

Friending Planet Earth:

Helping Youth Understand Solidarity & Sustainability
in Light of Climate Change



Our Church Has Something to Say



Operation Impact



A Dream for the World



Stories of Hope



A Carbon Footprint



The Human Face of Climate Change



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

A Dream for the World

By Joan Weber



Purpose

As people of faith, Catholics believe that God invites us into an intimate relationship with God, each other, and God's creation. We live in covenant with God, and part of the covenant is being in right relationship with creation. This 90-minute session is designed to introduce participants to the Catholic perspective on climate change and to give the young people and their parents or guardians an overview of the topics being covered.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 7:00 p.m. | Welcome/Word Association |
| 7:05 p.m. | Opening Prayer: God Calls Us to Right Relationship |
| 7:15 p.m. | Right Relationships and Climate Change |
| 7:35 p.m. | Reflection: Am I in Right Relationship? |
| 7:40 p.m. | Our & My Dream for Planet Earth |
| 8:20 p.m. | Closing Prayer: The Catholic Dream for Creation |
| 8:30 p.m. | Good Night! |

Extend the Session Ideas

1. Engage the parents of the youth in this session by having them participate in the Welcome and Opening Prayer. When the young people move into the next segment of the session, invite the parents to go to a different room with a parish leader. Give a quick overview of the Session Outline. Or invite a guest speaker to cover the topics in the resource mentioned below. Pass out the handout *A Catholic Approach to Climate Change – Question and Answer Resource*. It can be found at <http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/pdf/FAQ.pdf>. Engage the parents in a Q & A session, using the handout as your guide. At approximately 7:55, bring the parents back into the room with their adolescents so they can hear the dream sculptures and participate in the closing prayer.
2. Invite the youth to teach younger children about climate change and care for God's creation. Connect them with the DRE or the catechist in charge of a particular age group with whom they would like to work. Use the lesson plans on the CCCC website (<http://www.catholiccovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/K-2lessons.pdf>) and work with the youth on preparing to teach the children.

Materials Needed

- Pictures/symbols of each of the following on a large sheet of paper:
 - God (a Trinitarian symbol would be great)
 - A local community (family, neighbors, etc.)
 - The global family
 - Planet Earth/creation
- Bibles for the participants
- DVD “Who’s Under Your Carbon Footprint” found on the CCCC website
- Laptop and LCD player or DVD player and TV
- “All Good Gifts” from *Godspell* (music by Stephen Schwartz), available from iTunes
- [“Song of the Body of Christ”](#) by David Haas (*Spirit & Song*, OCP), or another song of solidarity
- CD or MP3 player and speakers
- Play-Doh or other clay substitute (various colors), enough for each participant to have access to different colors
- Flat-based paper plates, one per participant
- **Handout 1, Am I in Right Relationship?**, for each participant, copy double-sided
- **Handout 2, Take Action to be in Right Relationship**, for each participant
- Pens or pencils for journaling

Prepare in Advance

1. Set up your large sheet of paper with the symbols of God, your community, people around the world, and creation in the front of the room. Make sure it is high enough and large enough to be easily viewed by everyone in the room, even when they are standing.
2. The room needs to be set up in such a way that there is a large amount of open space so participants can move forward and backward without impediment. Having chairs set up in a circle around the periphery of the room would work well.
3. Invite five young people to proclaim the five Scripture passages in the opening prayer.
4. Select one youth to proclaim Micah in the session on Our & My Dream for Planet Earth.
5. Be ready to set up tables and chairs for participants to sculpt their clay for the Our & My Dream for Planet Earth session.

Session Outline

Welcome (5 minutes)

Greet and welcome youth as they arrive to the session. Introduce the session making the following points:

I am going to do a word association with you. I will give you a word or phrase, and then I want you to share whatever comes into your mind. Don't think about an answer—just share the first word that pops up. Ready?

- Creation
- Earth
- Planet
- Air
- Water
- Climate
- Creator
- Drought
- Pollution
- Climate change

Some people question if climate change is real. Some may wonder what climate change has to do with faith—in our case, the Catholic faith. In this session we are going to look at both of these issues. We are going to explore God's command to live in what our Church calls "right relationship"—with God, with each other, with people across the globe, and with creation. But first let's pray.

Opening Prayer: God Calls Us to Right Relationship (10 minutes)

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

God of all creation, we thank you for the abundant gifts you have given us—the gift of your unconditional love, the gift of each other, the gift of all created things. We praise you for your generosity and care for us. We hear your call to us to live in right relationship. Help us to always be mindful of how our actions affect your gifts—for good or for bad. We ask this in the name of your Son, our Redeemer, and in your Spirit. Amen.

Listen (allow a few moments of silence between each reading)

Reader One: Genesis 2:15

Reader Two: Isaiah 58:6-7

Reader Three: Micah 6:8

Reader Four: Luke 4:16-19

Reader Five: John 17:20-23

Respond

Prayer Leader:

We hear in Scripture how God calls us to live in right relationship—to God, to each other, to people around the world, and to creation. Now we pause to ask forgiveness for all the times in which we haven't lived the way God asks us to live. Our response will be: **We ask your pardon, Lord.**

Prayer Leader:

For all the times we have ignored your commands, for the times we have failed to pray, for the times we haven't trusted your care for us, we pray...
We ask your pardon, Lord.

Prayer Leader:

For all the times we have failed to love our families, our friends, our fellow students, our neighbors, all the people in our lives, we pray...
We ask your pardon, Lord.

Prayer Leader:

For all the times we have failed to recognize our connection to all of Your people across the globe, for not paying attention to their suffering or their gifts, we pray...
We ask your pardon, Lord.

Prayer Leader:

For all the times we have hurt your creation by the choices we have made—to consume, to pollute, to damage—we pray...
We ask your pardon, Lord.

Prayer Leader:

Creator God, we ask you to forgive us for not always being good stewards of the world in which we live. We ask you for the courage and strength, the self-discipline and sacrifice which we need to live as better dwellers on this wonderful earth. Amen.

Send Forth

Sing the closing song you selected.

Right Relationships and Climate Change (20 minutes)

Introduce this activity with the following:

Climate change is a reality in our world. As our own U.S. Catholic Bishops have written in *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*:

We all breathe the same air. Guarding the integrity of the atmosphere—without which complex life could not have evolved on this planet—seems like common sense. Yet a broad consensus of modern science is that human activity is [is altering] the earth's atmospheric characteristics in serious, perhaps profound ways. For the past century, researchers have been gathering and verifying data that reveal an increase in the global average temperature.

