



Key Area 4 Lifestyles

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We all have a choice to live a life that treads more lightly on the planet. And many faith teachings and traditions encourage us to live more simply and in harmony with the environment. But in order to change our practices, we also have to understand the effect that our present ways of living are having on the planet. How can faith communities help with that process?

These guidelines provide you with simple questions to consider as you take small steps in your individual lifestyles and those of your community for big change.

Steps and questions to consider as you develop your Faith Plan

<i>Name of faith community/group/organisation</i>	
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Environmental audits

<i>First steps: Understand our impact on nature as faith communities, families and individuals. This is the foundation to building ambitious plans to improve.</i>	
Questions	Space for notes and comments
1. Have you carried out an environmental audit of your assets and use of natural resources, recycling, energy etc. as a faith community, families and individuals? Are those in existence up to date and relevant?	
2. Have you or could you encourage your own faithful to do their own environmental audits and take action accordingly?	
3. What kind of resources and tools are you able to provide for members of your faith	

<p>community to be able to effectively carry out their own audits?</p>	
<p>4. What do you want to achieve, what are your targets? Have you done any research into living sustainably? What are your reference points?</p>	

<p><i>Next steps: Encourage your community to make changes based on what you have learned.</i></p>	
<p>Questions</p>	<p>Space for notes and comments</p>
<p>1. Could you hold an information evening for your community to share what you have learned from the audit and gather a wider range of ideas?</p>	
<p>2. Have you, or could you, encourage your faith community to undertake any of the following activities?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise clean-ups/ litter picks • Change the way they travel (eg, switching mode of transport, lift-sharing etc.) • Ensure good recycling practices at home 	

Purchasing power & traditions of simple living

<p>1. Based on your audits, could you encourage your faithful to live more simply and in harmony with the environment – particularly when it comes to choices around food, travel, energy, personal investments, charity giving, business?</p>	
<p>2. Are there areas where you and your faithful can use your purchasing power to help the environment?</p>	
<p>3. Can you draw upon any of your own traditions – monasticism, for example – to promote a simpler lifestyle?</p>	
<p>4. What exists within your tradition that could be adopted as a regular practice? For example, many Christians chose to give something up during the season of Lent before Easter. What would it look like for Christians to make a permanent change by giving up something (either consuming a product, or</p>	

<p>undertaking an activity) in order to benefit social development or the environment?</p>	
<p>5. Will your practices of simple living ensure a healthy well-being for your community? Are they based on your theology and values?</p>	
<p>6. Are there any examples of simple living from other faith communities that could work well within your faith group, organisations or local area?</p>	

Pilgrimage and tourism

<p>1. With their beautiful temples, monasteries, mosques, churches, synagogues etc, faiths own many of the most prized tourist destinations around the world. They are also responsible, in terms of pilgrimage, for much of the 'tourist' travel in the world. As a faith, have you looked at your role in tourism and pilgrimage within the countries in which you operate and asked what can be done, at all levels of operation?</p>	
<p>2. Have you thought about how many pilgrims now travel by plane, coach and car where previously they walked, and</p>	

<p>considered ways of lessening the environmental impact of this?</p>	
<p>3. Have you considered what pilgrims will eat and where they will stay?</p>	
<p>4. In the past, what has been the environmental impact on the destination, thinking particularly of litter and waste?</p>	
<p>5. How might pilgrimage have changed since the outbreak of Covid-19? What impact will this have on your pilgrim places?</p>	

For more information...

To learn more about possible action you can take, watch the Faith Plans webinar on [Lifestyle](#), engage with personal stories and real-world examples, and access links to key resources.

Visit the [Faith Plans resource library](#) to find examples of stories, poems and prayers written by the faiths on the environment.

You may also wish to explore in more detail, the resources provided by our partners.

Environmental audits and traditions of simple living:

- Interfaith Center for Sustainable Development on [simple living](#)
- Resources by Ajahn Amaro, abbot of the Amaravati Buddhist Monastery, UK:
 - [Roots and Currents](#), a series of articles and essays
 - [Less is More](#), Buddhist principles on frugality, generosity and renunciation
- Interfaith Power & Light: [Cool congregations](#)
- Green Christian: UK-based network of Christians caring for Creation
 - [Nine Ways of Living Gently on the Earth](#)
 - [Seven Tips for Respecting Creation](#)

Pilgrimage:

- Global One:
 - [Green Guide for Hajj and Umrah](#) – updated guide for Muslim pilgrims
 - Dedicated [Green Hajj website](#)
- Green Pilgrimage Network: [Green Pilgrimage Handbook](#)

Case studies

Check-up kit shows churches their green progress

Eco-congregation Scotland

Many Christian churches are seeking a way to align all their activities in the way that is kindest to the planet. Their task has been made easier by Eco-Congregation Scotland, a group which has created a 'Church Check-Up' toolkit.

The group is run by volunteers but its focus is on rigorous practicality, starting with a guide which enables churches to conduct an assessment of their environmental work, and identify where progress needs to be made.

Topics of assessment range from worship and liturgy to church property and land. There are also sections for individuals to assess their own lifestyles. The group's work takes place in Scotland – but it provides a template that could be adapted for an environmental audit of any place of worship.

[Click here](#) to read the full story.

Muslims green up world's biggest pilgrimage.

Green Guide for Hajj and Umrah

There are 1.7 billion Muslims in the world, and environmental degradation and many of them live in parts of the world that are already affected by climate change. Muslims believe that man has been given a responsibility to care for the world by Allah, and this belief must be lived out through sustainable action.

One way that Muslims are acknowledging this and making a change is through the greening of the Hajj – the annual pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, that all Muslims are required to undertake at least once in their lifetime. Nearly 2.5 million people make the pilgrimage each year.

Dr Husna Ahmed, CEO of UK-based international Muslim NGO, Global One, produced the first *Green Guide for Hajj* in 2011, guided by leading Muslim scholars. Now the Guide has been updated in 2021, and renamed the *Green Guide for Hajj and Umrah*, to include other pilgrimages to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of year, unlike the Hajj which has specific dates.

The guide has recommendations on transport, waste management, and carbon consumption, and more, to enable individuals to reduce their own carbon footprint before and during the pilgrimage.

[Click here to read the full story and download the guide](#)