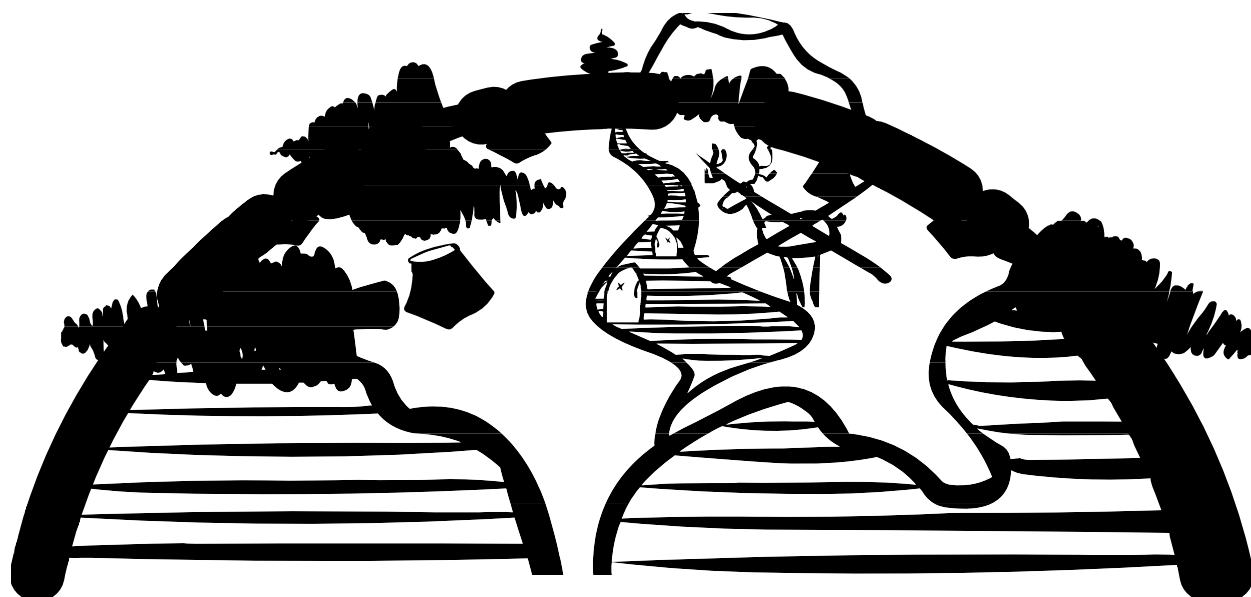


# SESSION 3: AN UNFORTUNATE CREATION STORY

LET THERE BE...STUFF?  
A SPIRIT-FILLED RESPONSE TO A CONSUMER-CRAZED WORLD  
A Faith-Based Program for Christian Teens



created by

THE STORY OF  
**STUFF**  
PROJECT

  
**GreenFaith**<sup>SM</sup>  
Interfaith Partners in Action for the Earth

[www.storyofstuff.org](http://www.storyofstuff.org)

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version 1.0

# SESSION 3 OVERVIEW

## ENTER & CONNECT – 8 MIN

- Opening prayer
- Promise Poster
- Check-in
- Homework

## INTRODUCE – 2 MIN

## THINK – 5 MIN

- The Story of Stuff Clip

## ENGAGE – 30 MIN

- The True Cost

## REFLECT – 5 MIN

- Scripture

## INSPIRE - 3 MIN

- Teen Activist Story

## ENACT – 5 MIN

- Action Plans

## EXIT – 2 MIN

- Song and Closing

# Preparing for Session Three

## Facilitation Preparation

This session has a lot of reading in it. Feel free to summarize sections instead of reading them off the page. Break up the readings by asking questions periodically, like “Who can relate to that?” or, “What do you think of that?”

The heart of this session is the exercise, The True Cost. It helps students begin to see that almost all the material objects they take for granted that are produced by humans have a toxic trail. Since there isn’t much time for students to learn, prepare a presentation, and teach back what they learned to the whole group, it will be important to remind them to get to the bottom line and keep it simple. Tell them to choose only a few key points and summarize their points into single sentences that get to the heart of the matter.

## Overview

This session brings the true cost of extraction and production home. In it students learn about the cost of some of their most cherished and familiar possessions: Clothing, jewelry, electronics, and cosmetics. It is the first step in their journey to understand and appreciate the secret life of their stuff and the personal steps it takes to change their own habits. It is a call to action!

## Goals

- Reveal the externalized costs associated with everyday household objects: clothing, jewelry, electronics, and cosmetics
- Guide students to think about where things come from before they buy them
- Light a fire of passion to make changes in their consumption habits and become environmental stewards
- Provide inspiration and guidance for making changes

## Themes

### Religious:

- Humanity’s role in Creation
- Stewardship, responsible use of our power

### Secular:

- The true cost of our stuff
- Externalized costs onto communities and the environment – how we’re destroying the environment, displacing communities, exploiting workers and making them sick - all to make our stuff

### Materials for Session 3

- Story of Stuff clip

### The True Cost Exercise

- Have extra "stuff" in case students forgot to bring their own
  - cell phone
  - clothing
  - jewelry
  - lotion or other cosmetic/body care product
- Black and white copy of map of the world (1 for each team)
- Instruction sheets (1 for each team)
- Production Summary Sheets (A different one for each team)
- Poster paper, colored paper
- Scissors
- Colored pens, markers, etc.

### Hand-outs

- Session 3 Readings Sheets- 1 per student
- Religious Text Sheet- 1 per student
- Session 3 Action Plans- 1 per student

### Session 3 To-Do List

- Have Session Readings and Religious Text ready to hand out
- Either put up a new piece of butcher paper for the Right Stuff Action board Session 3 or delineate a section of the poster you posted for Session 2 for Session 3.
- Re-post Promise Poster on wall if needed
- Set up *The Story of Stuff* clip cued for Extraction & Production (from 2:30-8:05)
- Have extra "stuff" ready
  - cell phone
  - clothing
  - jewelry
  - lotion or other cosmetic/body care product
- Set up a materials station for The True Cost materials
- Have Action Plans ready to hand out.

