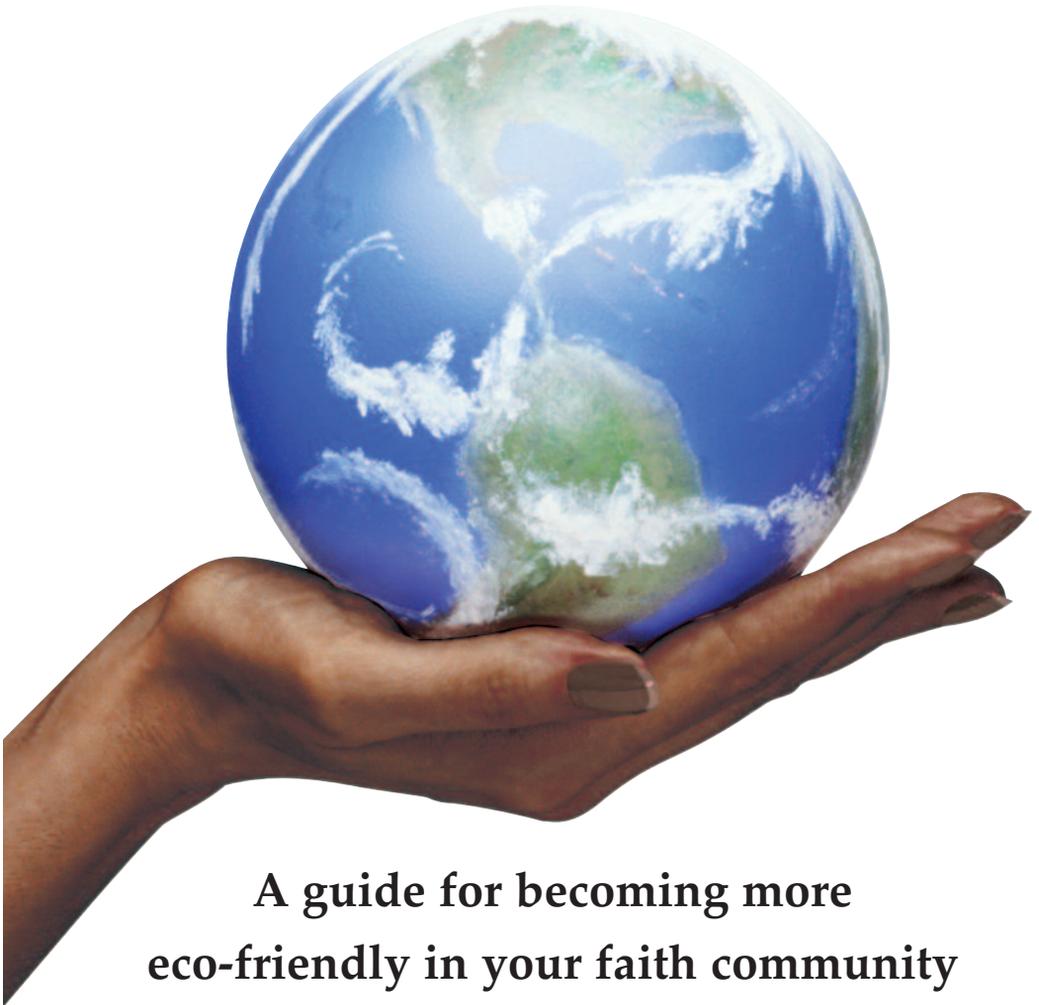


Our Sacred Earth



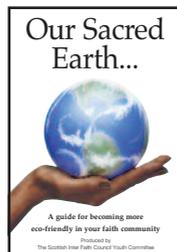
**A guide for becoming more
eco-friendly in your faith community**

Produced by
The Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Committee



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Introduction

Welcome to our guide on how to be more eco-friendly in your place of worship. As humans we rely on the natural resources that the planet offers us in order to survive. For too long people have taken this for granted and have degraded our environment with little thought or care. All faiths teach the importance of caring for the earth and where better to start than in our places of worship. Through our faiths we have the opportunity to care for creation in both a spiritual and practical sense and as people of faith we can become a powerful force for safeguarding our world for future generations.

