



# Make It Simple

*A Resource for Stewardship Education and Annual Response*

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## **Acting Together** (Based on John 13:34-35)

### **Background thoughts**

In today's world, concern for the environment has traveled much farther than many of us might have imagined. The questions have become more insistent—Do we really need big cars?—and the stakes have become much higher—When *will* the polar bears no longer have a sustaining habitat? In their homes and schools, even small children are aware of the broad strokes of environmental stewardship. They already know about recycling, about conservation, about careful use of natural resources.

They may not know or understand God's providence and God's agency in these matters. In this sermon you have the opportunity again to tell children how strongly God loves creation, how insistent God can be when it comes to stewardship of creation, how lovingly God invites the whole church to join together in appreciating, conserving, preserving, and carefully using the world God created—and still creates.

Those two themes join each other in today's Children's Sermon, "God Goes Green."

### **Reflections and questions**

- When it comes to ecology, what do the children already know? What have they already experienced?
- How heavily has your congregation engaged in "Green Church" ideals and behaviors?
- Children may have strong feelings about this subject.
- What are some current energy-conservation or energy-generating schemes in your locale, especially those of which children might be aware?
- What's joyful and pleasing about caring for creation?

## Preparing for the sermon

1. Assemble the materials you will need: a small mirror and a Bible covered with green cloth.
2. Check the position of the sun in your worship space *at the same time you will deliver this sermon*. Practice using the mirror to reflect the sun on the ceiling.
3. If sunlight does not stream into your church, substitute a very bright light—out of sight of worshipers—as a kind of “sun.”
4. Check the location and status of your baptismal font for its ability to reflect faces. (See the script for the children’s sermon for further details.)

## Sermon: “God Goes Green”

*(As the children are gathering, pivot a small mirror toward the ceiling of the church, trying to catch the sunlight. Pay attention to what you are doing and the kids will, too. When everyone has arrived, begin the sermon.)*

Let’s talk energy today. There’s a company that is using sunlight and mirrors to make energy. The sun shines on the mirrors, the mirrors heat up water, and when the water is hot enough it turns to steam. The steam turns big machines called generators. Generators make electricity. The electricity from the sunlight can bring electricity to over 100,000 homes. This is a new technology that uses an old idea: using the sun to make energy. New technologies are springing up, too, as our world “goes green.”

Did you notice that the Bible is covered in green this morning? *(Show the Bible to children.)* Yes, our church Bible is going green today. Jesus is going to teach us all about energy. Listen to this passage for today. It’s only two verses long. If I were you—or if I were me—I would memorize it. *(Read it from the Bible first, then say it from memory.)*

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13:34-35

Jesus once called himself the Light of the World. Who knew that he was talking about renewable energy? When Jesus said these words to his disciples, The Light of the World was going back to heaven to be with God. The disciples were sad. “How will we have any energy?” they thought. “Our source will be gone. The light will go out in the world!”

“NO WORRIES!” Jesus told them. “I have a plan. I will keep shining from heaven and you will be the mirrors on earth. Love one another. Take my light and flash it in every corner of the world. Send my beams to others and receive my beams from others. Together we will be God’s energy.” *(Read or say the passage again.)*

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

What a sustainable energy plan! It's still working. God's love powers billion of homes every day by using God's people as mirrors. Look in that mirror. *(Show the mirror around to a few children.)* You know who that is? That's a child of God. Turn that mirror a little bit so your friend is in there. *(Let children manipulate the mirror so that two or three other children are also visible to them.)* You know who those other people are? They're children of God, too!

*(If possible, go to the baptismal font together and have children notice their reflections in the water. Then this observation.)* There they are, the energetic children of God reflecting God's energy! *(If time and the sunlight allow it, review again how a mirror can reflect light.)*

Our Green Bible gives us a simple, sustainable energy plan. And does our world need God's energy! God shines love, and we are the mirrors who beam God's love to every place. *(Gesture to include all worshippers.)* Together we are God's energy.

## **Let's pray.**

Dear God,  
Thanks for making your command simple for us: Love one another. Help us to be your mirrors and fulfill your energy plan. Amen!