## Biblical Passages

### Genesis 1:28

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

### Genesis 2:15

The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to till it and keep it.

## Notes on Biblical Passages

When you ask people to name a passage from the Bible about the environment, one that often comes to mind is Genesis 1:28 in which God gives humanity "dominion" over creation. It's a familiar verse, which seems to give a clear description of how people should treat the earth. At first glance, the description seems problematic. "Dominion" has an arrogant, authoritarian sound to it – far from the respectful or cherishing Biblical tone that we'd hope for in relation to the protection of Creation.

The Bible actually offers several important passages that teach us how people should treat the Earth. Here, we'll look at two of these verses – Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15.

One of the ways that scholars investigate the true meaning of Bible passages is to look at the meaning in the language in which they were written; Hebrew, in this case. Scholars have studied the two key Hebrew verbs in Genesis 2:15 – "till" and "keep," and have discovered important layers of meaning that give this verse vital importance.

The Hebrew word for "till" is translated as the English word "serve." This word's best-known appearance in the Bible is in Joshua 24:15. Joshua has gathered all the tribes of Israel to renew their covenant with God. He recounts the history of events through which God has repeatedly expressed divine love for God's people. At the climax of his speech, Joshua states, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord."

The second verb – "keep" – is also used in ways that shed some additional light on its meaning. For example, in Numbers 6:22-27, God is teaching Moses – who has a speech impediment – to teach his brother Aaron a blessing to pronounce over the Israelites to assure them of God's compassion and care for them. The blessing that God tells Moses to pass on to Aaron begins, "May the Lord bless you and keep you." The connotation of the verb "keep" is clear. It's a loving, protective act – one that expresses generous care for another. So, Genesis 2:15 offers a remarkably positive role for people in relation to Creation. "Till and tend" become "serve and keep" a rich and positive relational meaning. It's a lovely description of what God holds our role to be

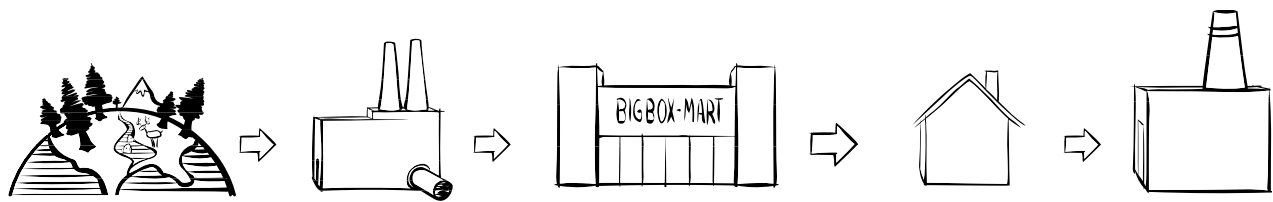
## Notes on Biblical Passages Cont.

And with this in mind, we can return to the Genesis 1:28 “dominion” passage and ask ourselves a question. The Hebrew word for “dominion” is the same word that the Bible uses to describe the power that rulers have over their subjects – it’s a word that really expresses a sense of power and authority. In fact, human beings have a lot of power over the earth. We consume resources, eat plants and animals, and control the Earth in ways that no other species can. Like it or not, we have “dominion.”

The question is, how do we think that God wants us to use our power? Do we think God wants us to use it destructively, or with care and responsibility? Do we think God wants us to exercise our dominion by exploiting creation for selfish gain, or by treating creation with a loving kindness that resembles the care that God offers to us? This is the real question.

And when we’re faced with this question, the answer couldn’t be clearer.

# SESSION 3 – An Unfortunate Creation Story



## Enter and Connect - (8 min)

### Opening prayer (1 min)



*God, the Creator of all that exists, you have blessed us by placing us to live in your world, a world which you love and which you recognize as good. Help us understand the ways in which our methods of making so many of the goods we use causes harm to your good Earth and to your people. And bless us with the strength to consume in ways that respect creation, now and for future generations. We pray this in Jesus name, AMEN.*

- Look at the Promise Poster together and ask students to raise the hand with the promise string on it if they intend to keep the promises during this session.
- Check-in - What was it like for you this week to live with greater awareness of *The Story of Stuff*?
- Homework Check – Ask who did their homework. In pairs (not their buddies), have them tell each other what they did and how it went. (2 min. ea.) Back in the large group, have them each say how many points they earned that week (tally the points on the tally sheet) and choose a highlight to share. Have them post any pictures they brought on the Right Stuff Action board.
- Hand out Session 3 Readings and Bible Text sheets

## Introduce (3 min)

Recap the previous week, if needed.  
Ask the students:

### SAY THIS

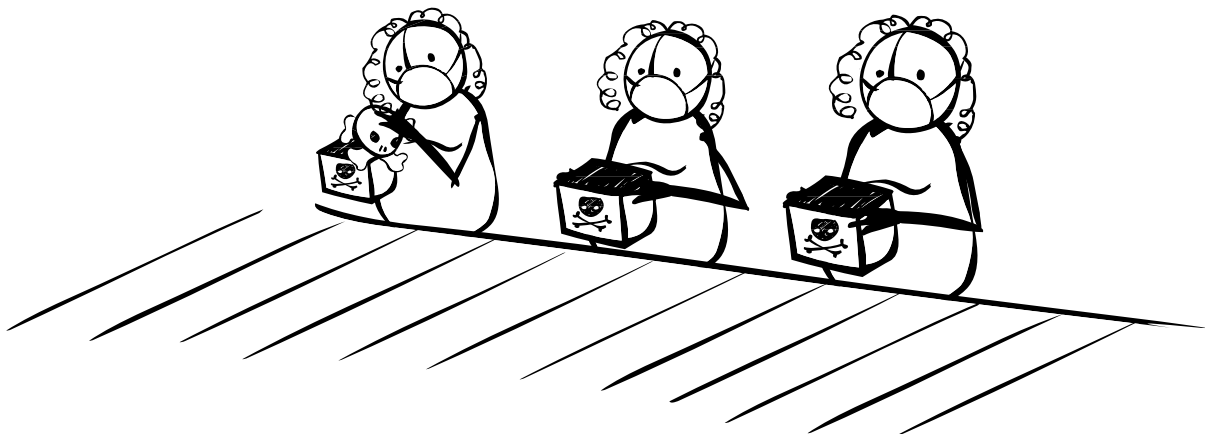
*What did we do last week?  
What did we learn?*

