

eco- congregation



an environmental toolkit for churches

Module 1

church centre check-up

*Eco-congregation (England & Wales) is a project of A Rocha UK
13 Avenue Road, Middlesex UB1 3BL Registered Charity No 1089276*

Eco-congregation – working under the auspices of Churches Together in Britain and Ireland

The Eco-Congregation environmental check-up is designed to help churches, Christian centres, church national and regional offices to:

1. Identify and affirm their existing environmental ministry
2. Prioritise what they would like to do next and identify supportive resources

Step 1 Getting started

It is recommended that you form a small group to work through the check-up and prioritise your first steps. Eco-Congregation offers resources to support your chosen priorities – the following sections 2-12 each has an associated module. To order your choice of modules free of charge, complete the form with:

- Contact details
- An affirmation your centre has undertaken the check-up, or a comparable audit
- An affirmation that a decision-making meeting approves that environmental activities form part of your organisation's life and mission (this step helps gain support for subsequent activities)
- Tick your choice of resource modules

Step 2 Get Cracking!

On receipt of the resources, distribute them to appropriate people/groups in your organisation (e.g. worship resources to worship leader, property resources to office manager) and encourage the development and implementation of your plans.

Step 3 Go for an Award

Organisations that undertake initiatives with spiritual, practical and community dimensions are encouraged to apply for the Eco-Congregation Award. Keep a record of your organisation's environmental activities to aid any application.

How to complete the check-up

Use sections 2-11 to identify your organisation's current environmental good practice and future priorities. For some questions you may wish to tick more than one box (e.g. an environmental feature may be present but also have the potential to be further developed). There is space to write additional notes on each section if you would like to, but it is not essential. Skip those sections or tick boxes that aren't relevant for your organisation.

If you have any questions, please contact the Eco-congregation (England & Wales) office:

Eco-congregation, c/o Groundworks Sheffield
The Innovation Centre, 217 Portobello, Sheffield, S1 4DP

0114 263 6421

ecocongregation@arocha.org

2. Worship

While churches themselves are the focus of Christian worship, many church offices and organisations have times of prayer or worship, and may publish and distribute prayer and worship resources for use in churches. The Scottish Episcopal Church produced a booklet, Prayer and Action, on twelve themes including the environment.

How regularly during the year are environmental concerns included in worship?

- Never Occasionally Frequently

In your organisation's prayer life do you:

(tick any that apply)

- Praise God the creator Say sorry for the harm done to the environment
 Give thanks to God for the gift of creation Pray for the healing of creation

Does your organisation connect with God's gift of creation through worship?

(tick any that apply)

- Through occasional outdoor worship through prayer walks
 Using natural materials within worship choosing organic bread and wine

Do you encourage churches to make the link between environmental issues and Christian faith by:

(tick any that apply)

- Producing worship resources with an environmental theme
 Relating care for God's creation to other themes in worship resources
 Identifying and promoting environmental worship resources produced by others

Module 2, 'Celebrating Creation!' contains ideas and resources for worship teams and leaders

3. Theology

Theology is concerned with giving and exploring a rational and orderly account of Christian belief, drawing on Biblical studies, Church tradition and history, ethics and the context in which the Church is present. St Mary the Virgin, Monkseaton, explored aspects of creation/green- theology over a five week period. Does your organisation:

	Yes	No	Has potential to develop
have access to Christian environmental resources	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
organise teaching events that include environmental issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
include creation/environmental issues in study materials it produces?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Module 3, 'Creation and Christianity' contains some eco- or green theological ideas together with suggestions for further reading.

4-5. Children's and youth work

As part of a special creation-focussed service, the children at St John's, Hamilton gave each member a gift of bulbs potted in a re-used plastic cup. If your organisation works with children and young people or provides children's resources, use the check-up to identify how you include environmental issues in children's ministry and the potential for development.

