

PEACE

24/7

Empowering Youth to Be Ministers of Peace and Justice



Water, Water . . . Everywhere?



Become Aware

“Water, water,
everywhere,
And all the boards
did shrink.
Water, water
everywhere,
Nor any drop to
drink.”

—Samuel Taylor
Coleridge, *The Rime of
the Ancient Mariner*

The quotation from this poem is often repeated in jest during floods, major storms, or cruises on the sea. But the sad reality is that the essence of existence depends on water, and it is most definitely at risk in this world.

Imagine a world where water was unsafe to use. Or even

worse, just not available. Have you ever had to boil water for cooking, drinking, and cleaning? Have you ever experienced what it is like to haul water from a distant place to even have it available for use?

Conservationists are sounding the alarm. Water in the world is at risk, and thereby the existence of life is also at risk. We are polluting our lakes and streams, and wasting the supplies of fresh water that we do have. Like most environmental issues, if we can't see the result or problem immediately, we don't believe it exists. It may feel like someone else's problem, but in all reality there are few things quite as personal.

¹• Only about 3 percent of the Earth's water is fresh, about three-fourths of that is in the Arctic icecaps and glaciers.

- The human body contains about 65 percent water.
- On average a person (U.S.) uses 100 gallons (380 liters) of water each day and takes in about 16,000 gallons (60,566 liters) of water in his or her lifetime.
- It takes about 80 gallons (300 liters) of water to make the paper for one Sunday newspaper.

²• Up to 40 percent of the water used indoors by one person in one day is wasted.

¹Water Conserving Facts
http://www.geocities.com/xiaojun_wu70/water_conservation/Water_Conserving_facts.htm

²Ground Water Primer
<http://www.epa.gov/seahome/groundwater/src/you2b.htm>

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

Acknowledge Responsibility

Throughout the Bible there are stories that include the image of water. Because water can be both life-giving and destructive, it is a powerful force in human life. Look up the scripture verses listed. How is water used in each story? Is stewardship over our water supplies the responsibility of discipleship? Why?

- Genesis 1:9
- Genesis 7
- Exodus 2:1–10
- Exodus 14
- Matthew 3:11–17
- Matthew 4:18–22
- Matthew 14:28–31
- Mark 4:35–41
- John 2:1–11
- John 4:7–15
- John 13:1–17

Genesis 1:9–10 NRSV

And God said, “Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.” And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together [God] called Seas.

John 7:37–38 NRSV

“Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer's heart shall flow rivers of living water.’”

Acquire More Understanding

Water Documentary

Make a video documenting the ways water is used by your community. Use the following categories as a guide.

- food and drink
- cleaning
- industry
- sports and recreation
- power
- transportation
- beauty/landscaping
- safety
- support plant and animal life
- agriculture
- appliances
- religion

Dangers to Water

Create a mural depicting ways water is at risk in the world. Spend some time at the local library and/or on the Internet. A little research will help you better understand the following conditions as well as many more.

- contamination
- industrial wastes
- pesticides
- sewage
- oil spills
- chemicals
- ecological imbalance
- residential wastes
- unnecessary use
- stagnation
- garbage and trash

Dangers of Water

Water is essential to life, but it can also be a source of danger. Create a report on the dangers of water and what people can do to help prevent water-related tragedies. Does conservation of water (or lack thereof) ever impact the dangers of water? Use the topics listed below to get started.

- flooding
- hurricanes
- drowning
- spread of disease
- contamination to food/plant sources
- drought
- erosion

Pollution Experiment

- 4 resealable plastic bags
- 2 cups motor oil
- 2 cups water
- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 4 fluffy feathers
- 4 fresh leaves
- 4 sheets of white paper

Label plastic bags 1, 2, 3, and 4. In each bag place 1/2 cup oil, 1/2 cup water, one hard-boiled egg, one feather, and one fresh leaf. Remove the contents from bag 1 after 15 minutes. Peel the egg to see the effect of the oil pollution. Lay the feather and leaf on a white sheet of paper. Repeat the process with bag 2 after 30 minutes; bag 3 after 60 minutes; and bag 4 after 120 minutes. Compare the objects from each bag. What impact does the time exposed to the oil have on them? Relate this to pollutants found in our water sources, especially lakes, oceans, rivers, and streams.

Hey Great Grandma,

Discuss water with older family members and friends, especially ones who are in their seventies or above. Did they have running water in their houses? (Some probably did, and some probably didn't.) Where did they get their water for cooking, cleaning, bathing? How did they store it? How did they do laundry? If you know someone who has lived in an underdeveloped country, an interview with them might also provide some unique solutions and information.



Take Action

- Watch the news for one week. How many times is water mentioned? How many times is it in the news because of contamination of some kind?
- Visit your local water supply company. Find out where the water comes from and how it is processed.
- Keep a diary of how your family uses water during the course of a week. Check your water meter at the beginning and end to get an idea of the quantity of water used. Sit down with your family at the end of the week. Discuss ways each person can help save water.
- Research ways individuals can make a difference in conserving and protecting water resources. The opportunities are endless and usually very simple. Set yourself a goal of helping the cause by changing ten ways you use water. Write your goals on pieces of paper and tape them in places that will remind you to change. For instance, on the dishwasher place a sign that reminds you to only run it when full. On the bathroom mirror place a sign that says turn water off while brushing teeth.
<http://www.wateruseitwisely.com/waterSavingTips/100tips.html>
Internet keyword search: water conservation

Become an Advocate

- Take a walk along the streams and/or lakes in your area. Look for signs of pollution. If possible, try to discover the source of the problems. Write letters to local industries, newspapers, schools, and government agencies to encourage awareness and change.
 - shiny multi-colored slick areas: oil
 - rotten egg smell: sewage
 - green algae: not enough oxygen for fish or plants
 - floating foam: decaying materials in stream or soapy waste from factories
 - cloudy, muddy: soil erosion
 - red or orange on surface: factory pollutants
 - trash: danger to water life
 - dead fish: could result from multiple causes
- Do the experiment on the previous page with younger children as a way to talk with them about water problems in your community.
- Create a flyer and/or poster to distribute to the community about how they can protect and save water. If available, work with local environmental agencies. They may already have resources that you could volunteer to distribute.
- Sponsor an activity with a water conservationist to speak at your congregation, school, or community. Get families involved with information booths, activities, and water games.