Have students take turns reading, one reader per paragraph:

*1.1 - We saw all of the things that have to happen in order for our economy to keep growing and growing, how it depends on our consuming as much as possible as fast as possible, how the way our stuff is being produced is trashing the planet, poisoning us, and how we're not having any fun while we're at it. It's not a pretty picture.*

### READ ALOUD

*1.2 - Today we're going to learn how to start appreciating the secret life of a few more ordinary things in our lives - our clothing, books, jewelry, electronic gadgets, and cosmetics - so we can start to see the whole story behind the things that surround us. When we can really see how God's Creation is affected by our consumption habits, it becomes clear that caring for Creation requires us to change those habits. It's not easy. Our habits are deep. But together and with the help of God, we can make changes in our lives that will offer respect to the earth and bring us greater fulfillment.*





## Think (5 min)

**Prep: Set up Story of stuff clip on extraction and production (from 2:30-8:05)**

1. Tell students they're going to watch a section of the video with the themes you'll be focusing on in this session.
2. Watch the clip.

## Engage (30 min)

### Activity - The True Cost

**Prep:**

- Have Black and white copy of map of the world (1 for each team) ready to hand out
- Have True Cost sheets (1 for each team) ready to hand out
- Poster paper, colored paper
- Have a supply station with colored pens, markers, etc.

**Summary**

Using the information provided in the handout sheets at the back of this Session, students will explore the first two stages of an object's life, what Annie describes in the film as Extraction and Production. Students will learn where some of the most common stuff in their lives comes from and how its made.

Students will work in teams with each team focusing on the true cost of a different object. They will study the information sheet for their object provided in the back of the session plan. Once they've had a chance to digest some of the information, they will work together to create a visual representation of the earliest stages of their stuff- where it comes from, how it got there, what it's made of, who made it, etc. They will do a short teach-back presentation to the larger group to share their information using a map of the world to help convey the international elements of our relationship with stuff. They will incorporate their visual work into the collective mural.

**Instructions**

1. Have the students break up into four groups by counting off by 4's (All "ones" are together, all "twos," etc).
2. Have each group find a place in the room to work together.
3. Hand out one True Cost sheet (ie, True Cost: Cell Phones) and one map to each group. These can be printed ahead of time and are the end of this section.

THINK

ENGAGE

**Instructions Cont.**

4. Instruct students to follow the instructions on their True Cost instruction sheet. They will be teaching the other students about the places where their object has traveled as it was being produced, its impact along the way, and its true cost to people and the planet. They can use the map and any other materials they want. Encourage them to be creative, but also to get their point across. Let them know that they will have 5 minutes for their presentations and that there is more material than they will be able to fit in, so they'll have to choose what's most important. (10 min.)
5. Have each group take a turn to teach the rest of the group what they learned and have them present on the "True Cost" of their item. Give a few minutes for the group to ask questions. Give each group 5 min. for their presentation. (20 min)

**Reflect (5 min)****Prep: Hand out Bible Text**

"The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to till it and keep it."

**Instructions:**

- Read the passages
- Tell students



*When we read the Bible, it's important to remember that it was written in a different language than English. This short passage from Genesis was originally written in Hebrew. The word "till" in Hebrew is usually translated as "serve." It's the same word the Bible uses in a famous passage when Joshua says to the Israelites, "As for me and my house, we shall serve the Lord." (Joshua 24:15) And the word "keep" is used in the Bible to communicate a real sense of God's loving kindness. It's part of a famous blessing that Aaron, Moses' brother, uses when he says, "May the Lord bless you and keep you." (Numbers 6:23) So, when you read this passage from Genesis, you realize that it presents a job description for people in relation to the environment – to "serve it and care for it," not just to use it any way we want.*

Ask students these reflection questions:



- *Why do you think God asked people to take care of the garden?*
- *How do the people feel taking care of the Garden and knowing that others around them are taking care of the Garden?*
- *What do you think God feels when we do a good job of taking care of the garden?*
- *What about when we don't do such a good job?*

## Inspire (3 min)

**Prep: Have students ready to read from Session 3 Readings sheets**



**SAY THIS**

*Emma Sleeth is a Christian teen who decided to write a book called *It's Easy Being Green*, when she was 15 years old in order to help people make the shift to a lifestyle that expressed their care for Creation. She believes that we're called by God to protect the resources that were given to us. She's speaking out to her generation – that's you! – in the hopes that you will be the ones who can end global warming and restore our world to the paradise that God desires for us. Here's a paragraph from her book.*

Have a students take turns reading paragraphs from the sheets.



**READ ALOUD**

*1.3 - "Remember when you were a young kid-playing outside and you somehow "didn't hear" your mom calling you for dinner? "Sorry, Mom, I didn't hear you screaming at the top of your lungs those, er, 25 times" seemed like a sorry excuse when she glared at you with one eyebrow raised and her hands on her hips. Don't worry, God hasn't borrowed your mother's apron, but he/she IS going to hold us all accountable for what we do or don't do to steward creation. With massive climate changes, a plethora of available information about how we are destroying the planet, and hundreds of Bible verses all pointing to our need to care for creation, saying "we didn't know" to God isn't going to cut it."*

Tell students that they are going to read the story of a group of young people who haven't ignored the call!