Does your organisation:

- include environmental learning or action in children's activities
- involve children and young people in auditing and improving the environmental management of the premises
- produce Christian environmental resources for children and young people
- identify and promote Christian environmental youth resources produced by others
- organise environmentally themed youth events or fun days for young Christians

Module 4, 'Acorns to oaks' includes inspiration and ideas for incorporating indoor and outside environmental activities in children's work
Module 5, 'Tread gently – go green' has ideas and activities for youth work

6. All-age and Adult education

People grow in faith from cradle to grave. Relating key topics, like environmental issues, with Christian thinking can be inspirational and faith-affirming. St John the Evangelist, C of E/Methodist LEP explored a creation- focused Bible study and their minister led some environmentally-themed assemblies at the local school. What opportunities are or could be available for your organisation:

Have done **Could consider**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Undertake an environmental Bible study |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organise speaker events on environmental issues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Produce or commission study material on environmental issues |

Module 6, 'Exploring God's green word' includes two sets of Bible studies

7. Property management

Good stewardship of energy and maintenance issues can both reduce your organisation's impact on the environment and save money, particularly in the long-term. The German Kirchentag has insulated its offices and installed solar PV cells on the roof, and is encouraging participating churches to do the same. Assess your current environmental stewardship of property and the potential for developing this:

Have done **Could consider**

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Monitor energy consumption regularly to check trends |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Switch to 'green' electricity (electricity from renewable sources) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Regularly service boiler or heating appliances |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Timetable meetings to minimise heating use |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Heating system with timer and thermostatic controls |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Commission an energy/environmental consultation
<small>(particularly useful if considering a new heating system or refurbishment or if any boiler is older than 15 years)</small> |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Fit draft excluders around windows and doors to reduce heat loss |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install appropriate levels of insulation where appropriate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Clean windows to maximise natural light! |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by (e.g. photocopier) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Replace cracked or broken windowpanes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Installed low-energy light bulbs where appropriate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Check water outlets – fix drips and leaks |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Install water-saving devices e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Collect rainfall from down pipes for use in garden |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Choose timber from sustainably managed forests, and reclaimed materials where appropriate |

Have done **Could consider**

Promoting eco-management

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide a model environmental policy for local churches to adopt |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organise bulk promotions for local churches for example on green electricity, insulation, or energy surveys |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Encourage environmental management in churches for example through quinquennial visits |

<p>Module 7, 'Greening the cornerstone' includes ideas and sources of resources to help put God's House in green order</p>

8. Financial management and purchasing

The church is responsible for the good stewardship of money and all kinds of consumables. The Church of Scotland Offices recycle paper, plastic bottles, cans and printer cartridges. Use this section to assess your organisation's existing good practice and identify issues for consideration and action:

Have done	Could consider	
------------------	-----------------------	--

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Check the environmental policy of your bank and see if you are satisfied with it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Have an ethical investment policy for any savings |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use environmentally-friendly cleaning materials & paint |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchase recycled paper and envelopes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use farmers markets and other local suppliers
(to promote local economy and reduce food miles) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Purchase fairly-traded products (e.g. tea and coffee) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Use local suppliers where possible
(so promoting a sustainable local economy and reducing transportation) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Provide tap instead of bottled water for meeting rooms and offices |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Collection facilities for recycling items (e.g. paper, cans, spectacles, stamps, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes, foil) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Organise book exchanges or 'to a good home' notice boards to recycle goods and raise funds |

Module 8, 'Greening the purse strings' includes ideas for good stewardship of financial, catering and purchasing matters

9. Gardens and Land

Many church organisations are responsible for land varying in size from a tiny patch to a large acreage. St Saviours Episcopal Church in Bridge of Allan carried out a survey of their grounds and are now planning a bird feeding station and other improvements for wildlife. Use this section to assess the ecological value, value to the community and attractiveness of your plot, whether a small office courtyard or acres of farmland, and the potential to develop it:

Present	Potential to develop	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management that is wildlife-friendly (e.g. minimal use of weedkillers and pesticides, leaving some areas unmown, valuing old trees, hedges, walls and stones)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Native plant species and plants that benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, hawthorn and blackthorn)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and hedgehogs)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visually attractive planting/features
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area for recreation

Module 9, 'Planting and conserving Eden' includes ideas, inspiration and sources of resources to:

- **assess the ecological value of your land and develop a management plan**
- **improve the community benefit or wildlife value of your plot**

10. Personal lifestyle

Employees, visitors, customers, service users or correspondents are all influenced by the example you set and the encouragement and information you provide.

Torphichen church encourages the minister to claim mileage expenses when he travels by bicycle on church business. Use this section to assess what your organisation is currently doing to encourage individuals to green their lifestyle and the potential to develop this mission

Have done	Could consider	Greening personal lifestyle
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publish green tips in the newsletter or magazine
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations (e.g. home energy audit)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encouraging sustainable transport eg by providing bike racks, providing information on cycle paths and public transport, promoting car-free day

Module 10, 'Green choices' includes information and tips to green lifestyles.

