

## Green Parish Accreditation Frequently Asked Questions

*Q1. Our church has been a "green" church for many years and can achieve our Gold level of accreditation. Do we need to go through the bronze and silver levels – or can we just go straight to gold?*

A. The program is a cumulative one so 10 categories from the bronze level need to be completed before the silver. But if you have been a "green" progressive parish for many years and have accomplished 10 items from the bronze and 10 from the silver categories there is no reason why you can't "go straight to gold". But please tick all 30 relevant boxes when you submit your form.

*Q2. We don't have 10 from the bronze level can we tick some of the silver level to claim our bronze level?*

A. The bronze level aimed to be an educational tool for each parish so it is important to complete just the bronze and not reach into the silver category. Don't forget that you can substitute 2 items not mentioned on the form using creative ideas that have been achieved in your parish. If you used silver items for the bronze it would be harder to complete the silver at a later time and give you less flexibility in that category.

*Q3. How does our church stay accredited at bronze if we aren't ready to move on to silver?*

A. By completing 2 extra components at the bronze level within 2 years of the original accreditation. Don't forget that there is an opportunity at every level to include one or two alternative "green" items for accreditation that are unique to your church.

*Q4. Why is a Fair Trade section included in the accreditation process when it doesn't have anything to do with the church becoming greener?*

A. Fair Trade is an ethical, responsible and sustainable way to purchase food not grown in Canada. By buying fair trade we are supporting sustainable farming practices in developing countries. As a result, by choosing Fair Trade in our churches, we are making a positive impact in the way agriculture is practiced and consequently minimizing our negative impact on the life of the world.

*Q5. We are a rural parish and don't have blue bin and green bin recycling? How can we complete the areas that involve recycling?*

A. Contact your public works department and educate yourselves about what can be recycled/composted and do whatever is available. Press your local municipality for more of these services. Install a compost bin in the church grounds.

*Q6. We are confused about CFL and LED light bulbs - which are best? Should we change all the light bulbs before the old ones are burnt out?*

A. LED technology will continue to improve in efficiency and will be more available in the coming years. At the moment CFL light bulbs may be the only choice for some lighting fixtures and they will be mandated by the Ontario government in 2012. In this time of transition, we suggest only changing the old bulbs as they burn out. CFL bulbs do need to be disposed of safely at a hazardous waste depot as they contain small amounts of mercury. Consider having a box at church for people to drop off these bulbs and one person dispose of them.

*Q7. It can be hard to find time to prepare services for Earth Hour and Earth Day. Where can I go for help with these?*

A. Liturgies for "green" services are available on the Niagara Diocesan Web site. KAIROS also has excellent resources.

*Q8. Isn't it against health regulation to offer sugar bowls or milk jugs on the tables at public events? Single-serving containers are also easier for us to use in our hospitality, why would we switch?*

A. Where there are health concerns you need to comply. If the food event is open to the public then single-serving containers are needed. If the event is just for the church then open sugar bowls and milk pitchers are allowed, but only put out what is needed. Single serving containers are wasteful and use plastic which is oil based.

*Q9. Our parishioners are good at recycling but other church hall users aren't. What can we do?*

A. Try visiting groups and explain the policies you are trying to follow in the church. Have the Best Practice sheets available for outside groups. Have a written agreement for tenants to sign asking them to comply with your new rules. Monitor how groups are doing and give them feedback on improvements seen.

*Q10. Our parking lot is shovelled and salted by a contractor in the winter. What suggestions do you have for improving this activity as we have to have safe access for all the church users?*

A. This is a difficult area as safety is a big factor for all churches. But check with your contractor and explain your concerns about salt and see if they are able to use an alternative - cost may be an issue. Is anyone at the church able to do some of the sidewalks/paths using an alternative to salt.