This handbook has been compiled by the Scottish Inter Faith Council youth committee in conjunction with Global Xchange volunteers and funded by the Scottish Executive through the Sense Over Sectarianism initiative. It offers a simple checklist to determine how 'green' you already are and gives practical advice and suggestions to help you on your way to better eco practices in areas such as worship, youth activities and 'housekeeping'. We have also provided useful websites and contacts which have further information to help you achieve your environmental aims.

The Scottish Inter Faith Council Youth Committee is comprised of young people from ten faith traditions who meet together regularly. Their vision is to promote religious understanding throughout Scotland by building friendships, hosting conferences, workshops and retreats and by undertaking practical projects together – demonstrating that just as the natural world is full of diversity and beauty so is our human family.





The state of our sacred earth...

Climate Change

- Humans are currently causing irreparable damage to our environment.
- Scientists predict that due to global warming the planet will heat up by between 1.4 and 5.8°C by 2100.
- Global warming is largely caused by human activities such as burning fossil fuels which lead to an increase of greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, in the atmosphere.
- Due to the warming of the earth, glaciers, icebergs and polar ice sheets are beginning to melt. This melting is predicted to cause a rise in sea levels of up to 90 cm in the next 100 years submerging many coastal areas.
- The UK is responsible for 3% of global emissions despite only having 0.009% of the global population.
- If everyone turned off the standby button on their television Britain would need one less power station.



- 89% of our energy comes from burning fossil fuel (whereas Sweden use just 40% fossil fuels).
- The British government has set a target that, by 2020, 20% of our energy should come from renewable resources. At the current rate of change it is expected that we will achieve only half that.
- Globally we destroy an area of forest twice the size of Belgium every year.



- Ordinary light bulbs can use up to 4 times as much energy as energy saving bulbs.
- Every week we produce enough rubbish to fill Wembley stadium.
- In Britain we recycle just 10% of our waste.
- We put 70 million tonnes of rubbish into landfill every year.

Water

- By 2025 it is estimated that two thirds of the world's population will suffer from a lack of water due to rising population and the effects of global warming.
- A dripping tap can waste up to 90 litres of water per week.

**“Nature is God’s Will and is its expression in
and through the contingent world”**
Tablets of Bahá’u’lláh p 142 (The Bahá’í Faith)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Energy
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turn off appliances e.g. TV, computer screens, lights etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Move furniture away from radiators to make sure they heat the room more efficiently.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Keep windows clean and clear to maximise natural light.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't over fill the kettle – only boil the water you need.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Close curtains at dusk to conserve heat.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Turn heating down by 1 degree – this can save 8 percent on your annual energy bills!
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have meetings at times and in rooms that reduce the need for heating.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace ordinary light bulbs with energy efficient bulbs.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy the most energy efficient appliances available.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use a thermostat and time clocks for your heating – there's no point overheating an empty building.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walk or car share to travel to your place of worship.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Offset emissions created at your place of worship by funding tree-planting or energy saving schemes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Monitor energy bills to check trends and savings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Change your energy supplier to one that uses green (renewable) energy sources - www.livingethically.com
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Improve your insulation e.g. loft, cavity, hot water tanks, draft excluders. Public grants are available for this.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace your boiler – if it's over 15 yrs old it's inefficient.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Investigate installing renewable energy sources e.g. solar panels.