11. Community outreach

Church organisations can work with and through their local community to improve their neighbourhood. Dunscore church worked with the local school on activities like community clean-ups and environmental newsletters. Assess the links that your organisation already has in the local community and the potential for further development.

Have done	Could consider	Community outreach/mission
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish links with community organisations with a view to sharing your environmental ministry (e.g. schools, youth groups, local environmental bodies)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy formation – Local Authorities can advise
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Draw on links that employees or users have with environmental bodies e.g. Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust, RSPB
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support or initiate community schemes with a positive environmental element (e.g Clean-up, Green business awards)

Module 11, 'Community Matters' includes stories, ideas and further contacts for undertaking work with and through local communities.

12. Overseas Concerns

Living simply that others may simply live is a facet of Christian life. Edinburgh Diocese of the Scottish Episcopal Church is aiming to become a Fair Trade Diocese. What does or can your organisation do to benefit the environment and people across the world?

Have done	Could consider	Community outreach/mission
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the work of Christian development agencies (e.g. Christian Aid, Tearfund, Cafod, Trocaire or SCIAF)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Initiate or participate in activities in One World Week
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote fair trade
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Explore environmental issues through any linked or twinned overseas community or church
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the work of international conservation and environment agencies (e.g. A Rocha, WWF, Friends of the Earth)

Module 12, 'Global neighbours' includes ideas and contacts to help churches think and act locally to promote environmental care globally

Summary and Action Plan

What is your organisation already doing to care for creation?

What are the first three things you would like to do to improve your care of creation and which modules will help you tackle them?

Actions

Modules to order

1.

2.

3.

eco-congregation resources order form

To order Eco-Congregation resource modules free of charge complete this form indicating:

1. your contact and organisation details
2. your choice of modules (overleaf)
3. that you have worked through the church centre check-up or a comparable audit
4. that a decision-making body affirms that environmental activities form part of your organisation's life and mission.

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

Full Name of Organisation

Denomination (if any)

Title and Name of Contact Person.....

(Green Apostle/Environmental Co-ordinator)

Address of Contact Person.....

.....

County **Postcode**

Tel: **Fax:**.....

Email address:.....

My contact details may be passed to a third party* **yes*** **no**

* e.g. a church/denominational contact, local authority environmental officer but never for commercial purposes

Please tell us something about your organisation (Diocesan, District, national, agency etc)

.....

.....

Name of organisational decision-making body which approved this order:

.....

Date of Meeting:

Position of Officer chairing the meeting:

I affirm that environmental issues/caring for God's creation form part of our organisation's life and mission and that we have worked through the church centre check-up in module 1 or a comparable environmental audit

Name of Officer

Signature of Officer

eco-congregation resources order form

Please tick the modules that your organisation would like to receive:

Grounding in Faith

- Module 2 Celebrating creation!**
Ideas and resources for worship
- Module 3 Creation and Christianity**
Some green theological perspectives

Growing in Faith

- Module 4 Acorn to oaks**
Ideas and activities for children's work
- Module 5 Tread gently – go green**
Ideas and activities for youth groups
- Module 6 Exploring God's green word**
An address and two sets of Bible Studies for house groups

Managing in Faith

- Module 7 Greening the cornerstone**
Guidelines on caring for Church premises
- Module 8 Greening the purse strings**
Management of financial, catering and purchasing matters
- Module 9 Planting and conserving Eden**
Practical ideas and advice to care for Church grounds and land

Living in Faith

- Module 10 Green choices**
Information and suggestions to green personal lifestyles
- Module 11 Community matters**
Ideas to help Churches work with, through and for their local community
- Module 12 Global neighbours**
Sources and resources to help Churches think globally and act locally.

Please note:

- to save resources only one copy of each module is available per organisation
- modules are also downloadable from: www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales under 'Free resources' from the left hand menu
- modules may be photocopied (the text version on the web copies well)
- it is recommended that you only order as many modules as you can use
- other modules may be requested later without completing a second form

Return this form:

For England and Wales:

Post: Eco-congregation Resources, c/o Groundworks Sheffield
The Innovation Centre, 217 Portobello, Sheffield, S1 4DP

Email: ecocongregation@arocha.org

Website: www.ecocongregation.org/englandwales