

## Water Steward Pledge

### *Learning and Reacting*

First, share the statistics below with your family; you might read some aloud or invite a few family members to read. Guide a discussion about these statistics. Use questions like these:

1. Which sad statistic is most surprising?
  2. For which can you most easily imagine a way you could help?
  3. Which most strongly calls you to action?
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- Seventy percent of the Earth's surface is covered with water. But only 2.5% of that is fresh water.
  - Only 1% of the world's freshwater is available for use. A lot of the rest is trapped in icecaps or underground.
  - Twenty percent of the world's human population does not have safe drinking water. That is 1.1 billion people.
  - More than 2.5 billion people do not have adequate sanitation.
  - In 1998, 31 countries had bad water shortages. By the year 2025, unless something changes, there will be 17 more countries on the list.
  - In parts of Africa and Asia, young girls and women walk about six miles a day to get water. They often carry more than 40 pounds of water on their heads. When they are getting water, they cannot go to school or work or care for their families.
  - Every day, 3,900 children die because of lack of safe water and sanitary conditions.
  - About 5% of the world's water supplies are privately controlled. People have to pay to use them. Poor people can't afford the water, so they use whatever they can find in lakes and rivers. Many become ill and die. Early in this century, one cholera epidemic in South Africa made more than 250,000 people sick.
  - Ten (about 5%) of the world's countries have 65% of the world's water resources.
  - Here is how fresh water is used: 70% for agriculture, 22% for industries, and 8% for direct human purposes.

- ❑ Of all the diseases in developing nations, 80% come from unsafe water and sanitation.
- ❑ The news is not all bad. In the 1990s, a billion more people got access to safe water.

*(Adapted from information on the PBS website for Bill Moyers' program, NOW, accessed July, 2009.)*

### *Faith in Action*

Use the pledge below as a model and guide the family to write a pledge together. Record ideas on paper together. Help the household finalize the wording. Then write the pledge and invite everyone to sign it. Share it with the congregation during Joys and Sorrows, if you like.

*I promise to be a good steward to the Earth's water resources. I will conserve water whenever I can. I will not waste water when I can help it. I will work so more people around the world have the clean, water they need. I will clean up polluted waters whenever I have a chance. I will not make water supplies unsafe or dirty. I will remember that what I do upstream can affect all life downstream. I will honor my spiritual connection to the web of all existence by protecting it.*

*(signed)* \_\_\_\_\_