But what exactly do we mean by climate change? And what does it have to do with right—or wrong—relationships with God, each other, all of humanity, and our earth?

To answer the first question, climate change includes increased temperatures, rising sea levels, and changes in rainfall—things which impact the atmosphere of our earth. Some of the consequences of climate change are more frequent droughts and floods. This means increasingly limited access to water, reduced crop yields, more widespread disease, increased frequency and intensity of natural disasters, and conflicts arising from the decline in resources. And the poorest among us on earth suffer the deepest hardships of these consequences.

The second question, what this has to do with God and faith and right relationships, can be summed up in a statement from the Bishops' 2001 document:

At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about protecting both the 'human environment' and the natural environment. Let's take a moment to watch a quick video that show what the Bishops and Pope are talking about. It's called, "Who's Under Your Carbon Footprint."

To take this further, we are going to play a climate version of "Red Light, Green Light." I need all of you to stand in a straight line in the middle of the room.

Allow time for the youth to move to the middle of the room. Get them to stand in a line facing the symbols at the front of the room. Then continue:

I am going to read several statements to you. If you do what the statement says frequently, take two steps forward. If you do what the statement says sometimes, take one step forward. If you don't do what the statement says, take one step backward. Are there any questions?

I and my family use energy-efficient light bulbs.

A Dream for the World

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I turn off my computer, shut off lights, unplug chargers, and try not to waste electricity whenever possible.

I walk or bike to places which are a reasonable distance from my starting point instead of getting in the car and driving.

I and my family recycle old newspapers, used beverage containers, printer cartridges, and cell phones.

I and my family wash clothes in cold water.

I and my family use reusable containers and utensils.

I and my family pay attention to where food is produced and try to buy locally-grown food items.

I try to carpool and not drive alone in my car.

I try to eat more vegetables and less meat.

I have helped plant trees.

I have campaigned for recycling at my school, my parish, or my workplace.

I have emailed/written my legislators on the state or national levels to advocate for laws which protect the environment.

I have emailed/written my legislators to advocate for funding on behalf of the poor and vulnerable around the world.

I have donated to Catholic Relief Services or another faith-based organization to support those in need around the world.

I pray for the courage to make hard choices to protect the environment.

I pray for people across the globe who suffer the most from climate changes.

Now look at where you are standing in relationship to God, your loved ones, the global community and creation, then please take your seats in silence.

Reflection: Am I in Right Relationship? (15 minutes)

Once participants have taken their seats, invite them to take **Handout 1, Am I in Right Relationship?**, and journal on the questions.

After about nine or ten minutes, continue:

Gather in groups of three and share what the activity and the journaling have led you to conclude. Is there something you want to *do* as a result?

Our & My Dream for Planet Earth (30 minutes)

Invite the participants back into the large group. Then continue:

We have looked at the challenges of living in right relationship with our planet, which can help us to live in right relationship with God and with God's people across the world. Now let's look at what the world would be like if we actually did this—if we cared for God's creation, if we always considered the common good and the effects of our actions on the poorest and most vulnerable, if we listened to God's command to be in right relationship.

Have the prepared reader proclaim Micah 4:1-4.

Pause for a moment after the reading, then continue:

On the supply table you will find various colors of Play-Doh and some paper plates. I invite each one of you to take a plate and create your own sculpture of what the world would be like if we all lived in right relationship with the earth. What is your dream, looked at through the lens of your Catholic faith, for planet Earth?

Give participants about 15 minutes to complete their sculptures. Then invite them to share their sculptures with the large group. Encourage them to let the sculptures speak for themselves and to use just a few words to convey the meaning.

Note to Leader: If you have a very large group, consider having them share their sculptures in smaller groups.

After all participants have shared, wrap up the session and challenge the youth to action by sharing the following:

Dreams are only dreams unless we take steps to make them come true. I invite you to take the handout being passed out now and do some research on these websites and others you may find to discover an action which you can take to make your dream for Planet Earth come true. Find something that matches your God-given gifts and your passion. The next time we gather, I will ask you to share your ideas for action with the whole group.

Closing Prayer: The Catholic Dream for Creation (10 minutes)

Before the closing prayer, invite participants to hold their sculptures in their laps. Tell them there will be a point in the prayer service when they will be asked to lift up their sculptures as an offering to God.

Gather

Sing *City of God* or another song about our dreams for the Kingdom of God.

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

God, you created the world with your dream of what it could be. You dreamed of people and plants, animals and air, all living in right relationship to you and to each other. Today we offer to our dream for a world which is not threatened by climate changes which hurt our atmosphere, which wound the poorest and most vulnerable, which leave this wonderful planet in poor shape for future generations. And so we close our time together listening to your Word.

Listen

Have the prepared reader proclaim Isaiah 65:17-25.

Respond

Invite each participant to bring his/her sculpture up to the front of the room and place it below the sheet with the symbols of God, nature, and humanity. Invite everyone to sing "All Good Gifts" or another appropriate song during this time.

Send Forth

Distribute **Handout 3, Walk Lightly**, and invite participants to close the prayer together by praying this prayer aloud together.

All websites and links in this session were accessed successfully on August 9, 2011.

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| <p>This session was written by Joan Weber, Project Coordinator of Young Neighbors in Action at the Center for Ministry Development. Joan also teaches the Justice & Service course in the Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies Program.</p> |
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Am I in Right Relationship?

1. How do you feel about where you were standing at the end of the activity? Circle all of the following which apply:

Sad Angry Confused Proud Concerned Challenged

Happy Anxious Impatient Scared Annoyed Indifferent

Other _____ _____ _____

2. How do the actions named in the activity which we just did affect your relationship with God? What is the connection?
3. How do your choices about the named actions affect others around the world? Why should that be your concern?
4. Read the following passages, then answer the questions accompanying each one.
- a. Genesis 4:1-16
How does Cain's question to God apply to right relationships in your own life?
- b. "True stewardship requires changes in human actions – both in moral behavior and technical advancement. Our religious tradition has always urged restraint and moderation in the use of material goods, so we must not allow our desire to possess more material things to overtake our concern for the basic needs of people and the environment. Pope John Paul II has linked protecting the environment to "authentic human

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ecology," which can overcome "structures of sin" and which promotes both human dignity and respect for creation...Changes in lifestyle based on traditional moral virtues can ease the way to a sustainable and equitable world economy in which sacrifice will no longer be an unpopular concept. For many of us, a life less focused on material gain may remind us that we are more than what we have. Rejecting the false promises of excessive or conspicuous consumption can even allow more time for family, friends, and civic responsibilities. A renewed sense of sacrifice and restraint could make an essential contribution to addressing global climate change." *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, USCCB, 2001

How would living a more environmentally friendly lifestyle affect your relationship with God and others and the planet?

