



Best Practices for Special Events

Those involved in the planning of the many and diverse ministries of the Diocese of Niagara are encouraged to be intentional about considering their impact on creation. Here are a few tips for how to make our special events even more environmentally sustainable.

Preparation

Most special events require registration forms and other information to be distributed. Reduce the amount of paper handouts through the electronic distribution of documents and presentation materials. Instead of printing out copies of each form, letter, presentation, etc., for each participant, make all handouts available on-line, or send them electronically upon request (a simple sign-up sheet can accomplish this) after the meeting.

When needed, double-side handouts and print them on recycled-content paper and include a note identifying the percentage of recycled content used in the paper. Avoid bright, fluorescent coloured paper because it is more difficult to recycle. Try to print only the amount needed for distribution.

Transportation to and from special events also adds significantly to an event's carbon footprint. Encouraging carpooling or carbon offsetting amongst participants can greatly reduce this impact.

When planning for meals or snacks, consider what produce is seasonally and locally available and strive to use these products as centerpieces of your hospitality.

Hospitality

If refreshments are included as part of your event, use reusable cups, plates and cutlery. This may involve some clean-up at the end but has the potential to greatly reduce the overall waste. If you regularly host such events, consider buying reusable tablecloths and napkins instead of single-use plastic or paper ones.

Try to purchase standard food items (e.g., tea, coffee, sugar, butter) in bulk to reduce packaging. Moreover, serve beverages in pitchers, and offer bowls of sugar and a jug of milk/cream instead of the single serving packets of sugar, milk and cream. Buy coffee and tea from a 'Fair Trade' company. When making tea or coffee, heat only enough water as is needed to make the desired amount.

If meals or snacks are required to be transported to or by participants (snack break, bag lunch) be mindful of the amount of packaging (apples are a great snack that avoids excess packaging). Try to avoid the use of plastic wrap and where packaging is needed, use something compostable like wax paper. If single use cutlery or dishes are needed for outdoor functions, use biodegradable products.

Use pitchers of water instead of single-use plastic water bottles which should be avoided.

At the Niagara Diocesan Synod, November 2019, a motion was passed to actively reduce the use of single-use plastics across the diocese. Many parishes passed similar vestry motions in 2020.

Many special events are overnight events. When staying in your accommodations be mindful of things like shower time, lights and heating and air conditioning. Don't take excessively long showers and be mindful of vacant rooms with lights and heating/air conditioning on.

Meeting Space

If direction is needed, use reusable or recyclable signs to guide people to appropriate activity and meeting rooms. Put green bins (where available), compost collection containers, and recycling bins in prime locations to collect waste during refreshment breaks, and to recycle handouts that will not be taken home by participants.