

EARTH VIGIL

EXTINCTINO
REBELLION
FAITH
BRIDGE
2020

STARTER PACK

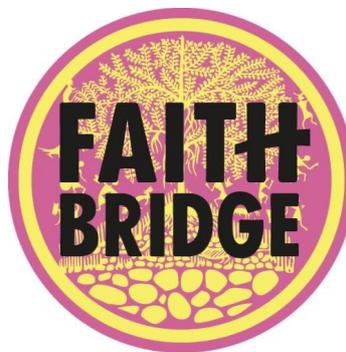


extinction
rebellion

INTRODUCTION

WELCOME! EARTH VIGILS ARE A PEACEFUL, POWERFUL ACTION FOR ANYONE WHO IS CONCERNED ABOUT THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL CRISIS. WE COME TOGETHER AND SIT IN SILENCE, IN THE DAYTIME, EVENING OR OVERNIGHT, AS WITNESSES TO THE SUFFERING OF OUR EARTH, AND WITH COMPASSION AND HOPE FOR HER HEALING. THIS PACK HAS BEEN DESIGNED TO SUPPORT ANY INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP WHO WANTS TO HOLD AN EARTH VIGIL - AS A ONE-OFF OR AS AN ONGOING ACTION, AS A STAND-ALONE EVENT OR TO SUPPORT ANOTHER ACTION. THERE IS A CHECK-LIST AT THE BACK OF THIS LEAFLET TO MAKE YOUR PLANNING EASIER.

WE HAVE FOUND THAT EARTH VIGILS ARE A BRILLIANT WAY OF GETTING OUR MESSAGE OUT TO THE PUBLIC - KEEPING AWARENESS OF THE CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY ALIVE. IT DEMONSTRATES THAT 'TAKING ACTION' CAN BE A QUIET, SAFE, REFLECTIVE ACTIVITY. IT OFFERS PEOPLE A 'HELD SPACE' TO SIT WITH THEIR FRUSTRATION, FEAR, GRIEF, THEIR COMPASSION FOR THE PLANET, OR WHATEVER ELSE THEY ARE FEELING. IT CAN ALSO BE A GREAT WAY OF REACHING OUT TO PEOPLE WHO MIGHT WANT TO GET INVOLVED IN THEIR LOCAL XR GROUP. FINALLY IT'S A GENTLE, LOW-RISK ACTION FOR THOSE NEW TO ACTIVISM.



THESE ACTIONS ARE ALSO GREAT AT BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, AS THOSE FROM DIFFERENT FAITHS AND PHILOSOPHIES JOIN TOGETHER, UNITED BY OUR COMMON AIM OF BRINGING HEALING TO THE PLANET. ALTHOUGH SOME VIGILLERS HAVE SPIRITUAL TRADITIONS OR BELIEFS THERE IS NO EXPECTATION THAT ANYONE WHO JOINS WILL HAVE ANY PARTICULAR SPIRITUAL BELIEF, AND EVERYONE IS WELCOME WITHOUT EXCEPTION. THE ACTIONS REQUIRE VERY FEW 'PROPS', NOT MUCH TIME, AND NO EXPERTISE. IF YOU ARE ORGANISING YOUR VIGIL AS AN EXTINCTION REBELLION ACTION, MAKE SURE YOU ARE ABIDING BY THE PRINCIPLES AND VALUES OF XR WHICH YOU CAN FIND HERE.



HISTORY

The first Earth Vigil organised by this group was a collaboration between Christian Climate Action (CCA) and other Extinction Rebellion (XR) faith groups in March 2020. The aim was to pray and meditate continuously on the pavement outside Parliament for forty days and nights. Our group (including representatives from CCA, secular meditators, XR Jews, XR Muslims and XR Buddhists) went on to organise an Earth Vigil for the London rebellion in September 2020, with vigils also happening in Cardiff, in Manchester and online.

At the same time several smaller local vigils were taking place in Lewes, Great Malvern and elsewhere.

We have been excited by the power of these vigils, both for those taking part and for those witnessing, and we look forward to having a presence at future rebellions and at COP26 as well as locally and, hopefully, across the globe!



THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO AN EARTH VIGIL

**CHOOSE A SPOT AND A TIME.
PRINT YOUR PLACARD.
GO AND SIT IN VIGIL!**



HOW TO GET STARTED

To hold an Earth Vigil you simply need to choose a prominent spot where you won't be blocking the public and where you can sit down - a wide pavement, by a statue, at the top of some steps etc. You can bring a folding chair or a cushion - whatever you need to be comfortable.

Hang a 'love and grief for the Earth' placard hanging around your neck and sit quietly. You can sit alone for as long as you like as long as you feel safe, or ideally buddy up with others. That's it!



PRACTICALITIES

PLACARDS TO HANG ROUND YOUR NECKS.

[Here's the link.](#)

We'd suggest you get these placards printed onto (recycled) A4 card, and then just put two holes in the top with a hole-punch and tie some string into a loop.

