

Section 4 - Environment

Reflection

To listen well is the mark of a true friend – and listening is a habit we learn through years of freeing ourselves enough to enter into another’s world. What we seldom realize is that the Earth itself is listening to us – and it speaks to us also, if we only make the effort to listen. But the earth is old and it speaks quite softly. Al Fritsch, SJ

Our vow of obedience – our vow of mutual collaboration – challenges us with making discernment our way of life by listening to God-within and obeying without resistance the inspirations that are so freely given. “Obey faithfully the inspirations of grace. There are few persons who give it full obedience. Often they respond reluctantly or negligently, seldom fully accomplishing the good God inspires them to do.” (Maxims of Perfection 6:8)

On the line next to each statement describe your current practice using this scale:

Never	Sometimes	Always
1	5	10

Score: 20 – 69 points

Use: *Tips for Living More Lightly*

Score: ☺ 70+

Use: *The Resources for Ongoing Learning*

1. I buy organic, pesticide-free food. _____
2. I keep hazardous wastes (old batteries, solvents, paints, oils, grease, etc.) out of the garbage or sewer. _____
3. I discard hazardous wastes and electronics such as computers, cell phones, and other devices using a designated recycling program. _____
4. I make an effort to know my watershed and protect it. _____
5. I use non-toxic, biodegradable soaps, detergents and cleaning products. _____
6. I use glass, metal, paper, or ceramics instead of plastics for food storage. _____
7. I use chlorine-free, recycled paper products – i.e. coffee filters, napkins paper towels, and toilet paper. _____
8. I buy clothes that don’t require dry-cleaning or use organic dry-cleaning. _____
9. I avoid using pesticides and herbicides on the lawn, garden or houseplants. _____
10. I avoid eating fish with high concentrations of mercury. _____

Reflection/Action

Analyze your everyday choices and how they impact the environment.

What choices do I feel good about?

Where do I feel the need to make some changes?

How do our communal choices in this area contribute to fullness of life and unioning love in the world?

Tips for Living More Lightly

1. Use organically farmed food to protect our soil, our water, and our health.
2. Take nickel/cadmium and other batteries to hazardous waste collection site. Batteries thrown away by consumers are the single largest source of cadmium pollution in the environment.
3. Learn about local opportunities for keeping all kinds of things out of the land fill. The average computer, for example, contains 3-5 pounds of lead. Ways to recycle computers and other electronic waste vary widely according to region. Learn more about your watershed.
4. Avoid products containing toxic ingredients – chlorine, phenols, formaldehyde, cresol, and the benzenes – commonly found in household cleaners. Many of these cancer-causing products find their way back into drinking water when dumped into the sewer system.
5. Avoid plastic packaging and bottles, choosing glass, metal, paper, or ceramics instead.
6. Use chlorine-free paper to help to keep dioxin out of your drinking water.
7. Avoid clothes that need dry cleaning. The Perchloroethylene (PERC) used in dry cleaning generates large amounts of toxic waste.
8. Find green ways to manage pests.
9. Mercury concentrates in fish, making this important food a source of mercury poison. Mercury is a potent neurotoxin that can affect the brain, spinal cord, kidneys, and liver. Learn more.

Web Sites:

www.worldwatch.org

www.greenpeace.org

www.epa.gov