



INTRODUCTION

Friending Planet Earth:

Helping Youth Understand Solidarity and Sustainability in Light of Climate Change

Attention: Leaders in Ministry and Catechesis with High School Age Youth in Dioceses, Parishes and Catholic High Schools

Young people today long for a way to make a difference in the world. They live at a critical time in the history of the world. The impacts of climate change are real and are taking their toll on the earth and its people. Youth worry about their future in a world where rain forests and oceans, clean water and air are threatened, and where rising temperatures create bigger storms and longer droughts.

The Catholic Church has always been a voice of hope in trying times. The Church's social teaching sheds light on a situation like climate change through Scripture, Catholic social teaching and the movement of the Holy Spirit. Catholic youth can be empowered to draw on our tradition and the Spirit to confront the threat of climate change with creativity, reflection, learning and action. When faith, knowledge, morality and compassion meet an issue...things begin to happen!

The Catholic Coalition on Climate change is partnering with The Center for Ministry Development, to help capture this energy. We are providing six learning sessions on climate change for Catholic youth in school and parish settings. These sessions are grounded in Scripture, Catholic social teaching, and provide hope in the face of climate change. They use multi-media, prayer, hands-on activities, simulations, games, quizzes, art and music. The sessions will help Catholic youth learn that their faith has a unique way of addressing climate change. They will discover that their Catholic faith considers the moral dimensions of human activity affecting the earth and understand it from the perspective of those most impacted by it: the poor and vulnerable. ***These resources will be provided free of charge to dioceses, parishes and Catholic high schools.***

Each learning session is 90 minutes long and includes the following components and each follows the outline of the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor (see catholicclimatecovenant.org):

Focus - Theme/Topic

Prayer - Scripture, music, reflection, challenge

Learning - Immerse and involve young people through speakers, videos, simulation games

Assessment - Explore in-depth more about the focus through social analysis, small group activities, games, interviews, speakers, study/research

Action – How to take put the learning and assessment into action that makes a difference

Advocacy – How to be a voice for the voiceless and encourage others to join this movement

Six Learning Sessions

1. A Dream for the World

- In this session participants will discover God’s intimate relationship with creation and God’s covenant with human beings. They will uncover what it means to be in right relationship with creation. This session can be used either by itself with youth as an introductory session or with youth and parents/guardians together to give them an overview of what the young people will learn.

2. The Human Face of Climate Change

- In this session youth will learn about the impact of lifestyle on the environment and the effects of consumption, choices and apathy. Youth will come to understand the role of the Catholic faith when facing and solving the issue of climate change.

3. A Carbon Footprint

- This session will help explain some of the science behind climate change, bust myths and help participants face climate change with faith and reason, science and prudence.

4. Our Church has Something to Say

- By taking a look at statements by our popes and bishops, Scripture and Catholic social teaching, participants will begin to understand and heed Pope Benedict’s call for global cooperation, the principle of solidarity, and the importance of advocating on behalf of the poor in the face climate change. Connections will be drawn between the plight of the poor and consumption, life style and materialism.

5. Stories of Hope

- In this session participants will look at positive stories of hope that highlight the good work being done around the issue of climate change by organizations and people of all ages. Youth will bring their own creativity, experience, ideas, dreams and passions together to create ways to respond to the challenge of climate change now.

6. Operation Impact

- This session is an intergenerational experience on Climate Change and considers how even little changes can have a great impact on the world. Families, parishes or school communities will be

invited to learn about climate change, their connection and contributions to it and how to start reversing and reducing their carbon footprint on the earth using the USCCB-endorsed Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor (<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>).

Sessions can be used in a variety of ways.

For each 90-minute youth-centered session, learning focuses on a unique topic and can be shared in parish youth ministry or religious education, Catholic school campus ministry or religion class, mini retreats, a whole parish community event, parent/guardian-teen event in parish or school, family event, morning or evening of reflection, special event connected to liturgical seasons/feast days (e.g. Feast of St. Francis on October 4), or national commemorative days such as Earth Day (April 22).

About the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

Founded in 2006, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change is a membership organization consisting of twelve national Catholic organizations, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and helps to more fully implement the U.S. bishops statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*.

The Coalition has focused its work on providing a forum to explore the issues and faith implications of climate change through education, outreach and organizing in the Catholic community around the country. It connects Catholics by connecting with state and diocesan leaders who are promoting climate change activities and partners with other national Catholic organizations to assist them in connecting the issue of climate change within their institutions. In April 2009, the Coalition launched the Catholic Climate Covenant: St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor.

About the Center for Ministry Development

The Center for Ministry Development provides training, resources and consultation for pastoral ministry and catechesis with youth, young adults, families, and the intergenerational community. Since 1978, Catholic parishes and dioceses have trusted CMD to provide a vision and practice for ministry that is rooted in Church documents, Scripture, and best practices research. Through our partnership with ministry leaders, CMD strives for excellence and innovation by providing practical, field-tested ministry solutions and resources. The Center for Ministry Development is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization.

Sign up today to receive these resources.

Contact the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change via e-mail at: info@catholicsandclimatechange.org
phone: 301-920-1442. Or, go to: www.catholicclimatecovenant.org

Contact the Center for Ministry Development at: www.cmdnet.org or phone: 253-853-5422