



Adults Can Be Sustainability Role Models



“Our children look at the example from grown-ups, and build their future based on that example.”

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Introduction

- **This topic will discuss the influence of parents, relatives, teachers, church leaders, and business leaders on children and teenagers concerning Sustainability.**
- **Many articles have been published about the importance of role-modeling positive behaviors, and the influence this has on our youth. (1)**
- **This is leading by example. This is making sure an adult's actions are consistent with their words.**
- **We all live on one planet. What one person does or does not do affects us all.**
- **Adults visibly and clearly living a Sustainable life every day has now become an enormously important need for America and 330+ million people.**



The Monumental Leap of Faith

- For centuries, parents have taught their children to live their life by burning fossil fuel and creating waste that goes into landfill mountains.
- Now, adults 21-90+ years old must create a new example of environmental protection for the younger generation that is based on principles they largely did not learn from their parents and other adults.
- This makes the challenge extremely difficult.
- The best strategy: Each grown-up should educate themselves about the dangers of pollution, until their commitment for environmental protection is very high and their new behavior is consistent.
- They must take a “Leap of Faith”.



Difficulty in Changing Bad Habits

- If unnecessary pollution can be a “bad habit”, how can today’s adults overcome these bad habits?
- A 2019 article by Adi Jaffe has an important suggestion. (2)
- When held accountable by someone, the chances of change success improve tremendously.
- So, each adult could find someone they respect, and hold each other accountable to reduce pollution. They would be leading by example.
- Sound too simple? Try it... it can work...



Parents and Relatives

- The tradition of parents passing on their principles, values and skills to their children goes back hundreds of generations.
- A father or mother showing their children how to camp, fish and hunt
- A father or mother showing their children how to cook and maintain a house.
- For many centuries, skills taught to children actually helped them survive.
- Now that dynamic will be repeated. Learning to live a life with zero carbon to atmosphere and zero waste to landfill is now essential to the survival of future generations on the Planet Earth.
- Parents, aunts, uncles, grand-parents can lead by example and make huge changes in how they live their life..... by protecting the environment every day.
- Parents are the best role models, and should take every opportunity to visibly and consistently reduce pollution in daily living... so their children will see the example.



Schools, Teachers and Professors

- Schools and universities are important learning organizations for our children.
- Teachers cannot properly teach environmental protection unless citizens have ensured Sustainability is embedded in standard curriculum.
- A case can be made that Sustainability is now more important than the standard subjects, because it involves survival on the planet.
- Every school district and university could set aside 3-4 % of their budget to make the transition to a Sustainable operation (buildings and vehicles), it just takes the will and the commitment. Long-term, the costs are greatly reduced.
- This “Lead by Example” concept is essential... what would students think if they are being taught environmental protection, while their school still pumped carbon into the atmosphere and created tons of solid waste each year?
- When children see school leaders doing the right thing, they learn positive Sustainability habits.

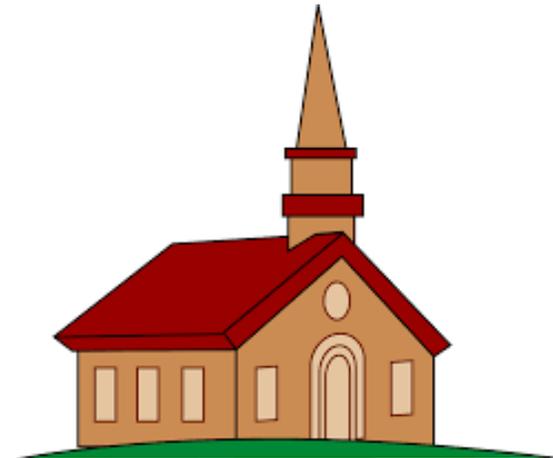


Sustainability and Faith (Religion)

- **Over the Centuries, parents have taught their children about their faith life.**
- **There are world-wide common themes concerning care for Creation in major religions....**
Examples:
- **Christianity – The Bible – Genesis 2:15, The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it.**
- **Judaism – The Torah – Genesis 2:15, Now the Lord God took the man, and He placed him in the Garden of Eden to work it and to guard it.**
- **Hinduism – Dharma - One of the most important Hindu concepts, has been translated into English as duty, virtue, cosmic order, and religion. Protecting the environment is an important expression of Dharma.**
- **Buddhism - Pupphavagga in Dhammapada: “As a bee that gathers honey from a flower and departs from it without injuring the flower or its colours or its fragrance, the sage dwells in his village.”**
- **Islam – Qur’an – 2:60, And do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption.**
- **Summary: Perhaps we should spend less time on our differences, and more time recognizing our common bond of environmental protection (Care for the Natural World).**

Church Leaders, Staff and Adults

- Obviously, the example children see at church is very important to their development.
- Will they see Church leaders and adults striving to operate the church with minimal harm to the environment (3-4% of the budget)?
- Will Sustainability concepts be woven into the Faith education offered to children by most churches?
- Will the adults in the church teach the children how to carry out faith activities with minimal harm to the environment? This includes buildings and vehicles.
- When children see church adults doing the right thing, they learn positive Sustainability habits.



Businesses and Business Owner-Leaders

- **American businesses currently create mega-tons of carbon to the atmosphere and mega-tons of solid waste to landfills every year.**
- **The behavior has to change this decade, not in 20-30 years.**
- **Sustainability has a positive financial return on investment over the long-term.**
- **Customers should be over-whelming business leaders with requests to provide their products with minimal pollution.**
- **Children see the example from businesses every day, especially local, small businesses.**
- **When children see business adults doing the right thing, they learn positive Sustainability habits.**



Summary

- **Because American grown-ups were largely not taught a “zero carbon to atmosphere” and “zero waste to landfill” lifestyle, they must make a Leap of Faith and teach their children the important concepts in spite of this disadvantage.**
- **Parents are the most influential role models, and should set up their home and family life to minimize harm to the environment.**
- **School, Church and Business adults could lead by example and set up their organizations to operate Sustainably.**
- **Children will take habits they learned from adults into their own adulthood.**
- **Will we give them a proper example?**



Citations

1. U.S Department of Health and Human Services, 2020, Healthy Parent-Child Relationships
2. Psychology Today, March 26, 2019, Why Is It So Hard to Change Bad Habits?

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