“Simplicity teaches economy. Simplicity is the conscience which calls upon people to rethink their values... Simplicity decreases the gap between 'the haves' and the 'have nots' by demonstrating the logic of true economics: to earn, save, invest, and share the sacrifices and the prosperity.”
 Living Values A Guidebook; published by Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Water
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fix drips and leaks from water pipes and taps.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure your hot water system thermostat is not set too high. Adding cold water to cool very hot water is wasteful.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Measure and monitor the amount of water used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Appoint a water monitor within the organisation to undertake periodic site walk-over to identify water minimisation opportunities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Consider alternative water sources, e.g. collect rainfall from down pipes for use in the garden and grey water re-use.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make sure people in the place of worship are fully aware of the importance of water minimization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure people in the place of worship are encouraged to report leaks and that leaks are repaired quickly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure pipes are well insulated to protect against frost damage.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Install water-saving devices in toilets e.g. dual or low flush, a toilet hippo, sensor urinal flushing controls, cistern displacement devices.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Fit water minimising controls e.g. push button or auto turn off taps, flow regulator/restrictors and spray nozzles on hoses.



“Our concern for the environment must not be limited solely to our own region or to the borders of our own country. It is a question which concerns everyone on earth”
 His Holiness Dalai Lama (Buddhism)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
Buildings and Maintenance		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use eco-friendly cleaning materials and paint.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Choose timber from sustainably managed forests.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use recycled/reclaimed products for building maintenance.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Replace broken or cracked windows to minimise heat loss from the building.

HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
Catering		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy organic if possible – this reduces the effects of chemicals on the environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use local produce – to reduce the negative environmental impact of excessive food miles.
		Or, if local produce is not an option...
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use fair-trade products where possible – fair-trade products all have to meet certain environmental standards in their production.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Don't waste leftover food – there's probably a local homeless shelter that could use it!
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycle plastic, glass and paper materials used in catering.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If you serve meat products, provide more vegetarian food. It takes 3 times the energy to produce meat as vegetarian products and intensive livestock farming is also major a source of the greenhouse gas methane.

“Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.”
Gospel of Luke 12:6-7 (Christianity)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
Finance and Purchasing		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Purchase recycled equipment and stationary.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have an ethical investment policy for your savings.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Buy fair-trade, organic or more environmentally friendly products where possible.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use local suppliers – this reduces the need for transportation.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Check the environmental policy of your bank – are you satisfied with it?

HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
Waste Minimisation		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Use hand towels rather than paper towels in washroom facilities.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Recycle or reuse products where possible, for example paper, printer cartridges, plastic bags.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Donate leftover food to local homeless shelters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold a jumble sale – this a great way to make sure products are re-used and not just thrown away.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Compost organic waste if you have a space outside where composting would be possible.



“Heaven, earth, and humans are the basis of all creatures. Heaven gives them birth, earth nourishes them, and humans bring them to completion...”
Leading Han Confucian Tung Ch'ung-shu (c.179-104 BCE) (Confucianism)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outside Space
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collect rainfall from down pipes in water butts to use to water plants etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Plant native species to encourage an abundance of wildlife. e.g. flowers used by bees and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide other features to benefit wildlife e.g. Bird feeders, bird boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and old logs for insects, hedgehogs etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide an area for outdoor worship to appreciate our natural world through our faith.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Management of outside spaces that is wildlife friendly e.g. minimising use of weedkillers, protecting and preserving old trees, hedges, walls and stones etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have an area for compost where members of your community can bring their organic waste – this can then be used to naturally fertilise your plants.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make use of recycled materials e.g. reclaimed wood, car tyres etc.

“The earth is our mother, and we are all her children”
Ancient Hindu Dictum (Hinduism)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outreach
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Promote fair trade.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Advise any users of your place of worship about your environmental policies.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support or initiate community environmental schemes.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Support the work of national and international conservation and environment organizations such as WWF or Friends of the Earth.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicise your own or other environmental projects and practices in your publications / newsletters.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Make a link with a community in a developing country. You can then share environmental information, best practice and resources.



“The world is green and beautiful, and Allah has appointed you his guardian over it”
Taught the Prophet Muhammad (Islam)



HAVE DONE	COULD CONSIDER	Worship
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Undertake a study of the 'environmental' aspects of your sacred text.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Highlight or preach about creation and protection of the earth during worship.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Invite a speaker to come and talk about faith and the environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus on the environment in your youth worship and study groups.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hold devotional services on the theme of environment.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have an environmental day, week or even month where you highlight the environment both spiritually and practically.



