

A large field of sunflowers with bright yellow petals and dark brown centers, set against a soft, hazy background. The sunflowers are in various stages of bloom, and the overall scene is warm and sunny.

10 Ideas for Summer

that can be used with children, young people and families, at home and in the community

UPDATED FOR 2022

from the Go Team



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Bath & Wells

Living the story. Telling the story.

10 Ideas for Summer

Introduction

As we prepare for summer 2022 and make plans for creatively connecting with children, young people and families in our communities, we have updated our 10 Ideas for Summer resource.

The Go Team originally collated these ideas with COVID-19 restrictions in mind, knowing that they could ease or tighten at any time, focusing on activities you can do outside with your groups or with families. Many of the ideas can be adapted to your context and the age and ability of those involved. Full permission is given to adapt ideas in this resource to suit any timings, setting, ability or type of group. Please also consider those with additional needs or special requirements.

If you are planning activities and events for a group, do keep risk assessments up to date and ensure necessary hygiene procedures are remain in place. Similarly, you must have all safeguarding procedures in place for in person and online activities. Latest COVID-19 information and guidance can be found at www.churchofengland.org

As we seek to live and tell the story of Jesus, we hope and pray that these ideas will help you and provide you with some inspiration.

For further help and support contact one of the Go Team Advisers. We would love to hear your stories and experiences of using this resource. Please share them with us by sending us an email or sharing your photos with us on Twitter (@GoTeamAdvisers) and Instagram (GoTeamAdvisers).

For all the latest news, resources and online events please subscribe to our newsletter **Inform** at www.bathandwells.org.uk/ministry/children-young-people



1. Hope Garden and Labyrinth

Growing a Hope Garden in a churchyard or on some land owned by the church is a great activity to do outside with children, young people or families. Alongside the garden you could have a small plaque with a prayer of hope that people can say or use as a reflection, either on their own or together.

It is important that you seek permission from the PCC. You will also need to consider maintenance of the Hope Garden as it will need to be carefully tended and kept tidy.



The image shows an example of how you could use plastic bottles stuffed with wrappers as a border. Within your Hope Garden, you may like to consider ways in which you can recycle materials. You may also like to consider introducing bee friendly plants. By starting small, this idea has the potential to develop. You could introduce a community garden where you grow vegetables that people from the community can look after together and all benefit from.



If there is a section of lawn in the churchyard, you could let the grass grow for a few weeks, which is good for the environment and local wildlife. You could then mow a labyrinth into the grass as a prayer/reflection walk. For safety, adults will need to help with marking out the labyrinth and mowing.

For more on the potential of your churchyard, check out Wilder Churches, an initiative being shared by

Somerset Wildlife Trust and our Diocese: somersetwildlife.org/events/wilder-churches

2. Dog Prayer Walks

Another great way of getting out and about with children, young people and families is dog walking. It can just be a simple dog walk or you could use it as a prayer dog walk where you silently pray for those you meet along the way. It can be as simple as praying, 'thank you God for the person/people we have just seen, please bless their walk and the rest of their day'. Outdoor activities such as dog walks may require a few extra adult staff or a couple of parent helpers.

For safety, dogs will need to be on leads at all times and it is best to only include dogs that are well socialised with other dogs. If you are out in the countryside, please follow the Countryside Code <https://www.outwiththedog.co.uk/useful-info/the-countryside-code/> for walking dogs on public footpaths and farmland where there are other animals. Please also pick up any dog poo and dispose of it safely and take some disposable hand wipes. If this is a new venture you might want to start with a smaller group and walk for a few miles to start off with. This can be increased over time and a picnic could be added.



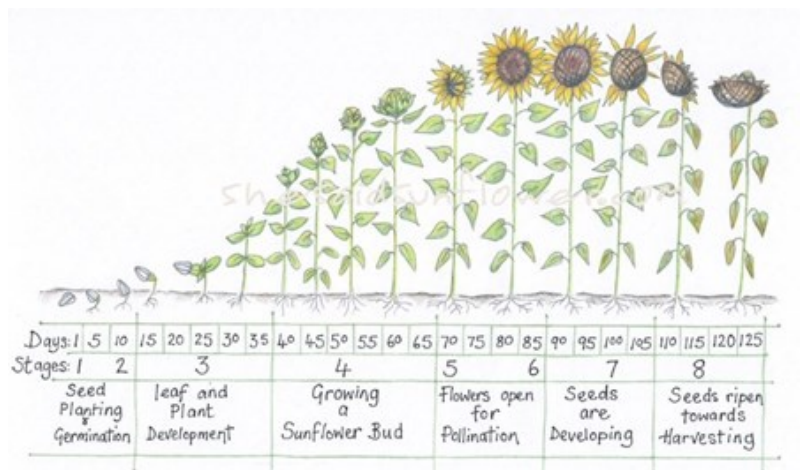
3. Seeds Of Hope



Sunflowers have an ability to make people smile. They come in different sizes and varieties, but the one thing they have in common is that they turn their heads to follow the sunlight.

