



Top 5 Ways to “Green” Your Christmas

There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions. (Laudato Si', 211)

Christmas is a time to celebrate the birth of Jesus, to cherish our friends and family, and to serve those who most need us.

It is a wonderful opportunity to focus on our call to love. **Protecting vulnerable people and all of creation can be part of the joy of Christmas.** Here are the top five ways to “green” your Christmas.

1. Consider **buying one fewer gift this year.** Instead, pledge to spend time with a special person or donate to a cause that serves the most vulnerable. Producing consumer goods at a large scale requires enormous energy and material resources. **Buying even one fewer gift is a move toward a more meaningful and sustainable lifestyle.**
2. **As the weather changes, adjust your thermostat** one degree cooler (Northern hemisphere) or warmer (Southern hemisphere) than you normally set it. Change the setting by several degrees when you are asleep or away from home. Heating and cooling buildings is the single largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in many countries. **Reducing your energy use may be the best gift you can give creation.**
3. In preparing food for Christmas celebrations, **focus on vegetarian dishes.** It’s a surprising truth that tending livestock for meat production makes a significant contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Vegetarian cuisine is native to many cultures, and **family members may enjoy encountering familiar dishes or exploring new ones.**
4. If you drive to purchase Christmas presents, **make as few car trips as possible.** Combine multiple stops into one trip, and take public transportation or walk if those options exist in your area. Fossil-fueled transportation contributes to climate change. **You’ll spend less time in traffic and generate less emissions.**

When buying gifts, commit to **spending 5 to 10 minutes researching ethical and sustainable sources.** A quick Internet search may help you support a small-scale producer and protect the goodness of creation. **The story of your gift may inspire its recipient, and the gift will directly benefit the producer and his or her local environment.**

“A constant flood of new consumer goods can baffle the heart and prevent us from cherishing each thing and each moment.” (Laudato Si', 222)

Christmas is a wonderful reminder that God loves us. Share the love with creation by taking 1 or more of these 5 simple steps. **And, please, tell us what you’ve done by [emailing us!](#)** We look forward to sharing the joy with you.