You could laminate a few if you're planning on sitting out in all weathers - they last much longer!

OUTREACH

HAVE A GREETER

We've found that it's helpful to have someone available to speak to members of the public. It can also make those sitting with their eyes shut feel safer knowing that they have a colleague keeping an eye on things.

It's helpful if this person knows a bit about Extinction Rebellion and/or environmental issues - newcomers can 'buddy up' which is a nice way of introducing people to this role.

They may want to wear a stewards jacket, although be aware that this can identify them as 'organisers' (if you are worried about attracting attention from the police).

As a general rule it's always good to listen and ask people questions about their own experience before sharing any facts or sharing your own experience. People are sometimes moved to join you in your vigil - greeters can welcome them and give them a placard if they want one.



INFORMATION

You might want leaflets for people to take away - there are examples [here](#).

You could also have a QR code linking with information about what you're doing - look here for how to create a QR code. An example of a page you could link to with your QR code is here on the Malvern XR site (feel free to copy any of this).



RECRUITMENT

You might want to collect email addresses for local Extinction Rebellion mailing lists, or have details of other local events they might want to attend. You can give them a chance to sign up to your local XR mailing list (remember to include a tick box so they can agree to their information being stored according to the principles of GDPR) or not.

REGULARITY AND VISIBILITY

REGULARITY

You might want to set up a regular slot for your vigil, or hold the space for a weekend or a morning. If you decide to cover a particular period of time you might want to use a rota for filling the slots. You could use a simple Googledoc, or free online software - we use Signup Zone (and here's an example of a previous rota).

You can send out an invite to your local XR group, to your friends and family, on social media or anywhere else you might find people interested in joining.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Consider who you are targeting when you choose your spot, e.g. outside your local council offices if you want to influence local councillors, or a busy shopping square

if you want to be as visible to as many members of the public as possible. Visibility As well as the placards that you hang around your necks,

you may want to create a banner to put on the floor in front of you, or bring flags or other objects to draw attention to the vigil.



HOW TO MAKE A BANNER

Making a banner can be as simple or as intricate as you want but remember that the purpose is to get your message out. Something like “Protect the Earth” or “8 Years Left” tells people what your vigil is about. You could just make an Earth Vigil banner or one that identifies the group you represent and have other means of saying why you are taking this action, but a very visible message engages people passing by.

We’ve found that there is often nowhere to hang a banner (there are sometimes by-laws that make it unlawful to attach things to railings) so using materials that are suitably sized and robust enough to be placed on the pavement in front of you if you don’t have enough people to hold a banner is important. Fabric painted with vinyl emulsion or fabric paint works well. To get consistency with your lettering you can print out your message or individual letters, cut them out, place them on your fabric, measuring as necessary and then draw around them (use chalk if you’re worried about mistakes) before filling in the outlines with the paint.

For artwork you can cut stencils from images and paint or sponge these on. If you are short of time, just use permanent markers to write your words on a strip of fabric. Here are some examples of banners we have created. [Photos, ?linked].



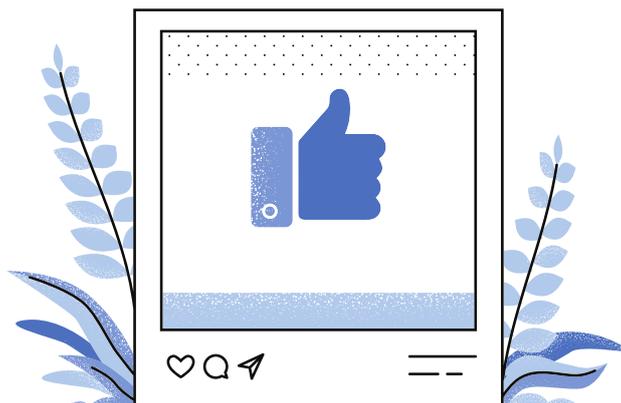
A good alternative to a banner might be a handheld placard, especially if there is only one or two of you, but remember that you will probably need to hold it while you are keeping vigil.

Do remember to take photos of the vigil so you can share them with your local group, on social media, and maybe in a press release for your local paper.

A final note - due to the nature of public protests we have found that passers-by like to take photos of people sitting in vigil. We see this as an extension of the visibility of the vigil, but it can be disconcerting if you’re not expecting it!

SPREADING THE WORD

There are many ways to spread the word to those who might want to take part. You can use social media - creating a Facebook or Eventbrite event or using Twitter or Instagram. You can advertise it in your local XR newsletter or Telegram group. You can put up posters locally or email information to your friends and ask them to forward it. We find that word of mouth works well for these events, especially when they are ongoing or repeated.



LEGAL ISSUES

TAKING DIRECT ACTION

Unlike some XR actions, an Earth Vigil offers a silent witness to the present suffering of the Earth and its peoples in a non-disruptive way, provided you are not blocking the pavement, preventing access or holding the vigil on private property.