One activity that has been popular in recent years is to give out sunflower seeds, inviting your church, group or community to grow them as a symbol of hope. Sunflowers can be grown in gardens, window boxes, plant pots, pathways, the churchyard, community spaces or in fact anywhere where there is soil and sunlight. It takes about 80-90 days for sunflowers to grow, so if all the seeds are planted in late May or early June, the church could organise a community event mid to late August (over a weekend) with trails around your community to see them all in bloom. You could consider setting up a dedicated webpage, Facebook page, social media channel or hashtag where people can post photos. You could even have a competition to grow the tallest sunflower!

The beauty of this initiative is that it includes people of all ages. On a dedicated Sunday, the church could hold a community service of hope (ideally outside) where people can bring and share their messages of hope.



4. Scavenger Hunt and Outdoor Reflection

Scavenger hunts are always a good way of encouraging people to go outside. They can also be a good way of giving people a task whilst reflecting on God and creation. Scavenger hunts can be organised in a range of ways, but the main objective is to find a list of items/objects. This may involve physically picking up and gathering the list of items or you may choose to do a photo scavenger hunt, where participants take photos of the things they find.

If you are based in an area where you have access to a large churchyard, garden, field, or maybe some woodland, you may consider using those areas. This task is best done in small groups with adult leaders or in family groups. It is important that you give those taking part clear boundaries for the space you are using, and warn them of any land features that maybe significant and that they need to stay away from (e.g. ponds, streams). It is important to have additional leaders available to marshal if necessary.

For this idea, each group will need a printed instruction sheet, something to write with and at least one fully charged phone that is capable of taking photos. The idea is to start at the church with an explanation and prayer, followed by sending the groups off for one hour to find as many items on the sheet as possible and to take a photo as proof.

As you send out the groups remind them it is not just a scavenger hunt, it is also a way of looking for or experiencing God in creation. Explain that when the groups return to the church, there will be a time to see which groups found the items on their list (with photo evidence), and also a short time to reflect and hear how people might have experienced God whilst being outside. To add a bit more fun, each item photographed has different scores to win more points. 1 point for something obvious, 3 points for something not so obvious and 5 points for something very obscure (this is explained on the sheet).

(St Finders Church) Scavenger Hunt and Outdoor Reflection

Group Name:

Your group has one hour to find as many of the 20 items (in any order) on this sheet and to take a photo as evidence. This is not a race so please take your time so your group can be looking out for ways to experience God whilst being outside. There will be time to share some of this when all the groups return.

At the end when scoring, a judge will award points for how obscure your photo evidence is.

| | Find something... | Obvious | Not so obvious | Obscure |
|----|---|-------------|----------------|---------|
| 1 | Green but not grass, a plant or a leaf | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 2 | Red | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 3 | Purple | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 4 | Orange | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 5 | Multi-coloured with more than 4 colours | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 6 | Round | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 7 | Square or oblong | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 8 | Clear or transparent | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 9 | With writing on it, but must include an A and S | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 10 | Metal and rusty | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 11 | Wooden and man-made (so not a tree) | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 12 | That smells | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 13 | Is prickly | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 14 | That flies | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 15 | That holds water | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 16 | Is (safely) edible without needing to be cooked | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 17 | With string or rope attached | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 18 | In the shape of a cross | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 19 | Beginning with the letter W | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| 20 | You have never seen before | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| | | Total score | | |

**Please be safe at all times, especially when crossing roads or when near places of danger.
Please also respect other people who you might encounter along the way.**

5. Equipment free relay races – Hebrews 12: 1-3

In Covid times, minimising the use of equipment is recommended, but that doesn't mean no competition! Relay races are a really simple activity to set up and make possible.

