulk. If it's not available in bulk – ask the manufacturer to offer it.</p>
	2 Tuesday	<p>Use a razor with removable blades Disposable razors and razor blades are two of the biggest contributors to plastic waste.</p>
	3 Wednesday	<p>Check labels of toiletries Did you know some facial scrubs & toiletries products contain tiny plastic beads? Avoid anything with “polyethylene” listed as an ingredient.</p>
	4 Thursday	<p>Use a bamboo toothbrush or a toothbrush with recyclable heads and try to find dental floss that doesn’t come in plastic packaging.</p>
	5 Friday	<p>Use bar soap instead of liquid hand soap This is an easy change to make, if you are feeling keen you can even make your own soap bars.</p>
	6 Saturday	<p>Choose lotions and lip balms in plastic-free containers Some shops will now refill glass toiletry containers or give you a discount if you return old packaging.</p>

Kitchen	7 Sunday	Choose lotions and lip balms in plastic-free containers Some shops will now refill glass toiletry containers or give you a discount if you return old packaging.
	8 Monday	Look around your kitchen and see what plastics you can replace Use a dish brush with a wooden handle and compostable bristles.
	9 Tuesday	Use natural cleaning cloths instead of plastic & synthetic sponges Compressed natural cellulose sponges are often sold without any plastic packaging.
	10 Wednesday	Use a blender made of glass If you find yourself needing to purchase a new blender in the future, try and go for a glass alternative if possible.
	11 Thursday	Buy glass and/or stainless steel containers for food storage Glass works well for freezer storage as well, just ensure you leave room at the top of the jar.
	12 Friday	Avoid foil wrapped crisps and chocolates Some sweet wrappers are now recyclable but don't forget to check.
	13 Saturday	Share your leftovers or unwanted food Reduce waste by joining a food sharing network like Olio.
Clothing	14 Sunday	Job 28:12-13 'But where can wisdom be found? Where does understanding dwell?' Do you use disposable cups at church? Can you encourage people to bring their own mug?
	15 Monday	Choose natural fibres Synthetic fabrics create microfibre pollution when washed. When buying new clothes look for organic cotton, wool, and other natural fibres.
	16 Tuesday	Alter and Modify Old Shoes and Clothing into New Do you have old clothes and shoes that you never wear because they don't fit or are out of style? Take them to a tailor or cobbler for alteration.
	17 Wednesday	Buy clothing second-hand Buying clothes second hand not only saves you money but ensures that the second-hand clothes you purchase have an extra-long lease of life.
	18 Thursday	Do a clothes swap Look online for local events or get advice on how to set up your own. Take a look at sites like Get Swishing.
	19 Friday	Invest in quality By doing this you are minimising the demand for cheap items that end up in landfill. In the long run it will save you money.
	20 Saturday	Request zero plastic packaging If you're buying clothes online ask the retailer if they can reduce or remove plastic packaging.

Home	21 Sunday	Psalm 24:1-2 'The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it'.
	22 Monday	Put a "No Junk Mail" sticker on your letterbox This will reduce the number of letters with plastic windows. It will also reduce your paper waste.
	23 Tuesday	Make it from scratch Try and cook as much as possible from scratch and take your own sandwiches and snacks when you go out.
	24 Wednesday	Avoid wet wipes These contain plastic fibres so don't break down like toilet roll, despite often being described as flushable.
	25 Thursday	Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new Check second-hand shops, Freecycle or Freegle. Look for sharing groups locally.
	26 Friday	Acquire necessary plastic items used instead of new Check second-hand shops, Freecycle or Freegle. Look for sharing groups locally.
	27 Saturday	Don't buy new CDs and DVDs Stream or download music, shows, and films online, buy second hand or borrow them from the library or friends.
Travel	28 Sunday	Micah 6:8 'He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'
	29 Monday	Avoid plastic pens and giveaways Try using a refillable fountain pen or pencils.
	30 Tuesday	Bring your own toiletries Skip the free travel size shampoos, soaps, and lotions offered by hotels. Instead, fill up your own reusable travel- size containers at home.
	31 Wednesday	Avoid the Mini bar snacks and drinks Not only incredibly expensive but they all come in plastic packages or bottles. Even if you can't avoid plastic entirely, you can resist single-serving sizes.
	1 April Maundy Thursday	What lasting changes are you going to make? Do you find yourself looking at plastics in a different way? List three things you are going to commit to changing.

Make your voice heard:

Share what you are doing with friends, family and community. Ask your [MP](#) what they are doing to tackle single use plastics. Join the UN's [Clean Seas](#) campaign and Greenpeace's [Plastic Pledge](#). Find out your own [plastic footprint](#).

We hope this challenge has made you more aware of your plastic use and helped you create some lasting changes.

Don't forget to sign up for the quarterly environmental newsletter at www.churchofengland.org/environment