Have students take turns reading the story, one paragraph each

**Teens Turning Green, Because Looking Good Shouldn't Kill You (or the Planet)**  
**Marin, CA**  
[www.teensturninggreen.org](http://www.teensturninggreen.org)



**READ ALOUD**

*1.4 - Looking good shouldn't kill you (or the planet) and these gals are doing something about it! Outraged by the number of chemicals and carcinogens in their cosmetics and body care products, a group of teens in California created Teens for Safe Cosmetics. Educating their peers and pushing their government, this group of teens rallied against the personal care products industry and was key in the passage of California Safe Cosmetics Act in 2005, which requires cosmetics manufacturers to report information on carcinogens and reproductive toxins in beauty products. They expanded their efforts and joined in to push the Toxic Toys Bill into law. This Bill would ban the very toxic chemical category, pthalates from children's toys and bottle nipples while continuing to work for the removal of pthalates from cosmetics.*


**READ  
ALoud**

1.5 - Approaching the issue from all sides, the girls collaborated with Whole Foods Market to develop a safe, healthy, toxic-free line of personal care products. While they continue to advocate for state and federal policies that would regulate these toxins out of our cosmetics, they have also expanded their platform to look more broadly at various exposures to toxics in your schools and homes. Taking up the charge of a toxics-free future, Teens for Safe Cosmetics became Teens Turning Green and they are now working across the country for sustainability.

Ask students how it inspires them.

## Enact (5 min)

**Prep: Hand out Action Plan sheet and Action Plan Instructions.**

**Instructions:**

Review the instructions below and have students selection actions..

### Action Plan Instruction Sheet

Read and think about the actions:

- Which actions would you like to do?
- Which seem like you could do them?
- Which seem like fun?
- Which seem as if they will really make a difference?

Decide which actions to take.

- Decide which actions you will do with your buddy and which you will do by yourself.

Remember to:

- Show your parent(s)/guardian(s) your action plan when you get home and ask them to support you. Think of what support you want from them. Ask them how they want to support you.
- Check in with your buddy at least one time this week.
- You can change your action plans.
- You can catch up on any unfinished actions at anytime.
- Take pictures or document what you do so you can share it!

## Exit (5 min)

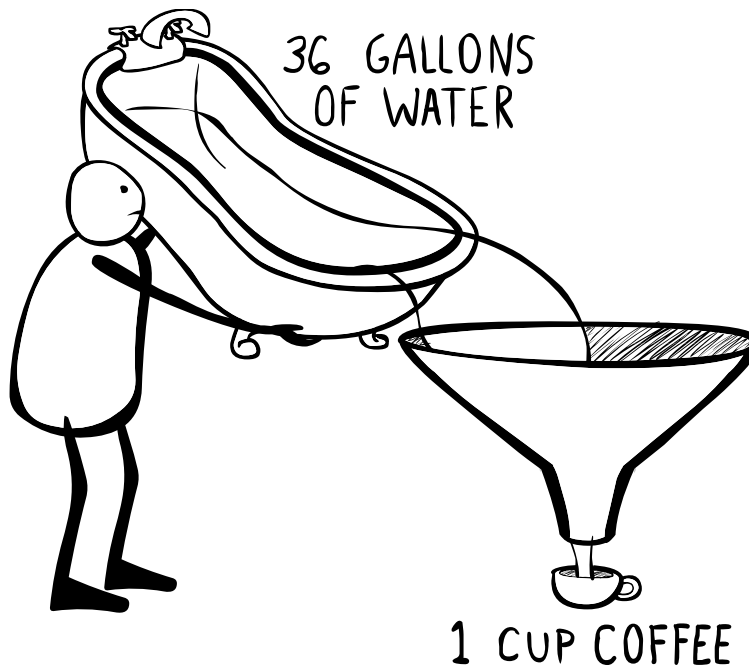
### Closing Circle

Have the students form a circle and put their hands in the center again. Bring your hands to the ground and send blessings to the earth. As you raise your hands to the level of each other, bless each other and as you raise your hands up and out, send blessings to the rest of Creation.

### Blessing

SAY THIS

*God – you’ve blessed us with a beautiful creation and with the knowledge that we are mistreating it as well. Strengthen us to make the commitment to do the right thing for your planet – now and throughout our lives. And bless us as we try. AMEN.*



### WE WANNA KNOW...

Congratulations on completing Session 3! How did it go? How much time did the exercises actually take? What worked? What didn't? What do you think would work better?

Let us know at: [www.storyofstuff.org/teach.php](http://www.storyofstuff.org/teach.php)

# Session 3: Readings

## Introduction

1.1 - "We saw all of the things that have to happen in order for our economy to keep growing and growing, how it depends on our consuming as much as possible as fast as possible, how the way our stuff is being produced is trashing the planet, poisoning us, and how we're not having any fun while we're at it. It's not a pretty picture.

1.2 - Today we're going to learn how to start appreciating the secret life of a few more ordinary things in our lives - our clothing, books, jewelry, electronic gadgets, and cosmetics - so we can start to see the whole story behind the things that surround us. When we can really see how God's Creation is affected by our consumption habits, it becomes clear that caring for Creation requires us to change those habits. It's not easy. Our habits are deep. But together and with the help of God, we can make changes in our lives that will offer respect to the earth and bring us greater fulfillment.

