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Hints and Tips for Your Eco Church Journey

Advice from a Gold Award Church –
St Oswald's Church, Methley, Leeds



Our Eco Church Statement

As Christians, we're called to care for God's Earth — the world He made and loves. Together we're working to make our church and community more environmentally friendly through the Eco Church initiative, supported by A Rocha UK.

-  Saving energy
-  Reducing waste
-  Caring for wildlife
-  Living simply
-  Protecting God's world



Beginning the Eco Church journey can seem daunting, but don't be put off. Every church starts somewhere, and you may already be doing more than you realise.



Take the journey one step at a time. Celebrate every achievement, however small, and remember that Eco Church is about continuous improvement rather than perfection.



It helps to form a small Eco Church group to guide the work, and the support of your incumbent or church leadership is invaluable. Other Eco Churches are usually delighted to share ideas and experiences, so don't hesitate to ask for advice.



The ARocha UK website contains excellent guidance, resources and examples. The five Eco Church award categories provide a helpful framework for planning your activities.



Above all, keep your congregation and wider community informed about what you are doing through services, notices, newsletters, social media and your church website. Bringing people with you is one of the keys to success.

OUR EXPERIENCE

The Eco Church journey is a marathon rather than a sprint. It took St Oswald's five years to progress from Bronze to Gold. Along the way we discovered that Eco Church is about far more than environmental projects. It has strengthened our fellowship, deepened our faith, built new community partnerships and helped us see caring for God's creation as an integral part of our Christian witness.

Don't be afraid to start small.
The important thing is simply to begin.



For further information about our Eco Church journey, please visit:



Website:
www.achurchnearyou.com/St-Oswalds-Methley

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the Eco Church programme, our Eco Church Lead, Jackie Davis, would be delighted to help.



Email:
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Caring for God's creation together



WORSHIP AND TEACHING

Creation care can naturally become part of church life. Consider including it in prayers, sermons, Bible studies and hymn choices throughout the year, not just during Creationtide or Harvest.

Look for opportunities to explore the many biblical themes of stewardship, creation and justice. Special services, such as pet blessings or outdoor worship, can also help engage new people.



BUILDINGS AND ENERGY

Many improvements are simple and inexpensive. Review heating, insulation and draught-proofing, recycling, water use and environmentally friendly cleaning products.

Consider using Fairtrade products, Toilet Twinning, reducing single-use plastics and monitoring your church's energy consumption. Every small improvement contributes to the bigger picture.



LAND AND NATURE

Whether you have a large churchyard or just a few pots outside the church door, you can make a difference. Plant for bees, butterflies, birds and other pollinators using wildlife-friendly plants. If you have a churchyard, consider leaving suitable areas unmown during parts of the year to encourage wildflowers and increase biodiversity.

Useful organisations include God's Acre, which provides excellent guidance on caring for churchyards for both wildlife and heritage. Participating in wildlife surveys and community nature events is another excellent way of engaging people.



COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

Look beyond the church gates. Build relationships with local schools, environmental groups, wildlife organisations and community volunteers.

Many organisations, including the RSPB, local wildlife trusts and community groups, are keen to work alongside churches. Joint projects often introduce new people to your church while benefiting the local environment.



LIFESTYLE

Encourage people to reflect on how small changes in everyday life can care for God's creation.

Whether reducing waste, choosing sustainable products, walking instead of driving when possible or simply spending more time appreciating nature, every positive step matters.



OUR TOP 10 TIPS

- 1 Start with Bronze—don't think about Gold yet.
- 2 Form a small Eco Church team.
- 3 Involve your incumbent from the beginning.
- 4 Record everything with photographs and notes.
- 5 Celebrate successes publicly.
- 6 Involve children and local schools.
- 7 Link with other Eco Churches.
- 8 Use free resources from A Rocha UK.
- 9 Choose projects that suit your church rather than trying to do everything.
- 10 Enjoy the journey—it strengthens both your church and your community.



Caring for God's creation together