- Put children/young people/families into groups of 4 or 5
- Encourage each team to sit behind their cone (socially distant if applicable)
- Set up another cone for each team which is about 10-12 metres away
- Do relay races using a range of different movements e.g.
 - running
 - army crawling
 - jumping using two feet
 - hopping
 - crab walk
 - running backwards
 - skipping (without skipping ropes)
- Each person performs their movement to their cone and then runs back to their team and sits down, then the next person has their go.

Through these activities, you can find ways of encouraging some Jesus-shaped conversations. Why not read the words from Hebrews 12:1-3 to the group? Plus, here are some questions you may encourage the groups to discuss:

- What is your favourite part of the Bible passage?
- How did it feel when your team won a race?
- How do you think God would like us to respond and behave when we win?
- How did it feel when your team lost a race?
- How do you think God would like us to respond and behave when we lose?

If it feels appropriate, encourage the groups to have a few moments to pause and pray together (your leaders may need to lead this).



6. Climbing Ben Nevis: a story from Martock Christian Fellowship

We recently heard of a church that decided to encourage all of their young people to climb the equivalent height of Ben Nevis, raising money for some chosen charities along the way. The event was initially planned during lockdown, meaning it looked like it would take place in homes, with young people climbing up and down their stairs. Due to some of the restrictions being eased, particularly around youth provision, the leaders were able to review their plans and go outside with the group!

On a sunny day in the Easter holidays, they gathered at Ham Hill, Stoke Sub Hamdon in South Somerset. Covid safety was a top priority throughout. The youth leader had identified a route and calculated the gradient and number of times each young person would need to ascend and descend before completing the task of 'Climbing Ben Nevis'.

As you might imagine, the young people were of varying levels of fitness. Some were able to run the whole distance, while others knew that slow and steady was essential to them completing the task. The group gathered with their leaders at 9am and began the challenge. It took until 5pm for all the young people to complete the challenge.

Throughout the day, a sense of camaraderie was built up between the group, with them encouraging each other along the way. Some of the young people who completed the challenge more easily than others took to doing laps for members of the group who were struggling, showing a real sense of teamwork.

The church family supported the young people in prayer throughout and some even popped along during the day to encourage and cheer them on.



- Do you have a group of young people who you could encourage to do a similar challenge?
- Are there charities or organisations that the young people would like to support and raise money for?

You don't need a large youth group to do this and you don't need any equipment, but it's an opportunity to gather together as a youth group and embark on a challenge.

7. Recycled Plastic Bag Kite craft

You will need:

- 2-3 recycled plastic bags
- Scissors
- String
- Glue and sticky tape
- 2 sticks or wooden dowels (one slightly shorter than the other)
- Ribbon
- Ruler
- Marker pen



Frame

1. Cross the smaller stick over the longer one about 1/3 of the way from the top of the vertical stick.
2. Dot glue between the two sticks.
3. Wrap the string around the intersection several times ensuring that the sticks meet at a right angle.
4. Use the string to create an outline of the kite around the frame.
5. Start by gluing the string to the bottom of the frame.
6. Then wrap the string around the stick a few times.
7. Use the string to create a tight line to the end of the next stick.
8. Repeat until you have the complete kite shape, then cut off.



Sail

1. Cut off the handle and down one side of the bag to make a flat sheet.
2. Lay the kite frame on the flat sheet of plastic and using your ruler and marker, measure 2cm wider than the frame and then trace the shape.
3. Cut along this line.
4. Then, cut in 2cm at every corner.
5. Place the frame in the centre of the sail.
6. Fold excess plastic over the string of the frame.
7. Using tape, secure the folded edge to the sail.
8. Cover the entire length with tape to prevent the wind from coming between the layers.
9. Repeat until all edges are secured to the sail.



Line, tail and ribbons

1. Cut a piece of string that is the length of the vertical stick plus about 8-12cm.
2. Tie one end to the top of the vertical stick and the other end to the bottom, outside the kite sail. Repeat with the horizontal stick (the string should be as long as the stick plus 8-12cm).
3. Use tape or glue to secure knots.
4. Where two strings intersect, tie the spool of string you'll use to fly your kite.
5. Using the other bag cut a strip that is up to 1 metre long.
6. Tape strip to the bottom point of the kite.
7. Cut three 12cm pieces of ribbon and tie them to the kite tail (add more tails to the side corners to balance if needed).



You are now ready to fly your kite in the wind – pick an open space **away from power lines**.

If you are new to kite flying, it may take some time to get airborne, so be patient and have fun.