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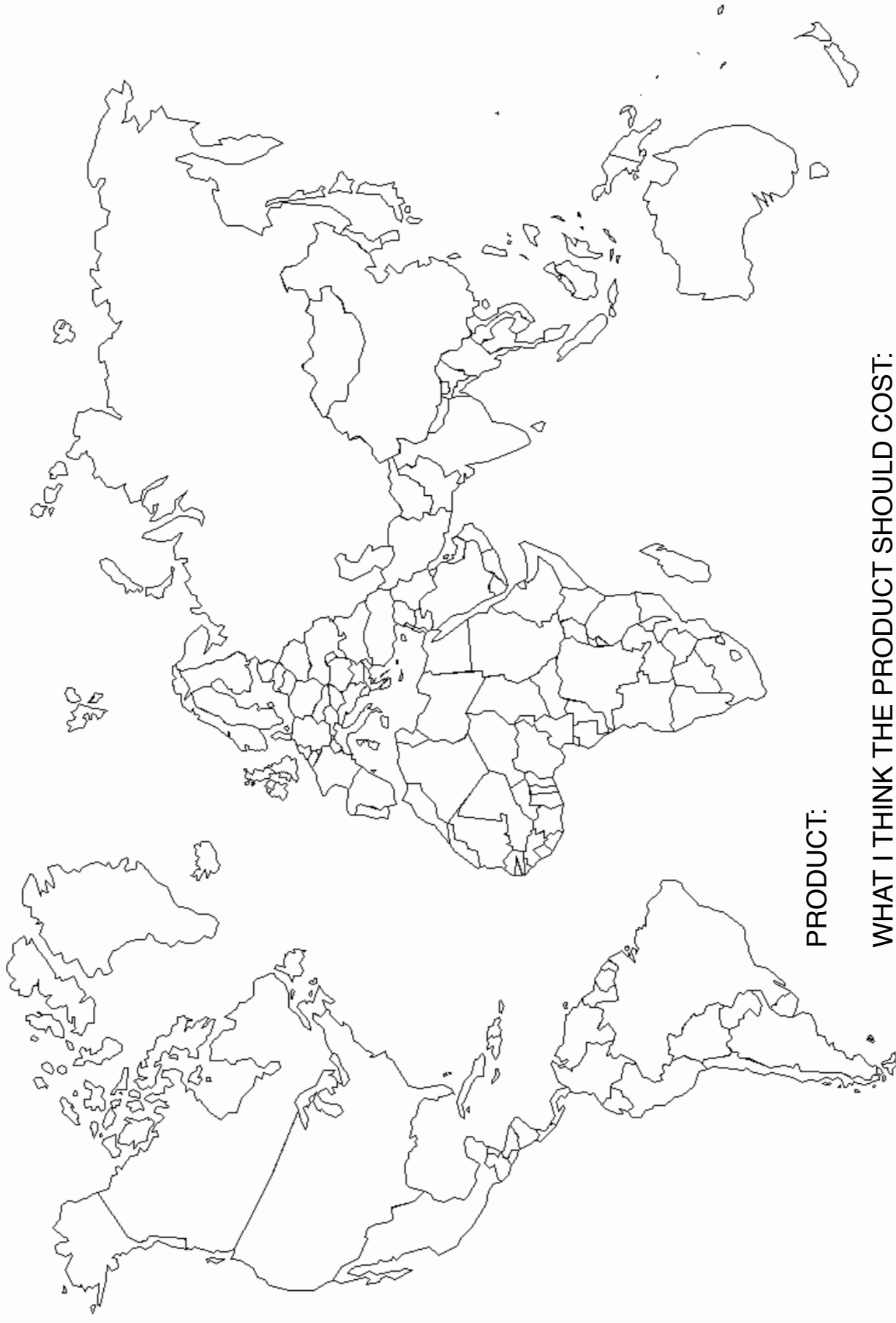
## Bible Text

### **Genesis 1:28**

God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.'

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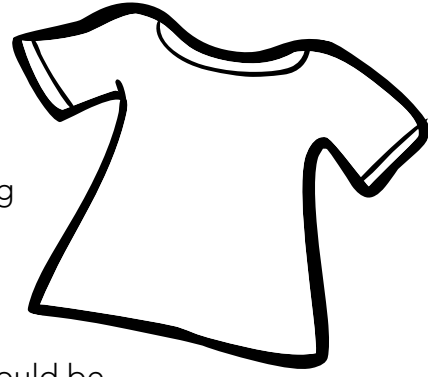
**PRODUCT:**

**WHAT I THINK THE PRODUCT SHOULD COST:**

TRUE COST MAP



# Cotton T-Shirt



## Instructions

1. Read through the hand-out marking key/interesting points to use in your presentation, for the cost and for the map.
2. Highlight 3 – 5 important points to convey to the group and add them to the map.
3. Estimate what you think the cost of the product should be.
4. Design your presentation for conveying the important points you chose and sharing your conclusion about the True Cost.

The journey from cotton crop to t-shirt is a long one that spans the globe and is filled with social and environmental costs that are hidden from view. These certainly don't show up in the \$5.99 price tag at Target.

To start the journey we have to look at where our cotton is grown. Right now, most cotton is grown in the US, Uzbekistan, Australia, China, India and small African countries like Benin and Burkina Faso. And we're making a ton of it, 25 million tons to be exact. Each year we produce 25 million tons of cotton globally which is enough to make 15 t-shirts for every single person on earth.

Growing all this cotton means that we are also using a ton of water. Cotton is a very, very, very thirsty crop. In fact, some communities are driving themselves into drought growing cotton for our t-shirts because it uses so much water. People aren't getting enough water to drink because the cotton crops are taking it!

Half of the water for our t-shirt obsession comes from other countries, which means we are using and polluting their water to make our Stuff. Not only are we using tons of water, but it turns out t-shirt making is a pesticide-laden business. The majority of the world's cotton crops are coated in pesticides. In fact, cotton crops use 25% of the world's insecticides. For every pound of cotton harvested, in the US, about one-third of a pound of pesticides have been sprayed on the crops.

All of the pesticides sprayed on these crops don't just kill bugs; they harm workers, the planet and neighboring communities. Cotton farm workers and neighboring communities bear the brunt of this burden. They frequently suffer from nerve diseases and vision problems because of the number of toxic chemicals they are exposed to in their work.