“When God created the first human beings, God led them around the Garden of Eden and said: “Look at my works! See how beautiful they are – how excellent! For your sake I created them all. See to it that you do not spoil and destroy My world; for if you do, there will be no one else to repair it.”
Midrash Kohelet Rabbah, 1 on Ecclesiastes 7:13 (Judaism)



Suggested Environmental Activities for Youth Groups

- Build and erect a bird feeder.
- Create a compost box – members of your faith group can then bring their organic waste for composting.
- Hold a ‘Council of All Beings’ – this is a discussion with different members representing the needs of different aspects of nature e.g. seas, forests, sky, to help understand the damage humans do to them. For more information visit www.wilderdom.com/games/EnvironmentalActivities
- Have a scavenger hunt.
- Plant a garden – native plants or trees would be particularly good for encouraging local wildlife. Or perhaps something like fruit or vegetables which can be organically grown!
- See ‘What lives in our garden?’ – get each member of the group to mark out 1 metre square of the outside space at your place of worship or a local park and then look to see what lives in that area for example worms, spiders, bugs.
- Get members to paint or draw their favourite things in nature.
- Create a collage to depict good environmental behaviour and bad environmental behaviour – if possible using natural/reused/recycled products.
- If you are able to access the internet, get members to calculate their carbon footprint – there are many websites where you can do this for example www.carbonfootprint.com
- Hold or join a tree-planting event.
- Have an eco-garden design competition.
- Undertake a practical environmental or conservation project.
- Encourage your young people to be of service in the community which might include environmental activities.

“Ye walk on My earth complacent and self-satisfied, heedless that My earth is weary of you ...”
Bahá’u’lláh (The Bahá’í Faith)



Useful Websites and Contacts

- www.greenchoices.org – a website with advice for environmental alternatives for all aspects of day to day living.
 - www.livingethically.co.uk – helpful and practical advice for a more ethical lifestyle.
 - www.adviceguide.org.uk – advice on many topics including environmental living.
 - www.thecarbontrust.co.uk – advice on how to save money and reduce energy consumption as well as information about climate change. Tel. 01355 581810.
 - www.est.org.uk – information on a wide range of energy saving products.
 - www.saveenergy.org.uk – information about grants for insulation. Tel. 0800 093 4050
 - www.envirowise.gov.uk – contains information about saving water or for their environment and energy helpline Tel. 0800 585794.
 - www.greenstat.co.uk – the website of the Green Stationary Company who provide recycled stationary products. Tel. 01225 480 556.
 - www.recycled-paper.co.uk – providers of recycled stationary products. Tel 01676 533 832.
 - www.eiris.org – for information regarding ethical investments. Tel. 020 7840 5700.
 - www.carbonfootprint.com – a site where you can calculate your carbon footprint.
 - www.climatecare.org - a website that enables you to pay to offset carbon emissions with forest replanting. Tel. 01865 207 000.
 - www.fairtrade.org.uk – for information about fair-trade products and suppliers Tel. 020 7405 5942.
 - www.btcv.org – the website for the British Trust for Conservation volunteers.
 - www.ecocongregation.org – Church of Scotland organization to assist their churches in becoming more eco-friendly.
 - www.stopclimatechaos.org - a coalition of groups fighting against climate change
- For information on grants for insulation and installing renewable energy sources contact your local government via telephone or website.

“After God created the earth, He saw that it was good”

Genesis 1-3 (Judaism and Christianity)



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- Photos courtesy of www.topfoto.co.uk

“Men, trees, pilgrimage places, banks of sacred streams, clouds, fields. Islands, spheres, universes, continents, solar systems. The sources of creation, egg-born, womb-born, earth-born, sweat-born, oceans, mountains and sentient beings. He, the Lord, knows their condition, O Nanak.”

Sikh Scriptures (Sikhism)



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE



If you require this handbook in a language other than English
or in a larger format please contact the Scottish Inter Faith Council

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