
One Small Step Barry's Story

Picking up plastic bottles when out and about...

“Seeing a plastic bottle lying around now instantly connects me with the image of all that plastic that ends up in the sea and so into the stomachs of fish and birds and in turn into us.”

“I walk a lot and I spot a lot of plastic bottles lying around. So, without going berserk, I try to make a point of picking up the ones I come across and putting them in the recycling at home.

“I think I was most inspired by a woman called Bernadette who lives in our village and does a huge amount of caring for our local environment. She does it quietly and modestly without preaching to anyone but just setting a brilliant example. She does all sorts of things from organising rubbish clearing to tending plant troughs around our streets.”



How have others reacted to the step(s) you have taken?

“I quite like it when I get strange looks from people when I pick up bottles. I reckon that at least they're registering what I'm doing and maybe, somewhere along the line, a penny might drop.”

Has it led you to make any other changes?

“I guess it's part of a long-standing journey of trying to lessen our own impact as a family on the environment and trying to spread the message in a way that doesn't alienate people - so things like getting our church aware of recycling and switching from plastic cups for our Sunday coffee, first to compostable cardboard ones and now to china ones. At first people said nobody would do the washing up but in fact we all do.”

What advice would you give to anyone contemplating a similar change?

“Know that you can't save the world on your own but little steps add up. And be prepared to look a bit daft.”

How has the change affected your spiritual life or Christian witness?

“It's hard to sort out which influences which but I guess a few years ago I wouldn't have associated picking up plastic bottles with my Christian faith and now I definitely do”.



Story with kind permission of Barry Sugg, counsellor and psychotherapist. CCOW's 'One Small Step' series shares stories of change -- the small steps individuals have taken to live more in keeping with their faith -- to help inspire and encourage all of us on our journeys. We hope you've been inspired by this story. Please do get in touch and share yours with us!