This makes Earth Vigils relatively comfortable and accessible actions for a wide range of people.

In the short history of Earth Vigils at XR actions, our vigils have been accepted by the police and there have been no arrests.

However, it is still a form of protest, which means if the police place restrictions on protests in a given time and place, these will apply to a Vigil as much as any other protest action.

It is very important that everyone participating in a Vigil understands that joining, or even being present around, any XR action comes with some risk of arrest, however slight that may seem.

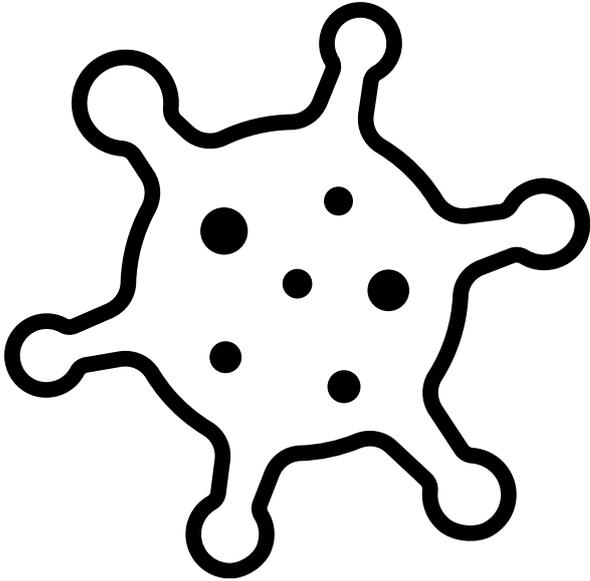
It is strongly recommended that anyone organising or attending an Earth Vigil completes XR's training in Non-Violent Direct Action (NVDA) before doing so.

You can access this training at the XR Rebellion Academy - just create yourself an account and put yourself in the 'Action Rebel' category to be directed to the appropriate trainings.



LEGAL ISSUES (2)

CORONAVIRUS RESTRICTIONS



It is important that Earth Vigils comply with the latest coronavirus regulations in your area, which can be found [here](#).

Here's a link on whether you can attend protests during coronavirus: [here](#).

This may mean restricting the number of people who can attend in one site, asking people to wear masks, having hand gel available and asking people to keep at least 2 metres of social distance at all times.

Don't share food at the vigil and be aware of contact when e.g. handing out leaflets.

A 'greeter' can help to keep an eye on this.

RISK ASSESSMENT

At the moment vigils count as protest, and so are exempt from some of the coronavirus restrictions (e.g. the rule of 6).

There may be a requirement for a risk assessment to be in place before the vigil starts - this can be simple and doesn't need to be checked, it just needs to exist.

There is an example risk assessment [here](#).



BE CREATIVE!

There are many different ways to bear witness to the Earth's suffering, and to express our love and compassion for her and for all living things.

[Here's another example](#) of a successful local vigil - do think about what will work for your local community and feel free to experiment.



We hope that you will find it a meaningful experience, and that alongside the grief there will be room for gratitude and for joy.

FURTHER READING/LINKS

See our main website with information about local vigils, photos and more at www.earthvigil.co.uk. We have a Facebook page where you can share experiences, photos and even videos <https://www.facebook.com/groups/3129899220569611/?ref=share>

The main Extinction Rebellion site is at <https://extinctionrebellion.uk>

If you have any questions that aren't answered here, do feel free to email Satya satya@satyarobyn.com or Melanie melanie.nazareth@btinternet.com.

We'd really love to hear about it if you do organise one - send us your photos! We can also advertise vigils on the vigil site.



SUMMARY CHECKLIST

PRINCIPLES

If you are doing this in the name of XR, has everyone read and agreed to the XR principles?

Are you aware of the (limited!) legal risks you are taking by engaging in peaceful protest?

PRACTICALITIES

What might you need to be comfortable (folding chair, cushion, blankets, waterproofs, provisions etc)?

Coronavirus

Do you have a risk assessment?

Are you complying with the current coronavirus restrictions?

OUTREACH

Do you want a 'greeter' - someone who can speak to the public about Extinction Rebellion and/or the environmental emergency?

Information - do you want printed leaflets or a QR code link that links to a webpage?

Recruitment - could you provide an opportunity for people to sign up to an XR mailing list?

REGULARITY AND VISIBILITY

- Do you want to set up a regular slot?

- Do you want to set up a rota to coordinate this?

- What is your target 'audience' and where will you sit?

- Do you want to bring flags or banners as well as your placard?

- Will you have some photos from the vigil to share afterwards?

SPREADING THE WORD

Do you want to use social media like (Facebook, Eventbrite, Twitter, Instagram)?

Do you want to advertise it in XR newsletters and group chats?

Do you want to put up posters?

Could you invite your friends?

LEGAL ISSUES

- Are you clear about the risks involved in taking direct action?

- Have you done a risk assessment?

- Are you complying with current coronavirus legislation?



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