



# Holy Ground:

Creating Tobacco-Free Faith Community  
Places of Worship, including Grounds



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## Creating Tobacco-Free Faith Community Places of Worship, including Grounds

*“Do not come any closer,” the Lord said. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” Exodus 3:5*

Human behavior is expected to be especially respectful when one is in the presence of the divine. Many places of worship expect specific signs of reverence and respect of its members when they enter their holy space.

With this thought in mind, we believe that commercial tobacco use should be prohibited from faith communities, including inside buildings and vehicles and on grounds. This booklet provides information to help any faith community to make the changes necessary to declare its holy ground tobacco free.

Communities may want to adapt this guide to their history, culture, and faith traditions. For example, in Native American faith communities one exception may be tribal elders who use traditional tobacco for ceremonial use or prayer.

The benefits to having a 100 percent tobacco-free facility are:

- Eliminating secondhand smoke exposure for staff, members and visitors;
- Promoting tobacco-free living;
- Encouraging tobacco cessation
- Reducing tobacco litter from grounds;
- Providing a good example for young people; and
- Improving the health of staff and members.\*

In this guide you will find the following:

- Five Steps to a Tobacco-Free Place of Worship
- A Holy Ground Assessment
- A Holy Ground Resolution
- A Tobacco Members Survey
- A Sample Tobacco-Free Policy
- A Sample Campus Sign
- A Page of Online Resources

## Five Steps to Creating Tobacco-Free Faith Community Buildings and Grounds

1. Assess readiness and determine the current policy.
  - Complete the Holy Ground Assessment Tool
  - Have members complete the Tobacco Survey
2. Organize key leadership and members to support a Holy Ground Tobacco-Free Policy.
  - It's often a good idea to include some people who use tobacco on the committee
  - Provide information about the benefits of implementing a tobacco-free policy
  - Engage and support high school youth as leaders within in the committee. Training is available for young people – see resource list.
  - Learn from other faith communities that have successfully taken their buildings and grounds tobacco-free
  - Work to create a group of members who will sign and promote the Holy Ground Resolution and work towards policy

3. Get the word out.
  - Educate members on the hazards of any tobacco use, secondhand smoke, secondhand aerosol, the role of and hazards or flavoring tobacco products, the benefits of quitting all tobacco use, and general tobacco education
  - Organize activities for your days of worship and other faith community gatherings, such as, presentations, guest speakers, Tobacco-Free Worship, "No Menthol Sunday"/ No Menthol Activities
4. Create a new Holy Ground Tobacco-Free Policy with the key members and inform the community.
  - Make announcements and share information in the bulletin, website and newsletter to educate about the new policy
  - Display signs in highly visible areas inside and outside the building
5. Continue to provide members with literature and resources about smoking cessation, secondhand smoke, etc.
  - Create a resource area to provide information on QuitlineNC; other effective smoking cessation programs; and information on secondhand smoke
  - Offer a support group for members who want to quit and recognize those who are successful
  - Encourage members to adopt tobacco-free policies in their home

## Tobacco Assessment Tool\*\*

Does your Faith Community:

1. Have a written policy prohibiting tobacco use in your buildings and vehicles and on your grounds?
2. Actively enforce a written policy prohibiting tobacco use?
3. Display signs with information about your tobacco-use policy?
4. Refer tobacco users to QuitlineNC or other tobacco cessation programs?
5. Host or promote free tobacco cessation programs?

If you answer "no" to any of these questions, please consider taking steps to ensure a healthier, tobacco-free congregation.



# Resolution

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“Do not come any closer,” the Lord said. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” Exodus 3:5

WHEREAS, Each year secondhand smoke kills an estimated 7,300 from cancer and 34,000 from heart disease each year among adult nonsmokers in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Approximately 480,000 Americans die from preventable smoking related diseases each year; and

WHEREAS, Tobacco use and secondhand smoke contribute to many types of cancer, interfere with cancer treatment, and increase the risk of cancer reoccurrence; and

WHEREAS, Secondhand smoke causes health problems for infants and young children, including asthma, upper respiratory infections, ear infections and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS); and

WHEREAS, Secondhand smoke is especially harmful to the unborn, increasing the risk of premature birth, low birthweight, and SIDS; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that a person with any risk factor(s) for heart disease should avoid all secondhand smoke; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Surgeon General and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that electronic nicotine delivery systems are harmful to young people and pregnant women, and the aerosol is not as safe as clean air; and

WHEREAS, QuitlineNC offers free, nonjudgmental help for anyone in North Carolina who wants to quit all forms of tobacco use; and

WHEREAS, The faith community values the health and abundant life of all its members