And all that happens before it's even turned into a t-shirt!

# Cotton T-Shirt Cont.

Then you need tons of energy to take it from raw cotton to a t-shirt (which is fueled by oil drilling or dirty coal or likely something else nasty). Then you put all that cotton in the cotton gin, bale the cotton, fluff the cotton, press the cotton, and finally turn it into thread.

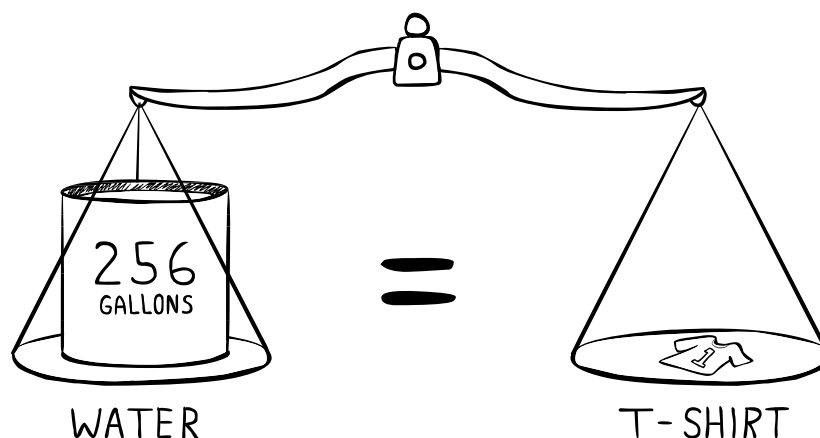
When we finally have that thread, we usually bleach the cotton even if we're going to dye it, usually using chlorine. Chlorine, bumper! Chlorine is toxic all by itself and when it leaves as wastewater it can become a neurotoxin and carcinogen. That means it causes cancer and impairs the way your brain works.

Once the cotton has been bleached and dyed and woven into fabric we want to make it as easy to take care of as possible, so we spray it down with formaldehyde (yep, like they put frogs in to preserve them before you dissect them) to make it "easy care" fabric. This use of formaldehyde might make our t-shirts soft, wrinkle-resistant, stain and odor resistant, fireproof, mothproof, and antistatic but it also causes respiratory problems, burning eyes, cancer and allergic skin reactions.

At this point, we finally have the fabric to make the t-shirt. Hooray? That fabric gets shipped to a factory or a sweatshop where folks in Haiti or China or Mexico work long days for low wages. Even with all the awareness we now have about dismal working conditions, it's still true that many factory workers are teens working 11 hour-days for 10-13 cents an hour. That's \$1.10/day. For example, in Haiti, where workers have been struggling for years for better working conditions, the legal minimum wage is still only \$3.75 a day!

Once the t-shirt has been whipped together by someone somewhere else working for next to nothing, its shipped to you in the US to find its way to you for under \$20.

**What do you think the true cost of a t-shirt should be after reading the information below?**



# Cell Phone

## Instructions

1. Read through the hand-out marking key/interesting, points to use in your presentation, for the cost, and for the map.
2. Highlight 3 – 5 important points to convey to the group and add them to the map.
3. Estimate what you think the cost of the product should be.
4. Design your presentation for conveying the important points you chose and sharing your conclusion about the True Cost.

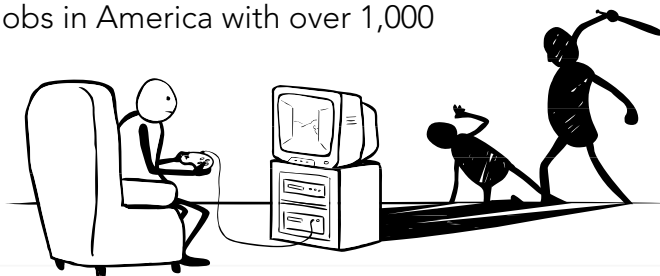
How did the world work before cell phones? While the thought may boggle the mind, equally boggling is the incredible journey that the various components of our cell phones take, and their environmental and social impact to get to us.

Just by looking at one you can probably tell that cell phones are made of plastic, metals and some other hard-to-describe stuff. To be specific, most cell phones are made of 40% metals, 40% plastics, and 20% trace materials and ceramics. All that stuff had to come from somewhere. As a cell phone is nearly half metal that means the metal had to be mined somewhere; that “somewhere” is usually Africa and South America.

One of the vital components in cell phone production is a metal called coltan, which is used in the circuit boards; 80% of the world’s supply of coltan or columbite–tantalite is found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Like Annie mentions in the film, coltan mining in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is contributing to a continued civil war over the resource. Another metal in cell phone production is gold. That’s right, GOLD! Which is mostly mined in South American and Africa.

It might be hard to tell at first but there is enough gold in 200 cell phones to make a nice sized ring. It turns out gold mining is a pretty nasty process that pollutes water, destroys natural habitats, uproots communities, and leaches toxins into the environment. In addition to gold and coltan, most of our cell phones also have copper, beryllium, lead, nickel, and zinc, which all have to be extracted from the earth, putting both the planet and workers at risk.

Mining is a super toxic practice involving cyanide and tons of other nasty chemicals that leach into the groundwater of surrounding communities creating devastating environmental and health impacts. Mining is also dangerous to humans; it is one of the 10 most dangerous jobs in America with over 1,000 deaths in the last 15 years.



# Cell Phone Cont.

Another component of the phone is petroleum-based plastics. This means that we're also tearing up the Tar Sands in Canada and destroying rainforest in the Amazon to get all the oil it takes to make all the plastic. The metal and plastics are combined to make a super tiny circuit board that makes our cell phones do all of the magical things they do. In addition to being magic it turns out those circuit boards are also...you guessed it...toxic! A number of plastics like PVC (polyvinyl chloride – one of the most toxic chemicals we know) and metals like lead (another super toxic metal) are persistent pollutants that build up in the ecosystem and in our bodies.

