
Selling Fair Trade in Your Church



Why should our church get involved in selling Fair Trade?

Many churches sell Fair Trade goods as a Christian witness – a sign of their members' commitment to live out love of God and neighbour in working for a more just world, where everyone can live with dignity. In smaller communities, selling Fair Trade products can also show love of neighbours for whom getting to shops is difficult. And at a practical level, a church involved in selling Fair Trade gives its members – and others - a chance to buy a broader range of Fair Trade goods than is available in supermarkets or most shops.

What route should we take?

Options include:

- a frequent (honesty/weekly/fortnightly) stall
- a monthly stall
- selling Fair Trade at special events
- forming a Fair Trade buying group, where people join together to place a common order

How do we access Fairtrade goods for sale?

- Information on where to get Fairtrade goods on sale-or-return or in bulk is summarised in a handy one-page guide at the end – also you can contact us to be put in touch with other options in your area.

Frequent Stalls

You might want a stall in your church hall after services. Or an 'honesty stall' which is always on display, with people leaving payment in a secure location. Or a regular stall that you operate in a location outside the church: local churches have operated them at farmers markets and car boot sales!

To run a frequent stall, you'll need:

- a team of volunteers to do the ordering, pricing, and selling on a regular basis
- space to store your goods
- a large enough customer base to ensure that you don't often get left with items that are past their sell-by date

In the short term, you might want to start your stall using sale-or-return goods from a local Fair Trade shop, so that you can work out what sells before making a financial commitment. In the long term, the easiest way to run a frequent stall is to register as a Traidcraft Fair Trader. This means that you can order easily from Traidcraft's catalogue (by post, by phone or online) and that you get a discount from the catalogue price.

Take a look at our "Setting up a Regular Fair Trade Stall" for a checklist and tips for people starting up a stall.

Monthly Stalls

Some smaller congregations prefer a monthly stall. The obvious upside is that there's a lot less work. One downside, though, is that it's harder for people to remember to bring money – and they may need to buy supplies on weeks when there is no stall.

If you're going to do a monthly stall, you may still wish to register as a Fair Trader and place orders with Traidcraft. But you're unlikely to want to buy a lot of perishables (except if people specifically order them from the catalogue), as you have fewer opportunities to sell and a stronger chance that the material may go out of date. What can work well is to buy non-perishables (gifts, cards, etc) from Traidcraft, meaning that you have the full discount, and then to get the perishables on sale-or-return from a local Fair Trade shop or key Fair Trader. Or you might choose simply to get everything on sale-or-return, which means that your church has no financial risk.

Special Events Stalls

For some churches special events stalls work best. One rural Fair Trader explains: "In our church, we don't have a large enough congregation to sustain a monthly stall. But we wanted to maintain our commitment to selling Fair Trade and helping Fair Trade producers to reach a wider market. So we decided to focus our Fair Trade sales on a few special events a year – and to make each of these also an outreach event. For example, we now hold an annual Christmas Fair, with a Christmas-focused Fair Trade stall. We also run a stall at a local fete. The events reach people from outside the church and provide a witness of our care for justice."

If you're going to run stalls as special events, you may want to explore some mix of sale-or-return and non-perishable material that you've ordered from Traidcraft, or just go for sale-or-return. Such events often work best if they have themes: Christmas is an obvious one, but you could also have an Easter stall with Easter chocolate ... a 'fabulous foods' stall with Fair Trade foods that people might not have seen before ... a 'keeping in touch' stall with a selection of carefully selected Fair Trade cards ... a 'well-dressed table' stall with some of the beautiful Fair Trade tablecloths, glasses, serving dishes, etc on offer. It can work well to have two tables: one with the old favourites, and another that focuses on the theme. For the stalwart foods, a carefully arranged full table can give a sense of bounty. For the theme, though, remember that less can be more – a 'table-setting' display that shows some beautiful homewares to best advantage may well sell more than a table stuffed full of small and large items where nothing stands out.

Fair Trade Buying Group

Here's an alternative to a stall that can also make it easy for people to buy the Fair Trade products they need when they want to buy them.

It doesn't take a lot of people – you could do it with a few individuals and families. These people form a church Fair Trade buying group, which agrees to place an order on a regular basis with Traidcraft: each member commits to order at least a certain amount over the course of the year.

The group then either registers for a Traidcraft account or contacts a local Fair Trader who is willing to act on their behalf. Each member of the group has a copy of the latest catalogue (you might want to have some in church as well). When an order's going to be placed, people decide what they want to order and let the person placing the order know. That person places the order: the goods are delivered to the church or designated location. And when the goods arrive, people come, collect their goods, and pay. The account holder gathers the money and pays Traidcraft.

It's a great way of helping people buy Fairtrade household staples – washing-up liquid, laundry liquid, tea, coffee, pasta (does chocolate count as a staple?) - on a regular basis, as well as Christmas cards, Easter chocolates, gifts, etc. You only need to order £50 worth of goods among the group to qualify you for free delivery, and if you set up your own account, you can either give people the Fair Trader discount or charge catalogue prices and donate the money saved to your church. And everyone gets what they want, when they want it.

How do we access materials?

Setting up a Traidcraft account

To register as a Traidcraft Fair Trader, go online at <http://www.traidcraft.co.uk/fair-trader-account> or ring 0191 497 3999. Having an account lets you order easily from Traidcraft's catalogue (by post, by phone or online) and gives you a discount from the catalogue price. Each order can be sent directly to any place you designate.

Getting sale-or-return from a Traidcraft 'Key Contact'

Ring Traidcraft on 0191 497 3999 to be put in touch with your nearest 'Key Contact'

Getting sale-or-return from a Fair Trade shop

If you're in the Thames Valley, go to our list of Fair Trade shops. If you're not in the Thames Valley, go to the British Association of Fair Trade Shops (BAFTS) website and look for the shop nearest you on their 'member location' page: <http://bafts.org.uk/member-location/>

Getting items from a Fair Trade importer

In addition to Fair Trade shops, there are Fair Trade importers, some of whom will provide items on sale-or-return for a special event. In the Thames Valley, for example, Trading for Development (email judith@tradingfordevelopment.co.uk), offers the 'World in a Box', a sale-or-return selection of Fair Trade non-perishables from around the world. The local representative of Palestinian handicrafts importer Hadeel is also willing to provide materials or to run a stall at your church.

Wherever you live, it's worth checking for local BAFTS-registered importers who might be willing to supply goods sale-or-return for a larger special event. Importers often have direct connections with the communities from whom they import, so some churches not only ask them to send goods, but also invite them to speak.

Getting display materials

Traidcraft (see above) offers display materials for stalls. You can also get materials from the Fairtrade Foundation via their Fairtrade shop: <http://shop.fairtrade.org.uk/>. We also have a range of materials that we can loan – as well as Fair Trade-themed bookmarks that many stalls have found handy.

Any Questions?

Feel free to contact us on 01235 851763 or Fairtrade@ccow.org.uk. We're always ready to talk things through, signpost resources, and – if you live in the Thames Valley area – to put you in touch with others nearby.



Christian Concern for One World is an ecumenical charity working to help Christians and churches live the Gospel in a globalised world. For more information about us and our work, visit our website, www.ccow.org.uk or ring us on 01235 851763.