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that our Place of Worship will work towards: 1) adopting a tobacco-free policy; 2) increasing awareness about the risks of tobacco use and benefits of quitting; and 3) promoting tobacco cessation programs, such as QuitlineNC.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

House of Worship: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

# Tobacco Survey

Please select the best answers for you:

1. Are you a (mark all that apply):

- Smoker?
- Other tobacco product user? (e.g. smokeless tobacco, cigar, little cigar, hookah, etc)
- User of E-cigarettes/Vape products, Juuls, etc. ?
- Former tobacco user?
- Never tobacco user? (if former or never-user, skip to question 5)

2. During the last 30 days, on how many did you use tobacco?

- All
- Most
- Some

3. Have you ever tried to quit tobacco?

- Yes
- No

4. Would you like to quit tobacco?

- Yes
- No

5. In general, do you support smoke-free/tobacco-free policies?

- Yes
- No
- Sometimes

6. Should faith communities try to reduce the risk of tobacco addiction and harm by adopting policies that discourage tobacco use?

- Yes
- No

7. Would you like to see your worship community adopt a smoke-free/tobacco-free policy?

- Yes
- No

# Sample Policy

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*“Do not come any closer,” the Lord said. “Take off your sandals, for you are standing on holy ground.” Exodus 3:5*



The leadership and members of \_\_\_\_\_ covenant to implement a Tobacco-Free Grounds Policy for the overall health and welfare of its members. Tobacco use will not be permitted within buildings or anywhere on grounds of this place of worship. Tobacco use includes the use of cigarettes, cigars, hookahs, electronic cigarettes and smokeless tobacco. This policy applies to all employees, members, visitors and contractors.

As a community of faith, we will also work to provide information about the risks of tobacco use and benefits of quitting to all members. In addition, we covenant to refer those tobacco users who want to quit to 1-800-Quit-Now (1-800-784-8669) or [www.quitline.nc.com](http://www.quitline.nc.com) for free assistance. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ will take the following steps to ensure successful support of the Holy Ground Policy:

1. Remove all ashtrays from the premises.
2. Distribute copies of the policy to employees, contractors and members.
3. Post signs in highly visible areas inside and outside of the building.
4. Provide tobacco education literature and QuitlineNC materials to employees, members, and visitors.
5. Continue to remind members about the Holy Ground Policy during announcements and in the worship bulletin.

Faith Leader’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Church Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Effective Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Tobacco-Related Resources

## Holy Ground: Creating Tobacco-Free Faith Community Buildings and Grounds

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### Secondhand Smoke

- The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Secondhand Smoke Facts: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/general\\_facts/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/general_facts/index.htm)
- CDC: The Health Effects of Secondhand Smoke: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/secondhand\\_smoke/health\\_effects/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/secondhand_smoke/health_effects/index.htm)
- The Mayo Clinic: What is Thirdhand smoke, and why is it a concern?: <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/expert-answers/third-hand-smoke/faq-20057791>
- U.S. Surgeon General: Children are Hurt by Secondhand Smoke: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2006/pdfs/children-shs.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2006/pdfs/children-shs.pdf)
- Surgeon General: Secondhand Smoke: What it Means to You: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/2006/consumer\\_summary/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/2006/consumer_summary/index.htm)
- Smoke-Free Pledge: <http://www.tobaccopreventionandcontrol.ncdhhs.gov/about/Documents/communityTools/8.5x11-pledge-1.pdf>

### Smoking and Other Tobacco Use

- QuitlineNC: [www.quitlinenc.com](http://www.quitlinenc.com)
- U.S. Surgeon General: Smoking: What You Need to Know: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/wynk-smoking.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/sgr/50th-anniversary/pdfs/wynk-smoking.pdf)
- CDC: The Health Effects of Smoking: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/health\\_effects/effects\\_cig\\_smoking/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/health_effects/effects_cig_smoking/index.htm)
- National Cancer Institute: [www.smokefree.gov](http://www.smokefree.gov)
- Pathways to Freedom: <http://www.naatpn.org/pathways>
- National African American Tobacco Prevention Network No Menthol Sunday: <http://www.naatpn.org/menthol>
- Parent Tip Sheet on E-cigarettes: [https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR\\_ECig\\_ParentTipSheet\\_508.pdf](https://e-cigarettes.surgeongeneral.gov/documents/SGR_ECig_ParentTipSheet_508.pdf)
- CDC on smokeless tobacco: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/smokeless/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/smokeless/index.htm)
- CDC on Cigars: [https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data\\_statistics/fact\\_sheets/tobacco\\_industry/cigars/index.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/tobacco/data_statistics/fact_sheets/tobacco_industry/cigars/index.htm)

### On-line Free Training for Young People:

- Taking Down Tobacco: <http://www.takingdowntobacco.org/>