Eventually those circuit boards and plastic casings are snapped together with an LCD screen and a battery and voila! A cell phone! And...a ton more toxic stuff! The LCD (liquid crystal display) screens in our phones, so cool and high-tech, are made with mercury (another extremely toxic metal) and various man-made chemicals that are so high-tech we don't even know what they do.

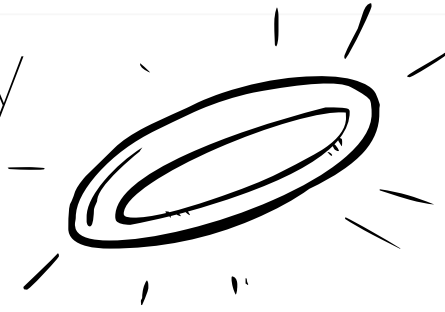
The batteries come in all different sizes and styles: lithium ion, nickel cadmium, lead acid but they all have one thing in common—they all require more mining which is just more of the same destruction, displacement, and pollution.

Cell phones are really cool. There is no denying it! But there is also no denying the fact that they are extremely toxic and contribute to all kinds of environmental destruction. With over 1.3 billion cell phones in use across the globe, it's worth pondering how we could do this better.

We can pay less than \$100 dollars for a cell phone.

**What do you think the true cost of cell phone should be after reading the information above?**

# Jewelry



## Instructions

1. Read through the hand-out marking key/interesting, points to use in your presentation, for the cost, and for the map.
2. Highlight 3 – 5 important points to convey to the group and add them to the map.
3. Estimate what you think the cost of the product should be.
4. Design your presentation for conveying the important points you chose and sharing your conclusion about the True Cost.

Our jewelry can hold a lot of meaning for us. We cherish the gold cross we might have gotten from our parents, a class ring, something from a special love. If only it were that simple. Unfortunately, in addition to the beauty and meaning our jewelry has, there is also a true cost to the planet. Let's see what it took to get those rings onto our fingers.

First we have to extract the gold. As a metal, most gold we use is mined and 75% of the gold we mine is used for jewelry. While gold is found around much of the globe, South Africa is the biggest supplier currently providing at least a quarter of the world's gold.

Mining as it's most commonly practiced is a horribly polluting and toxic process. Gold is mined in the following manner:

- The little pieces of gold (ore) are taken directly from the Earth
- Cyanide (a deadly chemical) is poured on top of a big pile of gold ore, separating the toxic metals like cadmium, lead, and mercury from the gold (any guesses where those metals go?).
- The gold is taken out of a big toxic puddle of heavy metals and cyanide
- This toxic puddle gets jumbled together with all the mining waste to create a big, toxic mess which often ends up in rivers and lakes and creates environmental and health concerns for communities living near the mines. Yikes!
- Two-thirds of the gold we use is newly mined in this super wasteful, toxic way.

Just one gold ring generates about 20 tons of mining waste. That's equivalent to four pick-up trucks or a very fat (and angry) elephant.

Not to mention the fact that mining is a dangerous job, in the top ten most dangerous jobs in the world. Workers are often put in extremely unsafe conditions.

## Jewelry Cont.

While diamonds are pretty, what the diamond trade has done to Sierra Leone is not. Because of their value, they create violent social upheaval. Diamonds are sometimes referred to as “conflict diamonds” or “blood diamonds” because they create violent wars over economic resources.

The attempt to control the diamond mining (and its financial profits) played a significant role in fueling the 11-year civil war in Sierra Leone. Trade in diamonds and other natural resources has underwritten some of the worst war crimes in the past two decades.

You can buy a gold ring for under \$100.

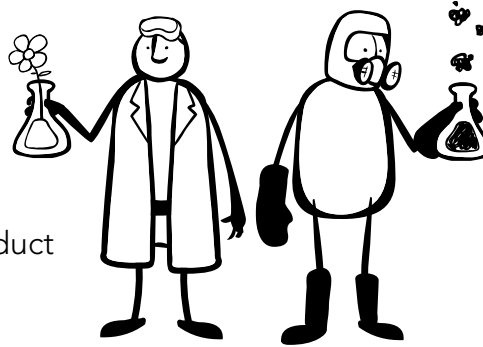
**What do you think would reflect the true cost of our jewelry to the countries and land where they’re produced?**



# Cosmetics/ Personal "Care" Products

## Instructions

1. Read through the hand-out marking key/ interesting points to use in your presentation, for the cost, and for the map.
2. Highlight 3 – 5 important points to convey to the group and add them to the map.
3. Estimate what you think the cost of the product should be.
4. Design your presentation for conveying the important points you chose and sharing your conclusion about the True Cost.



Most of us use lots of personal care products everyday. Every day the average woman uses 12 products containing 168 chemical ingredients while the average man uses 6 products with 80 different chemicals. We want to smell, look, and feel good. So we shampoo our hair, slather on sunscreen, roll on deodorant, apply mascara, and put on Chapstick. But what is all this stuff we're putting on our bodies? Reading the ingredients list on any of your cosmetics or personal care products doesn't give us much of a clue? For most of us, it's just a long list of strange chemicals.

With cosmetics and personal care products, extraction is a big issue. Let's start with just the container. Most products use a petroleum-based plastic container. This means that we're tearing up the Tar Sands in Canada and destroying rainforest in the Amazon to get access to all the oil it takes to make all the plastic for those containers.