- c. "Working for the common good requires us to promote the flourishing of all human life and all of God's creation. In a special way, the common good requires solidarity with the poor who are often without the resources to face many problems, including the potential impacts of climate change. Our obligations to the one human family stretch across space and time. They tie us to the poor in our midst and across the globe, as well as to future generations. The commandment to love our neighbor invites us to consider the poor and marginalized of other nations as true brothers and sisters who share with us the one table of life intended by God for the enjoyment of all."

Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good, USCCB, 2001

What is the connection between the common good and your responses to the actions in the activity we just did?

Take Action to Be in Right Relationship

Check out the following web links to find multiple ways you can take action to care for God's creation, help stop negative climate change, and be in right relationship with the earth.

1. http://www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/take_action.html
This is the action section of the website of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change (CCCC), a partnership of the USCCB, Catholic Relief Services, and other national Catholic organizations.
2. http://old.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/ccgp_waystopray.shtml
This is the action section of the website of the Catholics Confront Global Poverty, an initiative of the U.S. Catholic Church. See also http://old.usccb.org/sdwp/globalpoverty/pdfs/Climate_Change.pdf.
3. <http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org>
This is the part of the CCCC website which invites you to take a stand by pledging to be part of the solution to climate change. You will be challenged to pray, learn, assess, act, and advocate.
4. <http://old.usccb.org/sdwp/ejp/resources/education.shtml>
This is the website of the Environmental Justice Program of the USCCB, and provides real-life examples of parishes and dioceses engaging youth in promoting care for God's creation.

Walk Lightly

Each leaf, each petal,
each grain, each person,
sings your praises,
Creator God.

Each creature on the earth,
all the mountains and great seas
show your glory,
Spirit of love.

And yet the hand of greed
has patented and plundered
your splendour,
has taken and not shared
your gift,
has lived as owner of the earth,
not guest.

And so
the ice is cracked
the rivers dry,
the valleys flooded
and the snowcaps melt.

God our Father, show us
how to step gently,
how to live simply,
how to walk lightly
with respect and love
for all that you have made.
Amen!

Linda Jones/CAFOD
Used with permission.

The Human Face of Climate Change

By Susan Searle



Purpose

As people of faith, Catholics believe the issue of climate change is not just about politics, economics, or interest groups but rather it is an issue regarding the protection of God's creation. Climate change is a moral issue for people of faith because it especially compromises the poor. Our faith calls us to act and advocate for the "least" among us. This ninety-minute session is designed to introduce youth to the Catholic response to climate change and to highlight how the global issue especially impacts the lives of those who are already struggling with poverty.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|-----------|---|
| 7:00 p.m. | Welcome |
| 7:10 p.m. | What is Climate Change? |
| 7:20 p.m. | DVD: Who's Under Your Carbon Footprint |
| 7:30 p.m. | How Climate Change Especially Affects the Poor |
| 7:45 p.m. | Climate Change for the Poor is Like Living in a House of Cards. |
| 8:00 p.m. | The Catholic Response to Climate Change: Concern for the Poor |
| 8:10 p.m. | The Human Face of Climate Change |
| 8:20 p.m. | Closing Prayer: Why Catholic's Care about Climate Change |
| 8:30 p.m. | Good Night! |

Extend the Session Ideas

1. Visit www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org and discover ways your youth ministry can take the St. Francis Pledge to care for creation and the poor.
2. Encourage youth to organize an "Alternative Gift Market" at your parish. Youth ministry teams design and set-up various display booths to educate the parish community about poverty-stricken people around the world who are already suffering due to global warming. For more information go to: <https://gifts.crs.org> (Give the Gift of Hope) or www.altgifts.org.
3. Consider sponsoring a parish "Climate Change Film Festival" showcasing various movies that highlight the issue of climate change and poverty. Your film festival could be a fundraising event for a charitable organization that is currently working to reduce the impact of climate change. Suggestions:
 - a. "Global Warming and the Carteret Islands" – this short (5 minutes) Oxfam film gives a brief overview of the story of the people of the Carteret Islands

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- who were given land by the Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea to relocate. See:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2o2AapO6rK8&playnext=1&list=PL9C86CDB25B5F0BC4>.
- b. “Sun Come Up” is a 39-minute film telling the story of the people of the Carteret Islands. For more about the movie (including rental or purchase information), visit: (<http://www.newday.com/films/suncomeup.html>).
4. Research possible actions for your youth (e.g., Tread Lightly/Lift Up the Lowly ideas for Earth Day) at the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry webpage on Stewardship: <http://climate.nfcym.org/>.

Materials Needed

- Heavy, warm blanket
- One double-bed size sheet
- 3x5 index cards, one package per small group of four to six participants
- Pens or pencils, one for each participant
- Markers
- DVD, “Who’s Under Your Carbon Footprint?” Available from <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org> (Video can also be downloaded from YouTube)
- 6-8 white heavy stock presentation boards
- Box-cutter knife
- Several glue sticks
- Old magazines with of pictures of people from around the globe such as: *National Geographic*, *Time*, or *Maryknoll Missionary Magazine*. You can also download and print a variety of pictures from the Internet.
- Scissors, one pair per every two youth
- Heavy duty masking tape
- Large room fan
- Prayer environment: Bible (marked to Matthew 22:37-39), pillar candle, unsliced loaf of bread, bowl of water, four or five packs of green sticky notes
- **Resource 1, Readings for Closing Prayer**, one for each of the eight readers
- Song for closing prayer such as “We are the World” by Michael Jackson (the remake in 2010 was made to benefit Haiti earthquake victims; available on iTunes)
- CD or MP3 player and speakers

Prepare in Advance

1. Using heavy-duty white presentation board, make three life-size cardboard cut-outs of people. You will need a man, woman, and child to volunteer to be your templates – unless you are a pretty good artist and can free-hand draw three life-

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size figures. Tape two or three boards together, depending on the size of your people, and have your human templates lay down on the boards. Use a pencil and trace around the three people to make an outline of each. Carefully, use a sharp box-cutter knife to cut out your figures.

