

THE HOPEFUL RECYCLER

A Fun Sketch about Caring for God's Creation



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The Hopeful Recycler

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Cover: John and Ellie performing The Hopeful Recycler at St Philips Church, Cottesloe, WA, 1 July 2018

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Synopsis –

A well-meaning but none-too-smart volunteer is cleaning up the grounds of a local church, and has to decide whether or not they can recycle the various items they pick up. Their mistaken efforts are rejected by the Bin Fairy, who appears out of the recycle bin to impart some information and wisdom regarding our responsibility to look after God's creation. Other Bin Fairies join her to test the Hopeful Recycler to see if the message has sunk in.

A hilarious sketch enabling all ages to take on relevant messages about good domestic recycling practice as part of caring for God's Creation.

Cast –

The Hopeful Recycler: The Hopeful Recycler is (HR) is an everyday person dressed in casual street clothes. HR needs to be strong enough to safely lift a bin upright and lower it with a person inside.

Bin Fairies: The six Bin Fairies (BF 1-6) all wear white (white pants or skirt; wear coat or jumper over white top and remove it before standing to speak)

Props –

Large 240 litre council Recycling Bin (clean!)

Recycling Guide from the local council or recycling station, preferably printed A4 size and colourful – one copy for Bin Fairy 1 to give to HR, and a pile for the audience to take away.

Coffee keep cup (preferably not plastic)

Various items of rubbish. Suggested items include: a polystyrene (foam) cup, plastic cockroach bait and empty plastic milk bottle (with lid on). Further items in a plastic bag: include empty plastic water bottle, plastic straws

Notes:

1. The suggested rubbish items can be varied to suit the situation, however the first two need to be items that cannot be recycled. It is important that the Director check which items are recyclable in the municipality where the sketch is performed.
2. The Five Marks of Mission in the script are Anglican Church guidelines. These should be adapted to suit the situation, emphasising the environment as an important part of the wider mission of the organisation.

Scene –

The action takes place in the performance space. Three items are placed on the floor before the action starts – the foam cup stage left front, cockroach bait front centre, and milk bottle stage right front. Bin Fairy 1 starts in the bin with a copy of the Recycling Guide, bin lid closed. Bin Fairies 2-6 take places spread around in the audience, ready to stand and shout their lines. HR has the plastic bag over his wrist and the keep cup in his pocket.

Action –

HR: *(Wheels bin in through side door)* All this rubbish around the grounds of *(venue)* Guess I get the job. *(Stops with bin facing audience, opens lid while looking at rubbish, i.e. not looking into bin, picks up first bit of rubbish)* Foam cup. It's kind of plastic, that's OK, recycle it. *(Places in bin while looking to the right to pick up the cockroach bait. Foam cup shoots out of the bin to stage left)* Cockroach bait, plastic, recycle... *(Places in bin while looking at the milk bottle. Cockroach bait shoots out of the bin to stage centre)* Milk bottles can be recycled. *(Drops it in bin, it shoots out, he catches it)* What ... *(Bin Fairy 1 appears, standing in bin)*

HR: Who are you?

BF 1: I'm a Bin Fairy. Ok, Bin Fairy Grandmother. And I'm not the only one, we are everywhere. *(HR looking around nervously)* Now what do you think you're doing?

HR: Recycling.

BF 1: No you're not. Take the top off and rinse it – and leave the top off – when the bottle gets crushed, that top could fly off like a bullet. *(HR quickly moves it away from near eyes)* Check the council's guide for recycling. Here have this one *(Hands HR the Recycling Guide)*.

HR: What about those foam cups and cockroach baits, they are plastic?

BF 1: That cup's polystyrene, council won't take it, and that cockroach bait has poison in it – Hazardous Waste. And don't put your recycle together in a plastic bag! Read the guide. Remember, the Bin Fairy is watching you. *(Two-finger 'watching' action, point at HR, HR freeze, BF 1 snaps fingers, HR snaps out)*

HR: I can't believe I'm talking to a Bin Fairy Grandmother. She sort of looks like someone I know; but who?

