

Say “No Thank You” to Plastic Bags

Facts to Know and Share...

1. Plastic bags were introduced to supermarkets in 1977
2. Industry figures show 90% of all grocery bags are plastic
3. Only 1-3% of plastic bags are recycled worldwide and in the United States!
The cost to recycle plastic bags outweighs their value — most recycling facilities will not take them
4. Plastic bags are unacceptable in curbside recycling collection and jam mechanical sorting equipment
5. Plastic bags are so lightweight and aerodynamic, that even if we dispose of them loose in our trash — many will escape and go where the wind takes them
6. Public agencies in Dubuque send over \$30,000 per year cleaning up plastic bag litter
7. Public agencies and private businesses in Iowa spend millions each year cleaning up plastic bag litter
8. Over 130 U.S. cities ban or tax plastic bags — Countries with bans or taxes cover all continents and include Mexico, Brazil, Italy, China, Bangladesh, and at least 6 African countries with total bans in place
9. It takes 12 million barrels of oil to make 100 billion plastic shopping bags used in the U.S per year
10. Plastic bags don't biodegrade, they photodegrade — breaking down into smaller and smaller toxic bits — contaminating soil and waterways → entering the food web when animals accidentally ingest them
11. In the North Pacific, there is 6 times more plastic debris than plankton – base of the ocean food web
12. The **Great Pacific Garbage Patch** (discovered by Charles Moore in 1997) is mostly composed of plastic!
⇒ A floating seafill of garbage in the Pacific Ocean twice the size of Texas
13. Plastic bags cause the death of 1 billion animals each year when plastic pieces are mistaken for food:
⇒ Loggerhead sea turtles often mistake plastic bags for jellies, their favorite food
⇒ Albatrosses mistake plastic resin pellets for fish eggs and feed them to chicks
14. Think paper bags are better? Think again:
⇒ The U.S. cuts down 14 million trees a year to supply the raw material to make paper shopping bags
⇒ Paper shopping bags cannot be made from recycled paper, they would not be strong enough
15. Reuse the bags you may get from stores or packaging for basket liners and pet waste

***One person using reusable bags over their lifetime
would remove more than 22,000 plastic bags from the environment!***

One person can make a difference J Put the BYOB Campaign logo on your car!

- ◆ Store extra bags in your car to eliminate the vast majority of plastic shopping bags
- ◆ Use reusable bags for groceries and most of your shopping – clothing, hardware, drug store, etc.
- ◆ Use any kind of reusable bag – it's better than plastic! (or paper)
- ◆ If cashiers offer you a plastic bag, say “No, Thank You” and hand it back
- ◆ If you forget reusable bags — carry out items in your hands, a box or cart instead of taking plastic bags
- ◆ Make a “No Plastic Bags” policy in your home, work, faith community or any other group
- ◆ Educate others on the many problems with plastic bags (talk about it, copy this page and hand it out)
- ◆ Find other ways to reduce single-use packaging waste: take your reusable bottles for water or coffee



Reusable Bag Campaign

Who is Interfaith Power & Light?

- Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) began in 1998 and now has 40 state affiliates including Iowa Interfaith Power & Light (IPL) - <https://iowaip.org>
Mission: Equipping People of Faith to Address Climate Disruption and related environmental impacts
- Climate vulnerabilities will affect all of us, and it will require resilient responses from all of us
- When we go to buy something, we don't usually think about our climate impact, but one third of U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions come from our "stuff". We can each make a difference by finding meaningful ways to reduce our impact on Creation. How we choose to spend our time and money can make a big difference in our personal happiness and the well-being of the planet.
(Source: *The Good Life Redefined* - <https://iowaip.org/act/good-life-redefined/>)

"We need to take up an ancient lesson, found in different religious traditions; and, also in the Bible. It is the conviction that "less is more". - Pope Francis

Reusable Bag Campaign —

- The campaign's reusable bags were purchased from a local Dubuque printer & printed with non-toxic ink. Bags advertise Iowa Interfaith Power & Light and show collaboration between local faith communities.
- Polypropylene is now one of the most popular materials for reusable bags. It is incredibly durable which reduces waste, and it can look and feel like fabric.
- Bags are being offered in Dubuque faith communities to promote reusable bags, educate people on problems with plastic bags, and support congregation Green Teams and the Dubuque IPL chapter.
- 20% of reusable bags paid for by the grant are going to the Dubuque Rescue Mission stores & Dubuque Farmers Market SNAP customers to engage the local community beyond participating faith groups.

Other ways to use reusable bags

- ◆ Use them as beach or pool totes
- ◆ Carry and store your knitting, crafting or art supplies in them
- ◆ Use them as gift bags à Attach a ribbon and name tag to wrap an irregularly-shaped gift
- ◆ Tote your recyclables in them to the recycling center or cans/bottles to store for deposits
- ◆ Donate them to the local food pantry — food pantries use bags to distribute food, reusable bags are usually just as welcome as plastic
- ◆ Use them to bag items at your rummage sale or yard sale! If you have any kind of reusable bag, use them for your customers' purchases

The Dubuque Chapter of Iowa Interfaith Power & Light Reusable Bag Campaign was made possible through a grant from Sustainable Dubuque