- a. On the male figure, use a black marker to write the following quote: "Every year, 20% of Earth's people in the rich nations use 75% of the world's resources and produce 80% of the world's waste." (Source: "God's Beloved Creation" by Elizabeth Johnson in *America* magazine, April 16, 2001)
 - b. On the woman figure, write the following quote: "Because woman farmers grow more than half of all the food in developing countries, climate change affects their livelihood and their ability to support the nutritional needs of their family." (Source: Bread for the World)
 - c. On the child figure, write the following quote: "Children are among the populations that are most vulnerable to climate change, and may be the greatest victims of its impact." (Source: UNICEF)
2. Place a large room fan strategically off to one side of your meeting room. Have the fan plugged-in and ready to be turned on before your session begins.
 3. Make copies of closing prayer and invite youth to be readers.
 4. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and name tags. **Hospitality is important:** As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

Session Outline

Welcome (10 minutes)

Greet and welcome youth as they arrive to the session. Begin by explaining to participants that tonight they will be discussing the important issue of climate change and how it impacts not just the environment but how it affects the people who live on this planet. Open the discussion with these quotes:

Over the last three decades, 98 percent of all people worldwide were affected by a natural or climate-related disaster.

Developing nations are prone to experiencing the worst devastation as a result of climate-related disasters."

(Source: Catholic Relief Services)

Invite volunteers to share what information they already know about climate change.

Be sure to include the following points in your discussion with youth:

- Climate Change means a change in global weather patterns which can lead to increases in temperature and storm activity. The overwhelming body of scientific evidence demonstrates that the earth is warming.
- Climate change is happening and it is caused largely by human activity. Greenhouse gas emissions from cars, power plants, and other human activities—rather than natural variations in climate—are the primary cause of global warming. Its impacts are beginning to be felt and will worsen in the decades ahead unless we take immediate action.
- The solution to climate change will involve a broad array of technologies and policies. It will also require that we individually make changes to our current lifestyles. Basically, there is no easy answer or one solution to the problem.
- The Catholic Church, led by the pope and the bishops, considers climate change an important issue for people of faith.

(Sources: Climate Change 101: Understanding and Responding to Global Climate Change Science and Impact and Catholic Coalition on Climate Change)

What is Climate Change? (10 minutes)

Invite a volunteer to participate in a demonstration on climate change. Describe to your volunteer that you will be placing a sheet and a heavy blanket over them and you will be covering their entire body including their face. Assure your volunteer that they will still be able to breathe during the demonstration. Let your volunteer know that their job will be to verbally describe how they feel under the sheet and blanket. Explain that they will be helping you to demonstrate how greenhouse gases affect our planet. Once your volunteer is ready, lay a sheet and a heavy blanket over the person (be sure to cover their face).

Invite the rest of your group to come and stand around where your volunteer is lying. Wait about a minute and then ask the volunteer to describe what it feels like to breathe under the sheet and heavy blanket. (The volunteer should say that the air feels thicker and it is more difficult to breathe).

Next, ask your volunteer if their body temperature feels different under the sheet and blanket (they should say “yes” they feel warmer).

Ask the volunteer if they would be comfortable staying under the blanket for a long period of time. (They will most likely say “No! It is hot under here.”) After a few minutes, remove the blanket, and ask your volunteer to describe how the air feels different once the blanket is taken off.

Explain to the group that this demonstration is similar to what greenhouse gases do to our planet. Share with youth that some greenhouse gases are necessary to regulate our planet's natural environment. These gases are represented by the sheet. However, too much man-made greenhouse gases acts like a giant blanket over the earth. This blanket of gases gradually warms up the environment and disrupts the earth's natural balance – this effect is called global warming or climate change.

“Who’s Under Your Carbon Footprint?” (10 minutes)

Introduce the film by saying:

The U.S. Catholic Bishops have said “we as Catholics are called to protect people and the planet.” (seventh principle of Catholic social teaching). Our faith also teaches that caring for the environment is a moral issue because it not only affects the planet, but it also affects the people whom God created. Because we follow Jesus' example of especially caring for the poor, climate change takes on an even more urgent call. Science has shown that climate change will have the greatest impact on people living in the poorest countries. Since our modern lifestyle has helped to create this global impact, we are called to take responsibility and work to help lessen the impact of climate change on our brothers and sisters around the globe.

Show the video.

How Climate Change Especially Affects the Poor (15 minutes)

After the film, divide youth into small groups of four to six people. Distribute a package of index cards and pens or pencils to each group. Invite youth to brainstorm as many reasons they can think as to why the poor will be most impacted by climate change and then to write their answers on a separate index card. After youth have been working for a few minutes, stop the group and lead a brief group discussion on how climate change affects the poor. Use the following points:

- The very poor typically depend on natural resources for their livelihood.
- Climate change is likely to worsen hunger because farm land will be affected.
- As agricultural productivity declines, the number of farm jobs and wages will decline.
- Environmental stress many lead to political unrest in struggling countries.
- Extreme weather patterns will affect the health of the livestock that people depend on for food and transportation.
- Some poor may be forced to flee their homes to search for water, food and work.

Instruct youth to go back to their groups and continue writing ideas on their index cards. They may add the reasons you just presented if they do not already have them written down. Each group should have several index cards by the end of their allotted time.

Climate Change for the Poor is Like Living in a House of Cards (15 minutes)

Invite small groups to gather up all their index cards and pick a spokesperson to read what their small group has written on their cards.

Once each group has shared, tell participants that they will be using their index cards for a “house of cards building contest.” Each group may add 20 more index cards to their existing index cards to build their houses. The object will be to build the strongest and tallest house. They may only use index cards to build their houses, and they will have five minutes to complete their task. Warn youth that if their house falls down after time is up they will automatically lose the contest. Give groups three minutes to discuss and strategize and then officially start the contest!

After five minutes call time and see which group has the biggest house. Invite some of your other adult volunteers to judge the houses and determine a winner. As soon as your judges have announced a winning team, walk over to your strategically placed fan and turn it on without warning youth as to what you are doing. Note their reactions as their card houses all blow away!

Now, ask:

- What do you think was the purpose of this activity?
- Why did I blow down your card houses without warning?

