

## LIVING IN A FRAGILE WORLD: CHILDREN AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Children, on the whole, are a very caring bunch; they love being outside and active. At school they are taught to care for the environment so in our church groups we should be reinforcing the message and encouraging children (and adults!) to look after God's gift of creation. As the topic is massive, we need to get the message over that every small act will make a difference.

Ideas for church groups which include children:

- Churchyard group – encourage children to look after the churchyard: join the Living Churchyard scheme, make and put up bat and bird boxes, insect houses, make log piles for mini beasts, plant indigenous wild flowers, make and use a compost bin.
- Litter pick up – ask the local parish council if the group can 'look after' a stretch of road on a regular basis (but think safety first!)
- Is there an area in the village that looks neglected? Eg around the village hall, around the bus stop; Can the children's group, make it beautiful, environmentally friendly and accessible (where appropriate)?
- Is there a plot of ground that can be used by the group to grow their own vegetables?
- Are there issues that the children feel strongly about in their neighbourhood? Can they petition the parish council to provide more doggy bins, recycling facilities, cycle paths?
- What about an environment action day organised (with help!) by the children? Build a wildlife pond, encourage walking instead of driving, participants pledge to reduce their carbon footprint in some way, switch off unnecessary electrical appliances, buy local produce and cook a low mileage meal. Invite the whole community and environmental groups to take part.



These are just a few ideas: but ask the children what they would like to do and what they feel passionate about and the project is likely to be sustainable!

**Resources:** *Wasterwatchers* is a flexible programme, providing ideas for a holiday club or mid week programme: drama, craft, games, Bible discovery, and creative prayer. Published by Scripture Union ISBN 978 1 84427 204 4 accompanying DVD and 'Little Green Pages' puzzle booklet for children.

## YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENVIRONMENT CHARTER

In December 2008 Truro Youth Synod spent some time looking at environmental issues and concerns. An environment audit was drawn up to examine current lifestyles using Reduce, Reuse and Recycle as headings and Youth Synod's Christmas event took place at the Eden project where members were able to see many examples of environmental good practice. Both these fed into the discussions that led to the creation of an Environment Charter (see below), which is aimed to be accessible to young people and involve little or no cost.

Inspiration from a Promise Tree at Eden led us to create an Environment Promise Tree, which went on display in Diocesan House where staff and visitors were encouraged to write their own promises onto luggage labels and add them to the display.

**Transport** Where possible walk, cycle or use public transport.  
Try to share lifts if travelling by car.

**Energy** Be aware of how many electrical appliances you have on, can you turn off at least one? (TV/Computer/ipod/phone etc)  
Turn off mobile phone and other chargers when not in use.  
Turn off appliances rather than leaving them on standby.  
Use energy saving light bulbs and switch off lights.

**Clothing** Share/swap clothes with brothers/sisters/friends.  
Use charity shops to buy or pass on unwanted clothes.  
Buy good quality clothes that will last longer.  
Know your wardrobe; do you really need new items?

**Christmas/ Birthdays/ Cards** Limit the amount you spend on presents (by mutual agreement)  
Use email cards.  
Reuse old cards to make new ones and/or gift tags  
Buy charity cards

**Recycle/ Reuse** Recycle everything you can including composting/wormeries/ water butts.  
Take unwanted clothes/shoes/items to charity shops.  
Once you have read your magazine/ newspaper pass on to others before recycling.  
Recycle/pass on old mobile phones.

