

Caring for God's Creation – 40 Day Challenge

	Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5	Day 6	Day 7
Week 1	Start your Lenten journey by thinking about what you currently do as part of your stewardship of the environment and what commitments you will make this Lent to do more.	Sow some seeds – either in your garden or, if you don't have one, pots for the windowsill. It's rewarding to grow your own vegetables but if you haven't the space, some fresh herbs grown in pots can be used to add flavour to all sorts of things.	Remove one light bulb from your home or work space or tape over the light switch and live without its light. This will decrease your energy use and act as a reminder of your carbon fast commitment during Lent.	Only use your washing machine when you have a full load. Avoid using a dryer and hang your washing on a clothes horse or, if possible, a washing line outdoors to dry.	Spend some time today learning about climate change. Sites such as https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-46384067 https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p076w7g5 and https://cafod.org.uk/Campaign/Climate/Climate-change-FAQs are good places to start.	This week try leaving your car at home when you can, and using public transport or walking instead.	Buy local free-range eggs, free range farms are more environmentally sustainable than factory farms and reduce our carbon footprint.
Week 2	Swap your meat-based meals for vegetarian options for several days a week. Modifying diets will reduce environmental impacts.	Take your own reusable bags for shopping and try to buy food with the minimum of packaging. Some shops now offer goods you can buy loose, like porridge oats, dried fruit etc. (e.g. Seasons and the feed suppliers in Ashurst Wood for pet food.)	Turn off the electricity when you are not using it! Computers, TVs and many other things do not need to be on standby as they still use electricity if they are. Switch off the lights when you leave a room.	Check your laundry. Clothes do not necessarily need to be thrown into the wash every day or when they've only been worn once.	Countries in the developed world use an enormous amount of fossil fuel energy per household, compared with developing countries. Think about your own energy use and try and find ways to be more efficient and reduce consumption. https://cafod.org.uk/News/Campaigning-news/Cut-your-carbon-footprint	Do you use disposable items? Consider alternatives, avoid buying plastic where possible. If you buy takeaways, make sure you recycle the packaging.	Does your household energy come from renewable sources? Check and if it doesn't see if you can switch to a clean supplier.

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Week 3	<p>Minimize your food waste. Plan your meals ahead and shop with a list to avoid buying too much. Get creative with leftovers! There are plenty of ideas online, in blogs etc.</p>	<p>Wrap creatively. Are there any birthdays coming up that you need gifts for? Try wrapping presents in recycled newspapers, tied with reusable ribbon or twine. It's a quirky and earth-friendly way to decorate.</p>	<p>Rethink bottled water. Plastic water bottles take thousands of years to decompose. Carry your own reusable bottle with you and use tap water if possible, it is all drinkable in the UK.</p>	<p>For the remainder of Lent don't buy any new clothing items. Instead why not visit your local charity shop and see what second-hand items you can find. You may be surprised at the good quality. While you're there, why not donate some of your underused clothes?</p>	<p>Visit your local organic farms or famers' markets this weekend. Buying local means they have travelled less distance from farm to table.</p>	<p>This week try walking rather than driving wherever possible, not only will you cut your pollution but you will feel energised and fitter too!</p>	<p>Share this 40-day challenge with friends and family. Spread the message and help protect the environment this Lent.</p>
Week 4	<p>Cut down your mail. Speak to your bill providers and banks about sending e-statements as opposed to regular post. You can also send e-cards instead of posting paper ones.</p>	<p>Travel light. If you're going away and flying, then offset your carbon emissions for a few extra pounds. Most airlines will offer this option when booking your ticket. Packing light will also reduce the overall cargo weight and fuel consumption of the plane.</p>	<p>Check your tyre pressure. Cars with low tyre pressure require much more fuel per mile. You can check your tyres at any petrol station.</p>	<p>Choose matches over lighters. Lighters end up in landfill. Think about the things you put in your landfill bin – is there anything you could reuse, recycle or even do without?</p>	<p>Today reflect how climate change is affecting people around the world. Pray for people in poor countries of Africa and Asia where climate change is affecting people's everyday lives. https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-50726701 https://operationnoah.org/resources/salote/</p>	<p>This week go Fairtrade where possible. Challenge yourself to use fairly traded products, including tea, coffee, sugar and chocolate. Check the labels!</p>	<p>Share lifts where possible, perhaps even when taking rubbish to the recycling tip. Neighbours could take it in turns to go to the tip.</p>

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Week 5	<p>Cut down your shower time. Try and keep your showers to between 3 and 4 minutes. The bathroom and toilet use on average 40% of a household's water consumption. Find out more at https://www.southernwater.co.uk/help-advice/how-to-save-water</p>	<p>Refuse to buy products that use excessive packaging. Where possible only use individual bags for your fruit and veg when absolutely necessary. Avoid bread in plastic as well, instead visit your local baker for fresh bread.</p>	<p>Wash the dishes by hand today. Get a friend or family member to help and spend the time discussing how your 40-day challenge has been going so far and what you could do to improve.</p>	<p>Consider starting a compost bin or heap. If you haven't the space, can you share with a neighbour? If you both contribute vegetable waste you could share the resultant compost.</p>	<p>Have a silent Sunday. Today have an appliance and electricity free day by turning off your TV, computer, mobile phone and radio. Take the opportunity to listen to the birds outside, enjoy the silence on a walk or read.</p>	<p>Try a meat-free week beginning today. Take up the challenge of not eating meat for a whole week.</p>	<p>Is your heating on all day even when you are not there? Is it really necessary? Adjust to the weather and adapt where necessary.</p>
Week 6	<p>Turn off the tap while cleaning your teeth. It might be a few seconds of inconvenience but it can become very wasteful otherwise.</p>	<p>Using colder water can save up to 80 per cent of the energy required to wash clothes. Choosing a low setting on the washing machine will also help to save water.</p>	<p>Using the dishwasher today? Skip rinsing every plate and let the dishwasher do its job. There's no need to double up on water usage.</p>	<p>Spoiling yourself with some Easter chocolate? Make sure it's Fairtrade chocolate that supports cocoa farmers around the world.</p>	<p>Today it's time to speak up. Write a letter to your local MP expressing your concerns about climate change. Visit sites such as https://operationnoah.org/ https://www.theclimatecoalition.org/</p>		