

REDUCE your footprint // INCREASE your handprint

8 ways to care for God's creation

In his book, *Small Footprint, Big Handprint: How to Live Simply and Love Extravagantly*, Pastor Tri Robinson gives us a wonderful framework for caring for God's creation. We encourage you to prayerfully consider it, act upon it, and enjoy it. As with anything God asks us to do, caring for His world and all its wonder is a blessing!

Reduce your footprint

1) **Watch the water.** Less than 1 percent of all the water on Earth is useable fresh water and we're running out of it. We need to watch how we use it. Every drop matters.

- Shortening your shower by one minute can save some 700 gallons per month. Better yet take "Navy showers"—water on to drench, water off to soap, water on to rinse.
- Turning off the tap while you brush or shave can save 4 gallons each time.
- The average US household uses 80-100 gallons per day...for flushing! Flush only when you have to and put a brick in the tank.
- Run dishwashers and washing machines with full loads only.
- Compost kitchen scraps instead of washing them down the disposal.
- Lawns are water hogs. Use native plants that thrive in your area without all that water, fertilizers, pesticides and money!

2) **Conserve energy.** In the USA, buildings account for 36 percent of our total energy use and 60 percent of our electricity and are responsible for 30 percent of our greenhouse gas output. It's time to dial it down. Every watt matters.

- Unplugging unused appliances can reduce electricity usage by 5 percent and nationwide save more than \$4 billion a year.
- Turning your thermostat down in the winter (up in the summer) saves energy and money—one to three percent for each degree.
- CFLs and LEDs are the way to go. If everyone in the USA used energy-efficient lighting, we could retire 90 power plants. And gone are the days of "ugly cold" lights.

3) **Park the car.** Carpool, take the bus, walk, run, skate or bike, but leave the car at home as much as you can. It's good for your body and good for the planet. Every mile matters.

4) **Eat smart.** Eating is an environmental action. Choosing locally grown, organic foods increases your health and the health of the planet...and it tastes so much better. Every bite matters.

Increase your handprint

5) **Plant a garden.** The simple act of planting and tending a garden does wonders for you and for God's creation. A community garden—at church or in your neighborhood—is even better. Many hands make light the work and also build relationships.

6) **Adopt your watershed.** Water runs down hill—into streams, lakes, and oceans—carrying sediment, chemicals, sewage and more. Learn about your watershed and how to protect it.

7) **Get outside.** Nature sings of God's glory. But you can't hear it if you're always inside. Grab your kids, your friends or go by yourself, but get out there to marvel, relax, enjoy, learn and protect.

8) **Volunteer** with A Rocha or start an A Rocha project in your own community. You'll be glad you did and so will we!

For more information and help with reducing your footprint and increasing your handprint, see www.arocha-usa.org.

A Rocha USA is a 501c3 nonprofit conservation organization mobilizing a network of community-based conservation projects and education programs—all inspired by God's love for his creation.