



Building an Effective Green Team

Your institution's Green Team is the foundation upon which all your environmental efforts are built. The Green Team is responsible for strategizing, planning and organizing your 'green' efforts, and is the primary motivator for your entire community.

Building an effective Green Team is an important first step in your path towards environmental stewardship. Here are some tips to help you make your Green Team as strong as possible.

Tip #1: Identify Diverse, Motivated and Influential Members

The composition of the Green Team is a significant factor in determining its success. It is important that members are motivated, committed and aware of the time and work that is required. Effective Green Teams have members who represent diverse constituencies within your community, have a range of experiences, and have earned the respect of your congregation.

The Team should include:

- Lay, ordained, and professional staff leaders
- Facilities maintenance staff
- Members of the buildings and grounds, finance, worship, education and social action committees
- Respected leaders within your community

If your congregation has additional committees or groups of importance – such as Women's or Men's groups, or Youth Groups – they should be represented on the Green Team also. Your congregation's Governing Board should formally and publicly establish your Green Team.

Tip #2: Share the Work

Successful Green Teams share their workload among all members, and find ways to get others in their community involved. Each Team member should have an area of responsibility (e.g. energy conservation, publicity, etc), which cultivates a sense of ownership, engagement, and leadership. Larger Green Teams may find it helpful to create subcommittees focused on particular areas of activity. If this takes place, a chairperson should be designated within each subcommittee to keep efforts well-organized.

Tip #3: Meet Regularly

While there is no precise number of meetings that ensures success, it is important that your Green Team meets regularly to track your progress and plan upcoming activities. We recommend that your Green Team meet approximately once every 6 weeks. During the earlier stages of your environmental work, we recommend that many of these meetings be in person. Later, once your Team has developed momentum and your efforts are well underway, these meetings can be via teleconference.

During Green Team meetings, Team members should discuss accomplishments and outline specific goals for the coming months. In addition, members should communicate with each other between meetings by creating an email list serve, sharing contact information, or by other means. If your team creates subcommittees, the entire green team should continue to meet together periodically to assess each of the subcommittees' progress and brainstorm together about potential activities.

Tip #4: Quick Wins, Publicity, and then Planning

Successful Green Teams recognize that it's important to build momentum and a sense of accomplishment before setting more challenging goals. To this end, the best Green Teams find ways to create "quick wins" for their community – and publicize these victories widely – in order to build positive momentum, a sense of pride and accomplishment, and to attract further support.

With these initial accomplishments in hand, strong Green Teams proceed to set and pursue more ambitious, long-term goals. The best Teams know that they need to respect the range of demands on their congregation's schedule, while also supporting a growing focus on the environment.

Following these four tips will help you turn your house of worship's Green Team into an effective force for Creation. Good luck!