BF 1: Hey get me out of here. *(HR lies bin down, BF 1 crawl out towards rear of stage)*

HR: *(Sits on bin, to audience):* I'm sure I know her from somewhere. She's a bit over the top. *(Mimics BF 1)* 'Polystyrene, Hazardous Waste'... what's she going on about? Surely it's better to put everything in the recycling bin and let the recycling station sort it out?

BF 1: What you're talking about is what we Bin Fairies call 'hopeful recycling' – you hope it's recyclable, but you end up contaminating the good stuff. If in doubt, leave it out. And check out the Recycle Right website.

HR: *(Sighs)* Council guides, websites. Well why do we have to do all this Eco-stuff anyway – too hard.

BF 1: Now, do you know the Five Marks of Mission? You should, you're a member of this congregation.

HR: Errr, let me think... I've got this... ah... good music?

BF 1: *(Shakes head, clap clap)* Bin Fairies?

BF 2: *(Stands up, HR surprised)* The first Mark of Mission is to tell the Good News. Talk about Jesus to your family and friends.

BF 3: *(Stands up)* The second Mark of Mission is to teach and baptise. Preaching, study groups... And over there, *(Points to baptism area)* water is poured into a bowl for baptism.

BF 4: *(Stands up)* The third Mark of Mission is to tend to those in need. So I make casseroles for people.

BF 5: *(Stands up)* The fourth Mark of Mission is to transform society. Like writing letters for Open Doors.

BF 6: *(Stands up)* And... the fifth Mark of Mission is to treasure the integrity of God's creation and to sustain it.

BF 2-6: *(All come down to front shouting out)* Like tree planting – Clean Up Australia – Pick Up Three – Eco-Church – reduce, reuse, recycle – sign up for Plastic Free July! *(BF 2-6 surround HR, non-threateningly)* And Recycle Right! If in doubt, leave it out! If in doubt, leave it out!

BF 1: OK Bin Fairies, well done. *(BF 2-6 pause and freeze)* Back off now. *(BF 2-6 move back)* Let's see if he's got the message. I think a little test is in order.

BF 2-6: *(BF 2-6 laugh 'oh yeah', etc, while moving into a line side by side in order from BF 2 to BF 6)*

BF 2: Reduce! *(BF 2 looks to BF 3 who repeats the word, BF 4-6 follow on down the line)*

BF 1: *(To HR)* How?

HR: *(Looks in bag, pulls out water bottle)* Don't buy plastic water bottles... *(Pulls out straws)* or plastic straws.

BF 1-6: *(Still in line, not convinced yet)* Hmm.

BF 2: Reuse! *(BF 3-6 repeat the word as before)*

BF 1: How?

HR: *(Pulls out keep cup from pocket)* I use my keep cup for my take-away coffee! *(Bin Fairies thumbs up)*

BF 2: Recycle! *(BF 3-6 repeat the word as before)*

BF 1: How?

HR: Ohh, ahh. No 'hopeful recycling'! Check what you can recycle with your local council and on the Recycle Right website, and... *(Pauses, looks at plastic bag still holding)* ...don't put your recycling in a plastic bag! Yeah? *(Pause, all Bin Fairies clap)*

BF 1-6: Soooooo – care for the whole of God's beautiful creation.

HR: *(Picking up bin)* Well, let's get on with it! Anyone want a ride? *(Rushes off)*

BF 1-6: *(Pick up waste off floor)* Me! Me! Me! *(Follow HR off)*

Discussion Points –

- God's creation is good
- The creation is messy and groaning to be set free
- Jesus' resurrection launches the ultimate joining of heaven and earth
- That's the 'new creation' – heaven here on earth
- Jesus' followers have been handed stewardship
- We can't ignore the creation until Jesus appears
- What we do now somehow enhances the new creation
- So let's clean up God's Creation now!

Reference: Chapter 5 of *Surprised by Scripture* by N.T. Wright

Wright, N.T., *Surprised by Scripture*, Harper Collins, New York, 2014