
Environmental check-up

for your faith community



This form aims to help you get started on your action plan as a member of Eco Congregation Ireland. By completing the form, you will:

- Identify and affirm the environmental work you are already doing
- Show your areas of strength
- Identify how to develop and grow your environmental commitments

The questions in this form are extensive. It is not expected that you will give positive answers to all of them, or indeed that they will all be relevant to you. 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). We recommend you form a small group to work through this form and prioritise what actions are feasible.

The questions are set out under the four key areas of environmental commitment within a faith community – Spiritual, Practical, Community and Global. Please complete what you can and return the form to Eco Congregation so that we have a record of the starting point for your journey.

This form can be completed online. You will receive a copy of the form by email when it is completed. You do not have to complete it all at once! Your answers will be saved as you go through the form. Make sure you keep a copy of the final version.

If using a hard copy, please scan the completed form and email it back to us at info@ecocongregationireland.com or you can post it to: ECI, 45 Belvoir Drive, Belfast BT8 7DH. If you have any difficulty, please telephone/text +353 89 974 0744.

There is a NOTES section at the end of this form where you can include any environmental work you are doing which does not fit in with the headings listed.

In this form, we use the term ‘faith community’ to include churches, congregations, religious orders, dioceses, or other groups in Ireland following the religious traditions of Catholicism, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian Church in Ireland, Methodist Church in Ireland, or the Religious Society of Friends.

1 – Spiritual

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

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

- | | | | |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never | <input type="checkbox"/> Only at special services e.g. Harvest Festival, Easter | <input type="checkbox"/> Every few months | <input type="checkbox"/> Frequently |
|--------------------------------|---|---|-------------------------------------|

In your faith community's prayer life, do you...

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Praise God as creator | <input type="checkbox"/> Say sorry for the harm done to the environment | <input type="checkbox"/> Give thanks to God for the gift of creation | <input type="checkbox"/> Pray for the healing of creation |
|--|---|--|---|

Which of these worship/liturgy ideas have you used?

- | | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Outdoor services | <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Using natural materials within worship | <input type="checkbox"/> Choosing local bread for Communion |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|---|

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

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly | <input type="checkbox"/> On special Sundays/at special gatherings | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly ever |
|------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|

Does your faith community observe Creation Time (1st Sept to 4th October)?

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Every year | <input type="checkbox"/> Some years | <input type="checkbox"/> Hardly ever | <input type="checkbox"/> Never |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Use Christian environmental resources? E.g. from Eco Congregation website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in workshops that include environmental issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include creation care/environmental issues in its teaching and study programmes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide a study group on eco-spirituality?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Invite a speaker on environmental issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organise/participate in a creation-care Lent group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explore information on what other faith communities are doing in relation to creation care e.g. through the News section of the ECI website?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2 – Practical

Practical action to reduce fossil-fuel generated emissions and damage to ecosystems is vital in Creation Care.

Please review what your faith community is doing or can do in the use of buildings, equipment and land.

Everyday Use of Buildings

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Choose appropriately sized rooms and timetable events to minimise heating use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Read your electricity meters regularly/assess your energy and water usage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by? (e.g. photocopier, projector)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fix drips and water leaks quickly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Check electrical equipment and have it repaired promptly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Purchasing Policy

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Use environmentally friendly cleaning materials?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase recycled paper and envelopes?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Purchase FairTrade 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"/>

Catering

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Communicate a policy of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle through local channels, e.g. newsletter, website, notices in premises?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use crockery, or washable plastic rather than disposable cups and plates?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emphasise avoidance of single use cups and plastic cutlery?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide segregated bins for recyclable, compostable, non-recyclable and glass waste with clear instructions for their use?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Avoid food waste at events by providing 'take-away' containers?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Property

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Engage in wildlife-friendly management (e.g. minimal use of weedkillers and pesticides, leaving some areas unmown, valuing and caring for old trees, hedges, walls and stones)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Plant to benefit wildlife (e.g. flowers used by moths and butterflies, berry-bearing trees for birds, hawthorn and blackthorn)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use the All-Ireland Pollinators programme?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use other features to benefit wildlife (e.g. bird feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, bug hotels, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and hedgehogs)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harvest rainwater?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Have an area for prayer/contemplation/outdoor worship?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide safe bicycle storage and a repair station to encourage active travel?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Provide electric vehicle charging?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Finance

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Seek advice on Faith Based Investing if there are financial assets to be managed (considering not only financial return but also social and environmental impact)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Getting the message across

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Publish green tips in the community magazine/ announcements sheet?	<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 walking and cycling to faith community events?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage carpooling/lift sharing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Involving All Ages

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Involve children, young people, and the elderly in environmental action, to the maximum extent possible?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Undertaking Larger-Scale Emissions Reduction Projects

Are these feasible for your Faith Community?

	Have done	Could consider
Getting advice on how best to insulate buildings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Getting advice on improving efficiency of heating system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Adding a timer and thermostatic controls to the heating system?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contacting agencies providing funding for and advice on climate action projects such as solar panel installation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Completing an energy audit/Building Energy Rating?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installing double glazing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fitting energy saving light bulbs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Installing water-saving devices (e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

3 – Community

Faith communities can work with and through their local community to support creation care in their neighbourhood.

Please consider the links already made with the local community and the potential for further development.

Does your faith community...

	Have done	Could consider
Establish links with community organisations with a view to sharing environmental ministry and creation care (e.g. schools, youth groups, local environmental bodies, centres for people in need)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advise building users from the community of your environmental concerns?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participate in local environmental initiatives or policy formation?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage visits to places of particular importance for biodiversity and sustainability?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage/Support/Initiate community schemes with a positive environmental element (e.g. spring clean-ups, Tidy Towns, Freecycle groups, repair café)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Show a film on an environmental issue?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Encourage wider community members to attend walks alongside faith community members?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 – Global

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

Please consider what your faith community does and can 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="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explore environmental issues through linked overseas faith communities?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Support the work of international conservation and environment agencies (e.g. A Rocha, Friends of the Earth)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

NOTES

Please include here any environmental work you are doing which does not fit in with the headings listed above.