

The first time I stepped into the Washington State Capitol, I was an overwhelmed and intimidated 22-year-old that had never been involved in the political process.

With support from Earth Ministry, I realized that I could speak up for what I believe to be right—environmental justice. Before long, I was marching into offices, discussing values with legislators, and delivering hand-made valentines on the Senate floor.

A year later, I'd like to share tips on how an average person of faith can become a champion for justice:

1. First, **activate your heart**. Identify an issue that really matters to you. This might be getting toxics out of children's products, or stopping dangerous coal and oil trains from coming through our neighborhoods.
  - Reflect on how your faith calls you to action. It is to create a safer world for your children, build a more just society, or hold corporations accountable? Commit to your quest by recognizing your personal motivation.
2. **Seek out more information** about the issue. You don't have to be an expert on the topic, just know what to ask for and why, and relate it back to your values.
  - Oftentimes we find comfort in knowing facts. But really, your story and why you care is what legislators find most important. My fear of living and working in an oil train blast zone certainly caught their attention.
3. **Find an organization to help you**. Join Earth Ministry or other advocacy groups for support and opportunities for involvement.
4. **Take action!** There are plenty of ways you can make a difference.
  - **Call the legislative hotline** at 1-800-562-6000 to leave a message with your Senator or Representatives letting them know how they can champion your issue.
  - Throughout the Legislative Session, Earth Ministry organizes **Literature Drops** at the capital. Before beginning, our team gives an overview of the bill and key points. You will then join with experienced advocates to visit each office, distributing materials and sharing your story with legislators or aides. Sign up for Earth Ministry email alerts at [www.earthministry.org](http://www.earthministry.org) to know when these lit drops are happening throughout the legislative session.
  - Faith leaders from diverse traditions will gather at **Interfaith Advocacy Day on February 19**. Attend workshops on justice issues, and then join a group meeting with elected officials.
  - **Earth Ministry teaches classes** in "Faith and Environmental 101" and connects faith with advocacy. To schedule a class for your church, call the Earth Ministry office at (206) 632-2426.
  - Speak from the heart at a **legislative committee hearing**. Earth Ministry can help you write your two-minute testimony. If you aren't comfortable telling your story, you can sit in the audience to show your support.
  - Can't make it down to Olympia? Earth Ministry will set up an **in-district meeting** with your legislator, connecting you with other concerned community members for a conversation at a local office.
5. Finally, **hope and persistence are essential**. Don't underestimate the deep spiritual strength of the values calling you to action. After all, **you are the hero** in this story! Through advocacy, you can put your faith into action to protect our one and only planet.

In peace,

Jessica Zimmerle  
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