

Section

1

ECO-CONGREGATION IRELAND

An environmental check-up
for your church

2017 edition



eco
congregation

Welcome to Eco-Congregation Ireland!

This section has been developed to help you get started as an eco-congregation. It will

- help you identify and affirm the environmental work you are already doing with your congregation, church centre and/or church offices
- give you advice on how to develop and grow as an eco-congregation
- show your areas of strength and those that can be further developed
- point you to help for the areas you want to get involved in.

It is not a test! It is here to help you.

To become an eco-congregation, we recommend you form a small group to work through the check-up and prioritise your next steps. When you have done this, send us your registration form.

The environmental check- up

Use the following four key areas to identify your church'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 for additional notes on each. Skip those sections or tick boxes that aren't relevant for your church.

Remember It's not a test! Just pointers to help you get started.....

1. SPIRITUAL

Worship is the prime focus of Christian life from which the Church's life and mission flows. This section is designed to help you identify how thankfulness and concern for God's creation are expressed in your worship.

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

- o Never
- o Only at special services
e.g. Harvest Festival
- o every few months
- o Frequently

In your Church's prayer life, do you:

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

Which of these worship ideas have you used?

- o outdoor services
- o prayer walks
- o Using natural materials within worship
- o Choosing local bread for Communion

Does your Church sing hymns or songs that celebrate the wonder of creation and express the calling to care for the environment?

- o Regularly
- o On special Sundays
- o Hardly ever

Does your Church observe Creation Time (1st September to 4th October)?

- o Every year
- o Some years
- o Hardly ever
- o Never

Does your church:

use Christian environmental resources

eg. On this website

Have done Could consider

participate in workshops

that include environmental issues?

include creation/environmental issues in its

teaching, studying or preaching programme?

Undertake *an environmental Bible study*

Invite a speaker on environmental issues

Organise/participate in a creation-care Lent group

Notes:



2. PRACTICAL

Church Buildings	Have done	Could consider
Insulate church buildings wherever possible	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Read your meters regularly/ assess your energy usage	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Timetable meetings to minimise heating use	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Heating system with timer and thermostatic controls	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fit energy saving light bulbs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by (e.g. photocopier)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Check water outlets – fix drips and leaks	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Install water-saving devices (e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchasing policy		
Use environmentally-friendly cleaning materials & paint	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase recycled paper and envelopes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Purchase Fairtrade products (e.g. tea and coffee)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use local suppliers where possible (so promoting a sustainable local economy and reducing transportation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Catering		
Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use farmers markets and other local suppliers (to promote local economy and reduce food miles)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Waste minimisation

Collection facilities for recycling items which can be used by church members, building users or local community

(e.g. paper, cans, printer cartridges, clothes, shoes, foil)

Church Land

Wildlife-friendly management (e.g. minimal use of weedkillers and pesticides, leaving some areas unmown, valuing old trees, hedges, walls and stones)

Native plant species and plants that benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, hawthorn and blackthorn)

Used the All Ireland Pollinators programme?

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)

Visually attractive planting/ features

Area for prayer/ contemplation/ outdoor worship

Area for recreation

Getting the message across

Have done **Could consider**

Publish green tips in a church/ parish magazine

Promote awareness through posters or information from environmental organisations (e.g. home energy audit)

Encourage recycling by providing collection points or informing people of civic facilities

Encourage walking and cycling to church

All ages

Have you considered how children, young people, and the elderly could be involved in all the above?

3. COMMUNITY

Churches can work with and through their local community to improve their neighbourhood. Here you can assess the links that your church already has in the local community and the potential for further development.

	Have done	Could consider
Establish links with community organisations with a view to sharing your environmental ministry (e.g. schools, youth groups, local environmental bodies)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Advise building users of your environmental concerns and request that they utilise any environmental facilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy formation – local authorities can advise	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Draw on links that members have with environmental bodies (e.g. <i>Tidy Towns</i> , Friends of the Earth, Wildlife Trust)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support or initiate community schemes with a positive environmental element (e.g. An Taisce spring clean-up, Tidy Towns, local exchange trading systems, barter websites)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Show a film on an environmental issue	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Notes:



4. GLOBAL

Living simply that others may simply live is an integral part of Christian life.

What can your church do to benefit the environment and people across the world?

	Have done	Could consider
Support the work of Christian development agencies (e.g. Trócaire, Christian Aid, Tearfund, VITA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Initiate or participate in activities in One World Week	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Promote Fairtrade	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Explore environmental issues through linked overseas communities or churches	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Support the work of international conservation and environment agencies (e.g. A Rocha, WWF, Friends of the Earth)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Notes:

CONGRATULATIONS on all the work you are already doing to care for the environment!

For further assistance see our website

For admin, support and funding purposes, it would be helpful if you could print and send this page with your details to Karen Nicholson, 45 Belvoir Drive, Belfast BT8 7DH or scan it and send to info@ecocongregationireland.com

Full Name of Church

Denomination of Church

Title and Name of Contact Person.....
(Environmental Coordinator)

Address of Contact Person.....

.....

County **Post/Eircode**

Tel: **Mobile:**.....

Email address:.....

Size of Church (members/regular worshippers) Under 50 · 51-200 · 200+ ·

Location: **Rural** · **Suburban** · **Town/City Centre** · **Inner City** ·

Name of your Local Authority:

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

.....

Date of Meeting:

Position of Church Officer chairing the meeting:

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

Name of Church Officer:.....

Signature of Church officer:.....

For further information contact:

Karen Nicholson
Administrative Officer
45 Belvoir Drive
Belfast BT8 7DH

Email: info@ecocongregationireland.com

Tel: 089 974 0744

Website: www.ecocongregationireland.com

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