Then there is what goes in those containers, there's a huge range of products used for "personal care," and while the extraction process varies greatly for each one, the production process is pretty consistent across the board. Consistently toxic! In the US, the stuff that we slather onto our bodies to take good care of ourselves turns out to practically be poison. The chemicals in them are linked to cancer, birth defects and other serious health problems. In a study done in 2005 of thousands of personal care products, they found:

- One-third of all products tested contain at least one ingredient linked to cancer
- Almost half the tested products contained at least one ingredient that is harmful to the reproductive system
- One half include penetration enhancer that help them (and all the toxic chemicals) move deeper into the body faster

# Cosmetics/ Personal "Care" Products

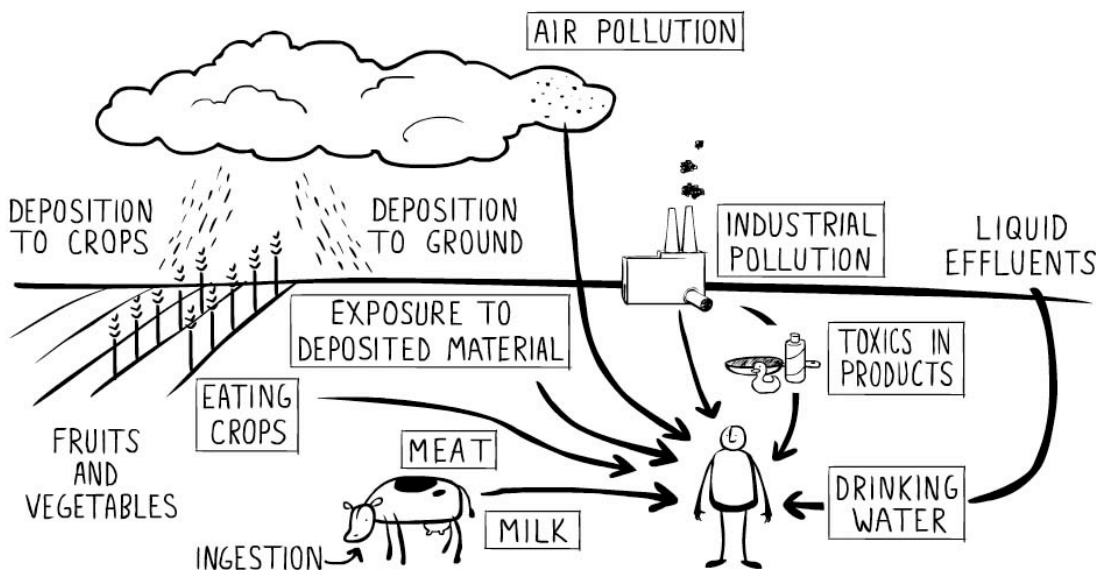
How can this be? Isn't there anybody regulating this? The answer is, "No." There is no neutral agency overseeing the cosmetic industry to insure our safety. It's a virtual free for all. The Cosmetic Ingredient Review Panel is the only organization responsible for testing the safety of these products. This panel is part of the cosmetic industry itself (you know, the ones who profit when we buy the stuff). Why should we trust them when they're the ones who profit from sales? As of 2005 CIR, had tested only 13% of the products we use daily. That means 87% of the chemicals we put on our bodies are completely untested.

You can get a bottle of lotion for under \$10.

## What should it really cost?

NOTE: This is scary stuff! Luckily, thanks to the great work of some really dedicated people who started their own cosmetic watchdog organization, you can look up your products and see what's in them on the internet (go to Skin Deep and GoodGuide). The most effective way to fight against having these chemicals in our products is to make laws that keep toxics out and that keep our bodies and our families free from cancer and reproductive health issues.

## EXPOSURE PATHWAYS OF TOXIC POLLUTANTS





# Session 3: Action Plan

## Create/Express

- Poem - Write a poem about the lifecycle of one of your favorite things. (2 pts)
- Make it up – Make a piece of art – only out of stuff you find in a recycling bin. (2 pts)

## Communicate

- Talk Stuff - Talk to 3 people about where their stuff comes from, what's in it, who makes it. Write the names of the people and a note about what kinds of stuff you discussed you spoke to in your notebook. (2 pts)

## Learn/Get Smart

- What's in it? - Visit to the SkinDeep Database or GoodGuide and figure out what's in the products you use every day. Make a list.  
[www.cosmeticsdatabase.com](http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com)  
[www.goodguide.com](http://www.goodguide.com) (2 pts)
- Mountain Tops - Check out I Love Mountains: "What's My Connection to Mountaintop Removal?" to see whether the energy in your home, church, or school is fueled by moutaintop removal.  
<http://ilovemountains.org/myconnection/> (2 pts)

## Try Something New

- Stop and think - Every time you want to buy something, stop for a minute, look at the object you want, and consider the people and places that were affected by that thing. Is the real cost of having that object worth it to you? Do you really need it? What else could fill the same need but have less of an impact? Make a list of the things you didn't buy because of this. (3 pts)

## Have Insights

- A new lens - Look around you at all the stuff you and your family own and think of all the people and places involved in producing it. Reflect in your journal about how it feels to know this. How would your life be different if you let yourself feel this whenever you shop. (2 pts)

## Be a Leader

At home

- A Stuff audit - Do a stuff audit of your living room and mark out on a map where your families stuff comes from and hang it on the fridge for your whole family to see (3 pts)

# Session 3: Action Plan Cont.

## Be a Leader

In the congregation

- E-stewardship - Do a bit of research online to find an e-steward where you can responsibly recycle electronics. Talk to the people at church about making a box to collect old, broken cell phones in your church.

Check out <http://www.e-stewards.org/> (3 pts)

## Tips and Tools...

- Check out your products on [www.GoodGuide.com](http://www.GoodGuide.com) before you make a purchase to give you a better sense of the environmental, social, and health impacts of a product.
- Out on the town? Take a look at the Center for New American Dream's pocket guides to help you make decisions when you are out and about: [http://www.newdream.org/marketplace/pocket\\_guides.php](http://www.newdream.org/marketplace/pocket_guides.php)

Remember to take pictures of anything you did to share and put on the mural.

Total # of Points \_\_\_\_\_