After soliciting a few responses, provide the following information:

This is an example of what happens to the homes of people around the world. Because climate change affects the weather of our planet, the type of housing you live in will determine how well you can adapt to extreme weather changes. For example, think of the classic children’s story of the three little pigs. One had their house made of straw, one of sticks, and one of brick. When the wolf huffs and puffs and blows the house down, only the brick house remains standing.

In economic terms, having a brick house is more expensive than a straw or stick house. Throughout the world, housing of people living in poverty is often constructed of mud, bamboo, straw, or other inexpensive materials which are vulnerable to extreme weather. Think of Jesus’ teaching in Matthew (Matthew 7:24-27). Jesus reminds us that houses built on rock stand, while those built on sand do not. So many of the poor around the world literally have houses built on sand. Also, people living in poverty often cannot buy adequate insurance or keep a savings account, to respond to such emergencies.

The Catholic Response to Climate Change: Concern for the Poor (10 minutes)

Present to the group your three life-sized cut-out people with the quotes written on them. Starting with the male figure, invite a volunteer to read the quote aloud. Then say:

What words describe how you feel about that statement?

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Invite two volunteers to use markers and write the group's responses around the quote written on male cardboard figure.

Invite a second volunteer to read the quote aloud on the woman cut-out figure. Then say:

What words describe how you feel about that statement?

Invite two volunteers to use markers and write the group's responses around the quote written on woman cardboard figure.

Invite a third volunteer to read aloud the quote on the child cut-out figure. Then say:

What words describe how you feel about that statement?

Invite two volunteers to use markers and write the group's responses around the quote written on child cardboard figure.

The Human Face of Climate Change (10 minutes)

Inform youth that to conclude this session they will be creating a visual display of the human face of hunger by decorating the three cut-out people with magazine pictures.

Distribute several magazines, scissors, and glue sticks. Invite youth to cut out pictures of people from around the globe and paste them on each of the cardboard cut-out people. Paste faces of men on the male cut-out, women on the female cut-out, and children on the child cut-out. Encourage youth to search for a variety of people, races, cultures, and economic situations to paste on the cut-outs. Youth should try to cover-up any blank spaces on the cut-out people without covering up the written quotes.

Closing Prayer: Why Catholics Care (10 minutes)

Gather

Once youth have completed decorating the three cardboard cut-out people, gather them for the closing prayer. Invite a few youth to help create your prayer environment. Use the cut-out people, a loaf of bread, a bowl of water, and a few candles as your prayer environment. Place some markers and green sticky note pads near the cut-out people.

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

*Creator God,
We thank you for the glory of your creation, a mystery that surpasses our understanding. Open our hearts and minds to truly care for all of your creation through our actions and words. Help us to make life choices that show our love of creation so that the world will know Catholics care for the planet and all its inhabitants. We make our prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

Listen

Prayer Leader:

Catholics care deeply about God's creation of nature.

Reader 1:

St. Francis of Assisi, in his Canticle of Brother Sun," sings of all as brothers and sisters. He calls planet earth our mother and speaks of the sun as our brother and the moon as our sister. Francis describes the water as our sister and the wind as our brother.

Prayer Leader:

Catholics care deeply about God's creation of humanity.

Reader 2:

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us that to love our neighbor is to love everyone, including the poor. Read Matthew 22:37-39

Prayer Leader:

Catholics care deeply about the bond between nature and humanity.

Reader 3:

Our Catholic bishops write that 'we are called to protect people and the planet, living our faith in relationship with all of God's creation.'

Prayer Leader:

Catholics care about all of God's creation.

Sing "We Are the World."

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Climate change is about the future of our one human family and the future of this planet we call home. So let us pause and remember some who are in most need of our help, compassion and prayer because of climate change...

Reader 1:

We pray for the drought stricken people of Markatola, India who are faced with malnutrition and starvation due to poor yields at harvest time.”

Reader 2:

We pray for the people of San Marcos, Guatemala who in 2005 were hit hard by a hurricane that wiped out their entire crop of produce.

Reader 3:

We pray for the people of Ethiopia, who for the past several decades have seen repeated droughts, rising temperatures, and increasingly variable rainfall which is killing crops and livestock and creating extreme famine among people.

Reader 4:

We pray for the people of Honduras who in 1998 suffered the effects of hurricane Mitch which forced some 200,000 people to flee their homes because of severe flooding.

Reader 5:

We pray for people of Nicaragua who must endure frequent earthquakes, hurricanes, floods, and volcano eruptions.

Reader 6:

We pray for the indigenous people of Newtok, Alaska who are being forced to relocate their entire community due to global warming effects on the rising sea.

Reader 7:

We pray for the former residents of the Carteret Islands, who had to abandon their island due to rising sea levels.

Reader 8:

We also pray for victims of natural disasters, including the people of Japan who just this year suffered a devastating 8.9 earthquake and tsunami, and the people of Haiti who are trying to rebuild their lives after a massive earthquake while continuing to struggle with food security, poverty, and hunger.

Prayer Leader:

Who else shall we pray for this evening?
Open prayer to spontaneous prayers of youth.

Pause for a moment of silent reflection.

Go Forth

Prayer Leader:

Science teaches us that the poor have contributed the least to climate change but will suffer the most consequences. Our Catholic faith calls us to consider how our actions and decisions affect poor and vulnerable people in our country and around the globe. As disciples of Christ, we recognize that we are called to act and advocate for the “least” of those among us. St. Francis, the patron saint of ecology, offers us a model of simple living in a time of ecological devastation. Let us now take a few minutes to silently reflect on a few simple things we can each do to help heal God’s creation.

Note to Leader: You might offer a few examples such as starting a Care for Creation club in their parish or school, turning off the water while we brush our teeth, or walking to school rather than driving.

After a few minutes of silence, say:

Let us end our prayer this evening by each of us making a personal commitment to remember the human face of climate change. I invite you to come forward one at a time and write an action you will commit to doing this week on a green sticky note. After writing down an action, you are invited to post your green sticky note on one of the cardboard cut-out people as a symbol of your commitment to help the world.

Websites and links in this session were accessed successfully on August 11, 2011.

Susan Searle is adjunct faculty for the Center for Ministry Development’s Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies Program, YouthLeader, and Just5Days programs. Susan is also an Ambassador for the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change and is available to give retreats, workshops, and presentations on this important issue to your parish youth ministry. Contact her at: smsearle@msn.com.