God is often described as being like the wind; you can't see the wind but you can feel and see the effects of it. Sometimes the wind is so gentle that you almost think it is not there. At other times it is so powerful that you can't fail to see the effects. The one assurance about the wind is it always surrounds us. Maybe this is why the wind is such a good way of trying to understand God? As you fly your kite, you might also want to reflect on God being around you all the time, just like the wind.



8. Gathering young people around the campfire

Most of us probably have memories of gathering around a campfire and toasting marshmallows. Creating a space like this with young people could be a powerful thing to do this summer, whether at a campsite, on farmland, on a beach or in someone's garden. Make sure you have the necessary permissions and take precautions in terms of fire safety, as well as being COVID responsible.

Here are some ideas for a youth group session around a campfire. Feel free to pick and choose or swap with your own ideas to fit your group and context. Most of the ideas could be used without the fire if it's not possible, but it is worth the effort if you can. For some tips on lighting a campfire try this guide from the Ordnance Survey: <https://getoutside.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/guides/beginners-guide-to-lighting-a-fire/>

Would you rather? Try these conversation starters one at a time and get feedback before moving on:

- marmite covered doughnuts or chocolate coated chips?
- be thrown off a horse or body slammed by a wrestler?
- be sat on by an elephant or swallowed by a whale?
- have the power to fly or power to disappear?
- have more money than time or more time than money?
- be a young person 50 years ago or in 50 years time?
- make a difference in the world and be unknown or be famous for doing nothing much?

Psalm 103. Read the Psalm to the group or invite group members to read a section each and reflect on it. Did anything stand out as you heard this Psalm read? Which parts do you want to say 'yes' to?

Thankful Marshmallows. Hand out some marshmallows and sticks to toast them on (wooden kebab sticks work well for this) and as the group toast their marshmallows over the fire invite them to name something they are grateful for today. As they eat the marshmallows remind them of verses 2 and 5.

"Let all that I am praise the Lord; may I never forget the good things he does for me... He fills my life with good things. My youth is renewed like the eagle's." (Psalm 103 v2 & 5 NLT)

Prayers Rising. Ask the group to hold onto their sticks for a moment and think about something they are concerned about. It might be for themselves, now or looking to the future, or for someone else. You could invite the group to share their thoughts or just think on them quietly. Encourage them to bring their concerns to God in prayer as one by one they throw their sticks onto the fire. As the sticks catch light and burn, watch the smoke rise like prayers rising to our Father in heaven. Remind the group of verse 11.

"For his unfailing love towards those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth." (Psalm 103 v11 NLT)

Growing forward. As a final prayer point, invite the group to look around for something like a leaf, fir cone or acorn that they could hold in their hand. (If a walk has been part of the activity, ask them to pick up something interesting and keep it for this moment). As they hold their object in their hand and have a look at it, ask: What would you like to grow in this year?

Is there an area of life you want to do better in?

A skill you want to master?

A characteristic you want to grow?

Paul's Prayer. Finish by inviting someone to Read Ephesians 3: 14-21 as a prayer over the group.



9. Oh, we do like to be beside the seaside!

As restrictions are lifted this summer, many families and groups will be simply enjoy getting out and spending time together. It might be a visit to the beach that hasn't happened for over a year or a walk out into the countryside with friends.

Whether we are doing this with family and friends, or as a church group, there may be opportunity to be intentional about introducing elements of story or prayer to the day, without necessarily turning it into a full-blown programme! Here are a few ideas for a trip to the beach, to get you started...

Share a story. Do you remember the first time you ever visited the beach? Or something that happened on a previous visit? What makes it stick in your mind?

Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders (Matthew 7:24-27)

Building sandcastles is a must at any sandy beach. Have a competition or work together on building the most impressive castle. As the tide approaches, whose castle will last the longest? What was Jesus teaching us with this story?



Jesus calms the storm (Luke 8: 22-25)

Have you spotted any boats today? If there is a harbour nearby, see if you can spot any fishing boats. Have you ever been on a boat? Was it a stormy day or a calm on the water? How do you think Jesus' friends felt when he told the wind and waves to stop?

Look up. Beaches are great for giving us a sense of open space. Look up at the sky and the clouds. What shapes can you spot? Think about this verse: "The heavens proclaim the glory of God. The skies display his craftsmanship." (Psalm 19:1 NLT)

Close your eyes. What can you hear? What can you smell? What can you taste?

