

# Intro

In the school where I worked as a chaplain they had a 'Green Team' who were those with an interest in the environment. OK so many students weren't interested in this group, but in lessons even some of the toughest individuals would listen when people told real stories about the impact of environmental change on people's lives, on whales or on Polar Bears etc. Some of it is so worrying it's hard to think about or watch. But this session is a call to action - not because we're green freaks but because God has told us to look after our world!

Some Christians don't care about the environment especially (if they even accept the environment is changing or being damaged!) because they say God is going to make all things new on earth and in heaven so why bother to care for the earth now? But this is quite ignorant and seems contrary to the nature of care that God has put in our hearts and seems to go against Genesis 2.15.

Others say we mustn't care about the environment because we should only really care about the Gospel. It's true that we can care more about the environment than about God or people coming to know God, but there's not many true Christians who do this. Rather, we see care for the environment as part of the outworking of our faith - as James 2 tells us.

## Design a Logo

Get some paper, pens and other creative materials (even loads of newspaper pages - check them first!) and then get people to design a logo for Christians caring for the environment. Give it a name like 'Christians for the Environment' or 'Enviro-Christians' or 'Creation Care' etc

Here are some ideas done by myfishbites for someone thinking of setting up a Christian environmental project but who didn't take the idea any further.



[Download the example PDF for some ideas](#)

## Three Videos to watch / choose from

Here are some videos from YouTube. These were chosen by searching YouTube so if you can find any better ones or have one yourself, please use that. I've made notes about each video to help you.

### Clip 1

This is a clip put together by Sky TV, highlighting the impact of plastic on our oceans. It is long and does contain some upsetting scenes. But we need to be upset so we make a change in not being so selfish!

Sky – A Plastic Tide – [https://youtu.be/D35YnZ7\\_WxM](https://youtu.be/D35YnZ7_WxM)

### Clip 2

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### Clip 3

This video below has more human impact, has a couple of pics of oil covered dead birds but not as sad in relation to animals.

Environmental issues - together we can save -  
[https://youtu.be/V5MN5VU\\_pYE](https://youtu.be/V5MN5VU_pYE)

### Clip 4

Finally, a 10-11 min clip which is also worth watching first to see if you like as it's quite long. It has much more of a animated visual flavour and makes much more of the impact on the earth as well as offering ideas like recycling, but is probably a bit long. Take a look and see.

Environment and pollution - <https://youtu.be/sW7fxGG9cEM>

## In the beginning - Talky Bit

*Genesis 1.28-30 - God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.' Then God said, 'I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with*

*seed in it. They will be yours for food. And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground – everything that has the breath of life in it – I give every green plant for food.’ And it was so.*

*Genesis 2.15 - The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.*

One of the very first things that God said to man, one of the very first purposes of man given by God was to work the Garden and take care of it. God gave man and woman the command to fill the earth and rule over the animals. This wasn't a cruel kind of thing where we do whatever we want, but another word for 'rule' is 'reign'. If we think about the kind of King that Jesus is, the nature of God, we see that we should 'rule' with fairness, justice and in the right way.

It is interesting that man's first kind of 'job' was as a gardener, someone who looked after the vegetation and the animals. In the old days this kind of thing was called 'husbandry'. Obviously today we're not all gardeners and don't all have gardens, so it's fair that we apply the same kinds of ideas to whatever we do and the world around us.

*James 2.14-18 - What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.*

In this, James is talking about the working of our faith. He tells us that if we say we have faith but don't do anything, then it's not really faith! You can say you are a great actor or actress, but unless you act then you're not really what you say you are! It's the same with our faith. We need to be who we say we are - we are Christians - followers of Christ. That means we allow and ask God to work in our lives by the Holy Spirit to be more like Jesus. We look to spend time with and obey God.

So if we say we care about the environment or the plight of penguins, whales or Polar Bears (for example) but don't do anything about it, we're not really showing any faith in this area. So this is an encouragement to do something about the environment and things you feel passionate about :)

*Revelation 21.1-5 - Then I saw "a new heaven and a new earth," for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. 'He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death' or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"*

We also have to balance everything out. Jesus tells us that we must worship God alone. We don't worship the environment and the Bible tells us that this world is not the ultimate destination - that this world will one day be made new and back to how God originally wanted things to be before mankind messed up. The world is in such a mess because mankind is selfish. Actually the very best kind of 'environmentalists' should be Christians because God changes people's lives to life for him, to live for others and not to be selfish.

The commandments that Jesus gave us summing up everything are: Love God and love your neighbour. So this is our priority. Jesus came into the world to save people from sin. This means he wants to help people meet with him and change them to be all that he made them for; to be right with him and spend eternity with him in heaven.

Think about your life and ask God if your life reflects the life and will of Jesus? Do you love God? Do you love other people and help them? Do you want to make a difference in your world? To help the environment (if that is your real passion)? Thinking of the environment, at the very least look at the things below to see if you can help.

## **Examples of Help**

1. Many places, national parks and beaches have 'clean-ups' where people can go and clean up. Why not organise an activity or day when you join with them or even offer to help clean up, with the support of a local wildlife project or park rangers etc.

2. Recently a friend and myself were out scrambling on Dartmoor at a place called 'Hound Tor'. As part of this we saw loads of litter having been dropped around. We picked up a couple of bits and then it built up into picking up a load of stuff which we took home and disposed of - including cans, bottles, crisp packets, a glass candle holder and plastic cups selfishly left behind. This stuff harms wildlife.

3. What about setting up something on the web to look at Christians and the environment? When you google search, there's almost nothing on Christian organisations working with the environment.
4. Support local groups like the National Trust or those who run National Parks. Have a look at their website and what they believe and don't associate with other groups who may be more extreme. But think about it.
5. When you are out, think about your actions. Don't leave litter, keep things tidy, don't throw away your banana or orange skin, make sure you shut gates, don't go through areas you shouldn't go into (eg where signs say don't go where birds are nesting or with cattle in breeding season etc).
6. Think about where your clothes come from. Many low price items cause harm for workers abroad so just think carefully. You don't want to put people out of jobs but think about what you buy and where it comes from. For example 'down jackets' filled with goose feathers that you see outdoors people wearing outside when it's cold... Some manufacturers like Mountain Equipment (100% of feathers) and Alpkita (95% of feathers) trace the feathers in their jackets to places where birds don't have their feathers cruelly taken. Other manufacturers don't do this (as of early 2013) so think about the impact of your purchases.
7. Can you recycle things you don't use? This is on top of recycling paper and bottles etc that we should all do to help the environment - as well as thinking about buying products with little packaging / packaging that can be recycled. You can also use a local recycling website (check them out, as I've used freecycle and it was full of people making things up and faking their identities). Better is to set up a freecycle style thing in your church. My church runs a recycling scheme where there's a regular list sent out of items that are available for others to have.

## **Prayer**

Lord Jesus, I want to live my life for you. Show me how I can do this and help others and the world around me. Show me what you want me to do and open up the right doors in my life to do things for you where you've given me skills and a passion. Amen.