Resource 1

Readings for Closing Prayer

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Climate change is about the future of our one human family and the future of this planet we call home. So let us pause and remember some who are in most need of our help, compassion and prayer because of climate change...

Reader 1:

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A Carbon Footprint

By Jane Angha



Purpose

This 90-minute session explains some of the science behind climate change, busts myths, and helps participants face climate change with faith and reason, science, and prudence. Youth have an opportunity to create positive solutions and action steps to impact their homes, schools and communities.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 7:00 p.m. | Welcome and Climate Change Bingo |
| 7:15 p.m. | Opening Prayer |
| 7:30 p.m. | Footprints Tells the Story |
| 7:40 p.m. | Large Group Sharing |
| 8:00 p.m. | Science Meets Faith |
| 8:10 p.m. | Closing Prayer |
| 8:20 p.m. | Thank You and Announcements |
| 8:30 p.m. | Good Night! |

Extend the Session Ideas

1. Download a carbon footprint calculator for each participant to take. Here's one that can be downloaded: <http://the-carbon-footprint-calculator.en.softonic.com/download>.

Most carbon footprint calculators are done online:

- a. Carbon Footprint Calculator at: <http://www.carbonfootprint.com/calculator.aspx>.
 - b. Center for Sustainable Economy at: http://myfootprint.org/en/visitor_information/.
 - c. Interfaith Power & Light: <http://coolcongregations.com/carboncalculator/>
2. Download the "Climate Justice Assembly" game, including script and PowerPoint, from CAFOD (the official Catholic aid agency for England and Wales) at <http://www.cafod.org.uk/resources/secondary/climate-environment/panels/resources-to-download/climate-justice-assembly-and-game>.
 3. Invite a Catholic Climate Ambassador or a speaker from a local college, diocesan social justice office, or a grassroots movement in your community to talk about how to reduce one's carbon footprint. Find an ambassador near you by visiting

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the Catholic Climate Covenant website:

<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/about-us/catholic-climate-ambassadors/>.

Materials Needed

- Video, *A Way Forward: Facing Climate Change*. Download from <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/environment/global-warming-environment/way-forward-climate.html>.
- Laptop computer, LCD projector and speakers
Note to Leader: Your audio/visual set up needs to be adequate for everyone to be able to hear/see the movie clips.
- Bingo prize, such as a reusable water bottle, a lunch tote, shopping bag, fair trade chocolate or coffee, glass mug etc. Have one prize for each game you play.
- Washable markers, two for each small group of five participants
- Brown packaging paper or butcher paper cut into 3-foot lengths, one for each small group of five participants
- Scissors
- ["Here I Am"](#) by Tom Booth (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- ["Our God Reigns"](#) by Leonard E. Smith Jr. (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
- CD or MP3 player and speakers
- Bible, marked to Isaiah 44:24 and to Psalm 8:3
- Table, cloth, pillar candle, lightstick or matches
- newsprint
- **Resource 1, Climate Change Bingo** (see #1 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Resource 2, Opening Prayer**, three copies (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Resource 3, A Prayer for Simple Living**, nine copies (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Handout 1, Carbon Footprints – Serious Impact**, one for each participant
- **Handout 2, FYI – Be Informed!**, one for each participant
- Pens or pencils, one for each participant
- "Wall of Hope" sign (see #5 in Prepare in Advance)

Prepare in Advance

1. Using the information from **Resource 1**, make climate change bingo cards for the opening activity. If possible, laminate the cards so they are reusable.
2. Invite five youth to read for the opening prayer. Give Readers 1, and 3 each a copy of **Resource 2, Opening Prayer**. Let Readers 4 and 5 know which Scripture passages they will proclaim. Invite 8 youth to be readers for the closing prayer. Give each a copy of **Resource 3, A Prayer for Simple Living**. Invite a musician to lead music for prayer.

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3. Invite older high school youth, college students or adults to be group facilitators.
4. Divide participants into groups of 5 for the small group sessions. This can be done by placing a colored dot or number on their nametag as they arrive.
5. Prepare a sign using butcher paper that says “Wall of Hope” (this will be posted on a wall for the closing prayer).

Session Outline

Welcome and Climate Change Bingo (15 minutes)

Distribute a Bingo playing card and marker to each participant as they arrive. Welcome the participants and introduce the first activity by saying:

Welcome everyone! We are really excited about all we have planned and glad you will be a part of it all. Let's start by getting to know each other a little bit better and learning some of the concepts we will be learning tonight, too. We are going to play Bingo. But not just any Bingo game...Climate Change Bingo! It's just like the game we all know and love, but here is how it is a little different: all the squares are climate change words. The caller will say a word or phrase and describe it a bit. If you have that word or phrase, make an X with a marker on the space. The caller will choose how the game is played—four corners or traditional. Get your cards and markers and let's go!

Give each winner a prize.

Opening Prayer (15 minutes)

Gather

Invite the participants to gather in the prayer space. Sing “Here I Am.”

Prayer Leader:

This evening is all about us—our lives, how we are living, and what impact humanity is having on the earth...literally. This night is about learning, reflecting, and finding hope in our future and the future of the planet. We come together as a faith community and so we begin with prayer. We are a people, set apart and sealed at our baptism with the sign of the cross. We are called to live differently and to set the course for others to follow. And so we pray, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Indicate to the first reader to begin.

Reader 1: Lord of all creation, we are grateful for the gift of life. The amazing diversity of all creation astounds us and holds us mesmerized. We marvel at a spider's web, the birth of a child, the growth of an acorn into a beautiful oak tree.

Reader 2: When we see the countless species of fish, animals, plants, and trees, we are brought to our knees. Your vision, creation, and design are beyond our imagination or comprehension.

Reader 3: Teach us tonight how best to care for the earth and remedy the scars she has from over-consumption, misuse, lack of knowledge, and sin. May we marvel like the prophets of old and sing your praises – and enjoy a world that will sustain us for generations to come.

Listen

After a few moments of silence, indicate that Reader 4 should begin.

Reader 4: Isaiah 44:24

Allow a few moments of silence and then indicate that Reader 5 should begin.

Reader 5: Psalm 8:3

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Inspire us Lord, that we might in turn inspire others to find new and creative ways to steward the earth. We pray all this in the name of Jesus our friend and brother.
Amen.