Look down. Check out some rock pools or turn over pebbles, especially near to the tide line, and see what you find. There are often things that you wouldn't otherwise notice. Can you find shells or tiny creatures? Think about God's care for all He has made. "The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it; for he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters." (Psalm 24: 1-2 NIV)

Build a cairn. Collect some pebbles and ask everyone to hold one in their hands and think about what they are grateful for today. If you have some chalk you could write or draw things you're thankful for on the pebbles. Build the pebbles into a pile (or cairn) as you say thank you to God.



Messages in the sand. What messages of hope and encouragement could you write or draw in the sand for others to see as they pass by after you've gone?

Alternatives. Maybe you are going to the woods, by a river, up a hill or meeting in a playpark instead. How could you adapt these ideas for the places you're visiting?

10. Moving on and moving up

Summer term is always a time when children, young people and parents are thinking about their next steps: preparing to start school, moving from First School to Middle School or Primary to Secondary, finishing GCSEs and starting college, or heading towards uni, apprenticeship or work.

Here are some ideas for supporting young people you know and the schools near to you, as they prepare for the changes that will take place this summer:

It's Your Move. Many churches gift Year 6 pupils in local Primary Schools with the 'It's Your Move' book by Scripture Union. There is also a video workshop which might be helpful to those working with Year 6.

<https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/its-your-move>

A School Chaplain who has been working with Year 6 pupils through the year, asked what they would like to talk about in relation to moving school and the issues mentioned were covered in It's Your Move. As a result, this year the church bought the books early so that they could be used by the children in their sessions with the Chaplain, rather than being given out at the Leaver's Service at the end of term.

Do also remember that in some areas there are First, Middle and Upper Schools meaning that children move schools in Year 4 and Year 8, rather than in Year 6.

Exams are back! It's been a strange couple of years for young people building up to exams that they didn't get to take, or at least not in the way they imagined. This summer exams are back in the usual May/June time frame and results day for A Level and GCSE students will be the third and fourth Thursday of August. How could you check in with young people you know? Send them a postcard and let them know you are praying for them as they wait for results and make plans for September. Once school is done, could you gather some of the young people for some food around the campfire? (see idea 8)

Do also remember teachers who take on extra pressure at this time of year.

Pray. Here are some prayer points you could use. Why not include them in your church notices or parish magazine in June or July?

- Pray for children and young people who will be transitioning to new places of education (primary to secondary, middle to upper, secondary to further education, further education to university).
- Pray for those who will be transitioning out of education into employment.
- Pray for those transitioning into independent living, especially those leaving the social care system.
- Pray for those moving up in uniformed groups or from children's groups to youth groups.

Love your school. How about sending a thank you card to the staffroom during the summer term, along with good quality coffee, tea, biscuits or flowers to say thank you for all they've done this year?

And why not involve children and families in praying for their schools and making thank you cards for the teachers and support staff they know?

Back to School Sunday. After the holidays and as the new term starts, many churches include prayers for schools in their Sunday worship. If you have young people or teachers in your congregation. you could interview them and pray for them as they return to school. Don't forget to remember those who will be starting school for the first time as well as those heading off to university or college in September.

For more ideas visit: www.prayforschools.org

Bonus Thoughts on Sport

2022 will be another bumper summer for sport with lots of different events to enjoy! Sport can often be a really helpful way to connect with children, young people and families in our communities. Here are some of the events due to take place this summer...



The Women's European Football Championship (Euro 2022) kicks off in July here in England with the men's FIFA World Cup not taking place until December this year, due to it being hosted by Qatar.

