

## The 5 R's of Kitchen Hospitality

*Episcopal Relief & Development works with local community health workers to train residents in safe garbage and waste disposal.*

*By ensuring the safety and security of land and water sources through integrated sanitation, hygiene and water programs, these locally driven solutions protect land, water and people. [Learn more](#) about these programs and how to support them.*

From composting and beeswax wraps to opting for energy-efficient appliances, Creation Care teams have many options to help their communities reduce waste and become more sustainable, starting in the kitchen.

Making sure your church kitchen is environmentally friendly — possibly even setting a goal to reach zero waste — is another way we can care for Creation. And while you're doing this in your schools, churches and other faith communities, you can also encourage neighbors and parishioners to do the same in their home kitchens. A great way to begin is by embracing “the 5 R's” of zero-waste in your kitchens:

1. **Refuse:** Be selective about the products you accept in your kitchen. For instance, refuse single-use plastics or excess packaging from suppliers, and opt for reusable alternatives. No more Styrofoam or plastic. Use your community's dishes, glassware and washable linens. If you don't have any, send folks out thrifting for reusable dishes and cutlery. Use paper, cloth, beeswax and other reusable materials to wrap and store food.
2. **Reduce:** Minimize the energy you use in your kitchen by installing energy-efficient appliances. Minimize food waste by reducing portion sizes.
3. **Reuse:** Find creative ways to repurpose items, such as using glass jars for storage or turning food leftovers into new meals.
4. **Recycle:** Set up a comprehensive recycling system for paper, glass and metal, ensuring proper waste separation and disposal. This is especially important at large congregation-wide events, even weddings and funerals.
5. **Rot:** Implement a composting system for organic waste, turning food scraps into valuable fertilizer for your kitchen garden or local farms.