Send Forth

To close the prayer, invite everyone to sing “Our God Reigns.”

Footprints Tell the Story (10 minutes)

Invite participants to get into small groups of five. Introduce this part of the session by saying:

Every day in the news we are looking at images in nature that cause us to stop and think. In the past few years, we have seen hurricanes, tornadoes, drought, and floods. There are scientists who say this is normal and reflects the cycles of nature. There are others, though, who are trying to get the attention of the world to say that something is not right with the earth and atmosphere, and we have to pay attention. We have seen lots of work in the area of going green, recycling, and being more mindful of using earth’s resources, but we often are confused about the end goal. Is this just a fad, or will all these activities really help save our planet?

We need to find out for sure and become knowledgeable about climate change. If you are wondering why it is a church thing... well, Earth was and is a gift to us from God. We were given the responsibility of caring for it and making sure it is tended

well for generations to come. So it is a matter of faith, a matter of science, and a matter of urgency.

We are going to get into groups of five to take a look at a challenging video on climate change that describes our carbon footprint on earth. After the video, you'll have time to talk about this with your small group.

Show the video, *A Way Forward: Facing Climate Change*, a video by National Geographic.

Large Group Sharing (20 minutes)

After watching the video, distribute pens or pencils and **Handout 1, Carbon Footprints – Serious Impact**, and invite small groups to discuss the questions. Allow several minutes for discussion. Then invite all the groups to share the key insights they got from answering the questions, including what they think is the biggest concern facing the earth. As they share their concerns, list them on newsprint. After all groups have had a chance to share, introduce the next part of the session by saying:

Thank you all for the information you shared with us. This list of concerns is rather overwhelming isn't it? Well, that's the last thing we want it to be for us. As we began in prayer tonight, we acknowledged that the earth is a gift to us from God, and God is very aware of what is occurring because of human behavior. We are not alone in this. For the rest of our time together, we will learn how our Catholic faith addresses the difficult challenges we face with climate change. We want to find out how our living...our carbon footprint...can leave less of an impact on the world. We want to leave a legacy of a different kind!

Science Meets Faith (10 minutes)

Provide some background on the Catholic Church's participation in the climate change conversations by saying:

You might be surprised to learn how much our Catholic Church has written and taught about global climate change. Our own Pope Benedict XVI, in his message for World Day of Peace in 2007, challenged us to strengthen "that covenant between human beings and the environment" which God wants us to have through prudent actions which mirror God's love. Prudent actions are those which are carefully thought out and have a good moral purpose. The bishops in their Statement on Climate Change say, "Prudence is intelligence applied to our actions...a thoughtful, deliberate, and reasoned basis for taking or avoiding action to achieve a moral good."

Because so many environmental disasters hurt the poorest among us more than any other group, our U.S. Catholic Bishops have asked us to "reflect the genuine participation and concerns of those most affected and least able to bear the burdens" as we offer aid and support to them. So whenever we talk about how to care for God's creation, we should also be talking about how to care for the poor who are the victims of climate change.

In 2010, Pope Benedict called on us to solve the problems we face with our environment, not just because creation is in dire straits, but because we are called to achieve “world-wide solidarity inspired by the values of charity, justice, and the common good.” In other words, what we decide to do to care for creation must always consider what is best for everyone, not just what is best for us.

So our Catholic Church guides us to take prudent actions to care for creation, to protect the poor who are affected deeply by climatic disaster, and to always keep the common good in mind so that we live in solidarity with each other and with our environment.

In your small group, this time, you will be making a proclamation—a letter to the good people of [insert your school, church or community name]. On this scroll will be a list of all the things you can do to eliminate your carbon footprint... to lower your consumption of the earth’s resources...so that you can live up to the challenges which our Catholic Church gives us.

Review the directions with them:

In a moment, you’ll be asked to send one person from your group to the front of the room to get the supplies you’ll need to make your proclamation. Each group will create a faith-based statement or proclamation and then below it list all the ways you will fulfill that. You will have 15 minutes. We will close with prayer where you will be invited to share your scroll.

Invite someone from each group to get the supplies for their group: one or two markers, two sheets of scratch paper, a pen or two, and a “scroll” (sheet of newsprint or butcher paper). After 15 minutes, call time and invite participants to gather in the prayer space.

Note to Leader: As teams are working, get the prayer space ready. Light candles, make room for readers and scroll holders.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Prayer Leader:

Our closing prayer tonight reflects that we have learned the seriousness of the problem of climate change and how our lives and lifestyles have contributed to it. We learned tonight that there are things we can do to stop and reverse climate change...and that is by lowering our carbon footprints. This will be the challenge of a lifetime.

We are a hopeful people though. Our Catholic faith reminds us that we are not alone. God loves and cares for us and is with us in our struggle for the earth. As Pope Benedict wrote, “My dear friends, God’s creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity.”

(Message for World Youth Day, June 2008)

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As each prayer is read, we invite a small group to bring their scroll forward and tape it to the Wall of Hope for all to see. Let us pray...

After the readers have completed the prayer, invite participants to walk around and read the Wall of Hope to conclude the prayer experience.

Thank You and Announcements (5 minutes)

Thank everyone for coming and all those who participated in the evening as musicians, small group leaders, readers etc. Give each person a copy of **Handout 2, FYI – Be Informed!**, to take home and share with their families. Make any needed announcements of upcoming programs and events.

All websites and links were accessed successfully on August 8, 2011.

This session was written by Jane Angha, Project Coordinator for Young Neighbors in Action at the Center for Ministry Development, as part of a project with the Catholic Coalition for Climate Change. Jane also teaches the Justice & Service course in the Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies Program.

Resource 1

Climate Change Bingo

Go to <http://www.bingocardcreator.com>. This website allows you to create your own set of Bingo cards. Below is the list of words needed to create your cards on Climate Change. Each person gets a laminated card and a washable marker. (Consider pointing out that you laminated the cards to make them reusable so they don't just become trash after the session.) You will need one caller who can use the list below to play the game. Just cut apart and put in a basket. Pick one at a time. Have a prize or two ready for the winners!