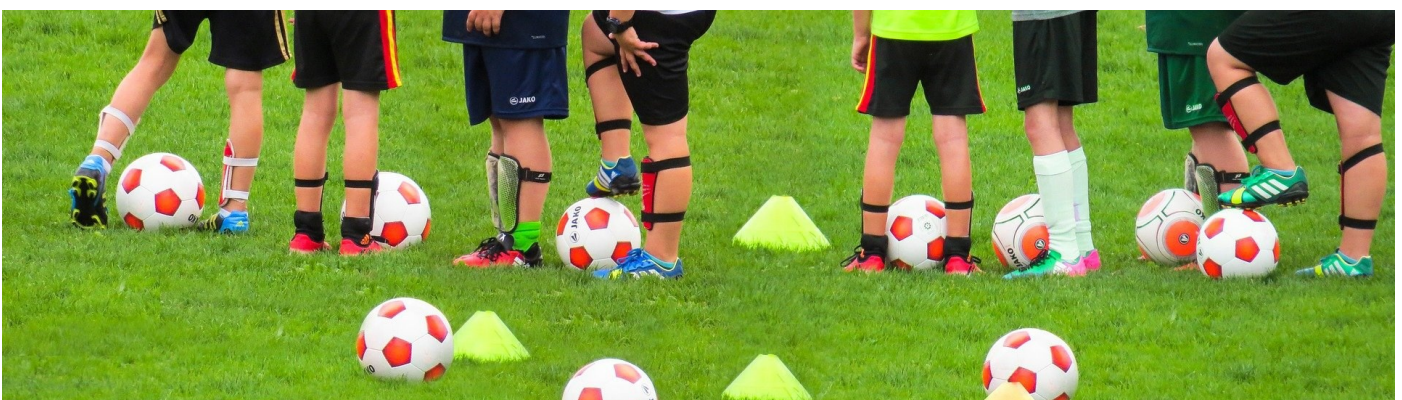
We're also hosting the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham from 28 July – 8 August, there's the Tour De France (1 – 24 July), the Hockey World Cup (1-17 July) and of course Wimbledon beginning on 27 June with the finals on 9 and 10 July.

Sport can often draw communities and nations together. How could your church, parish or group use sport as a way of gathering community and sharing the good news of Jesus?

Could you...

1. screen some of the sport and gather people together to watch?
2. organise a Euro 2022 sweepstake, giving each young person/family a team to cheer on during the tournament?
3. host a mini-Commonwealth Games, old-school sports day or opening ceremony event? More ideas and resources from Sports Chaplaincy: <https://sportschaplaincy.org.uk/commonwealthgames/>
4. use SU's Back of the Net resource: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/resource/back-net>
5. check out some of the great work Christians in Sport are doing and use some of their resources? <https://www.christiansinsport.org.uk/resources/>

And for more, check out what Scripture Union have to say on mission through sport here: <https://content.scriptureunion.org.uk/what-we-do/mission-through-sport>



Ethical and Sustainable Arts and Crafts Suppliers for Youth Ministry and Groups



Arts and crafts activities offer endless opportunities for learning about faith and creation and as a way to express thoughts, feelings and experiences throughout our Christian journeys. As good stewards of creation and the resources God has given us, we can commit to giving due consideration to the materials we use and where possible, choose ethical, sustainable and recycled or upcycled products that produce minimal waste and environmental harm.

Below is a brief guide to sourcing ethical and sustainable materials for Sunday school meetings, Messy Church, youth groups and craft groups. Realistically, some products do cost more but many are very reasonably priced and planning ahead can help keep costs low (e.g. accessing sales and end of season items or bulk-buying if possible).

Upcycle and Recycle First

The most sustainable materials are those that are being reused or repurposed. We are blessed in the diocese to have multiple scrap-stores which for a small fee offer a wide range of materials and craft essentials.

Yeovil: <https://www.thehubyeovil.co.uk>

Weston Super Mare: <http://communityscrapstore.org.uk>

Glastonbury: <http://yeastscrapstore.co.uk>

Ethical Kidz

Ethical Kidz has a clear and easy to use website that provides ethical and sustainable craft products and gifts including Fairtrade and charity-supporting purchases. They also have an excellent overview of their business considerations including how they reduce their own energy use and waste.

See <https://www.ethicalkidz.co.uk/shop/fairtrade/>

Yarn Yarn

Specialising in yarns and fabrics from India that support women's co-operatives, Yarn Yarn provides some beautiful, handmade supplies that also reduce waste and encourage a circular economy.

See <https://www.yarnyarn.co.uk/pages/our-yarn-journey-1>



Conscious Craft

Conscious Craft offer a wide range of plastic and waste free craft materials, toys and educational materials with the aim of providing items that will last. See <https://consciouscraft.uk>

Myriad

Myriad has an expansive range of sustainable products, mostly produced in Europe and they do not use air freight. They source their products solely from manufacturers who pay fair wages.

See <https://www.myriadonline.co.uk>

Baker Ross:

A well-known craft supplier with a good ethical policy. Whilst they still have some way to go to be sustainable, there are sustainable and low waste options including a natural materials section.

See <https://www.bakerross.co.uk>

And finally, please share your stories, questions and sustainable craft photos with us.

For more info about our Diocesan Environment policy visit: www.bathandwells.org.uk/faith/environment



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