1. Shop farmer's markets
2. Compost
3. Buy items with less packaging
4. Carbon footprint
5. Choose renewable resources
6. Fix leaky faucets
7. Greenhouse gases
8. Turn lights out
9. Repair not replace
10. Ride the bus
11. Generate less waste
12. Reduce consumption
13. Climate change
14. Buy local often
15. Buy less
16. Reduce
17. Unplug appliances
18. Clean without chemicals
19. Read Scripture
20. Reuse
21. Read Church documents
22. Recycle
23. Eco-friendly packaging
24. Eat vegetarian often
25. Carpool

Resource 2

Opening Prayer

Reader 1:

Lord of all creation, we are grateful for the gift of life. The amazing diversity of all creation astounds us and holds us mesmerized. We marvel at a spider's web, the birth of a child, the growth of an acorn into a beautiful oak tree.

Reader 2:

When we see the countless species of fish, animals, plants, and trees, we are brought to our knees. Your vision, creation, and design are beyond our imagination or comprehension.

Reader 3:

Teach us tonight how best to care for the earth and remedy the scars she has from over-consumption, misuse, lack of knowledge, and sin. May we marvel like the prophets of old and sing your praises – and enjoy a world that will sustain us for generations to come.

Resource 3

A Prayer for Simple Living

by Fr. Jim O'Keefe, CAFOD

Reader 1:

We know we are beginning to live simply when we glimpse that we are content with less; when we discover we don't have to compete with other people in relation to what they have or what they have achieved.

Reader 2:

We know we are beginning to live simply when we find ourselves delighting in little things; when we can affirm the achievements of other people of any age and background; when we appreciate the gifts of others; when we find ourselves valuing the present moment and worrying less about tomorrow and its mysteries.

Reader 3:

We live sustainably when we value what we have and need, not what others want to sell us. We recycle what is not needed; we do not recycle relationships and commitments that underpin our very existence.

Reader 4:

We know we live sustainably when we find ourselves increasingly sad about the destruction of the created world that has been given to us as a gift by God.

Reader 5:

We know we are deepening our commitment to live in solidarity when we are hurt by the sheer lack of respect for our brothers and sisters throughout the world; when we weep more easily as we appreciate the plight of others on whatever margin they live.

Reader 6:

We know we are deepening our commitment to live in solidarity when we don't just observe, don't just complain about or analyze problems, but find ourselves ready to commit to changing the circumstances and removing the obstacles to the fullness of life of our sisters and brothers – then we are beginning to glimpse “living in solidarity.”

Reader 7:

Living simply is not primarily about changing anyone else or anything outside ourselves. It is to discover that I am indeed made in the image of God, I am sustained by God, and I need nothing else.

Reader 8:

A Carbon Footprint

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This awareness will mean that I make different choices about what I need, what matters, what I care about, what I commit myself to. These are huge insights...and huge risks... but what wonderful ideas!

Prayer Leader:

Lord, these scrolls filled with hope and creativity will remind us that you are in the midst of our world in crisis. We know that you have gifted us with ideas, creativity, determination and courage. May we use those gifts to help renew the earth so we can leave a healthy planet for generations yet to come. We pray this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

(This prayer was used with permission of Catholic Climate Change and CAFOD.)

Handout 1

Carbon Footprints—Serious Impact Small Group Activity

Directions: After watching the video, answer the questions below.

Questions:

1. What is the main point of this video?
2. What is the biggest concern for the earth? For humanity?
3. What concerns **you** the most?
4. What does faith have to do with this issue?
5. What can the church do to help with the problem?
6. What is one thing you could do today to help solve the problem?

Handout 2

FYI – Be Informed!

Some ideas and information from eHow.com

- Climate Change: a series of events in the earth's environment resulting from increasing global temperatures.
- Greenhouse Effect: Greenhouse gases, such as carbon dioxide, help keep the earth warm. They float in the atmosphere, the blanket of gases that surrounds the earth, and allow the sun's warming rays through to the earth's surface. When these rays reflect back up, the greenhouse gases keep the warmth from the rays inside the earth's atmosphere. This is how the planet stays warm.
- Greenhouse Gases: These gases are not in themselves a bad thing. Earth's greenhouse effect is what keeps the planet warm, and allows life to exist, even for the half of Earth that isn't facing the sun at any given point in time. Scientists believe that climate change is the result of mankind producing too much greenhouse gas. This excessive amount keeps too much of the warmth from the sun bottled up underneath the atmosphere, and the added warmth is causing a number of problems for the climate.
- Carbon Footprints: An individual's carbon footprint is the amount of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas that the individual's activities produce. These activities add this greenhouse gas to the atmosphere. These activities include things like driving in a car, flying in a plane, and using electricity in their homes. Most power in the United States is provided by plants that burn coal, which produces greenhouse gases. While leaving a light on doesn't seem like it is creating greenhouse gases, if the power is coming from plants that burn fossil fuels, which produce greenhouse gases, then it is.

Read more: [Carbon Footprint Facts for Kids | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/info_7972220_carbon-footprint-kids.html#ixzz1Qn5QCeiq)

http://www.ehow.com/info_7972220_carbon-footprint-kids.html#ixzz1Qn5QCeiq

Simple things you can do to slow down climate change:

Recycle, eat less meat, buy items with less packaging, reduce your consumption, drink from reusable water bottles, generate less waste, ride the bus, shop locally, carpool, clean without chemicals, repair, don't replace, fix leaky faucets and windows, use cloth shopping bags, compost, turn lights out, unplug appliances, cook on burners that fit your pan sizes, take shorter showers...

Share this message with others!

A Carbon Footprint

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Climate Change: Our Church Has Something to Say

By Joan Weber



Purpose

As people of faith, Catholics believe the issue of climate change is not just about politics, economics, or interest groups, but it is primarily about the protection of God's creation. Climate change is a moral issue for people of faith because it makes the lives of poor people more vulnerable. Our faith calls us to act and advocate for the "least" among us. This 90-minute session introduces youth to the Catholic response to climate change and to highlight how the global issue especially impacts the lives of those who are already struggling with poverty.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|---------|--|
| 7:00 pm | Welcome / What Does Faith Have to Do with It? |
| 7:05 pm | Opening Prayer: God Saw That It Was Good |
| 7:10 pm | Jeopardy: Catholics and Climate |
| 7:30 pm | Exploring Church Teaching |
| 8:00 pm | Teaching Church Teaching |
| 8:20 pm | Closing Prayer: Care for All of God's Creation |
| 8:30 pm | Good Night! |

Extend the Session Ideas

1. Bring in a speaker from the diocese or a faith-based organization to go deeper into Church teaching with the young people (or see if a Catholic Climate Ambassador lives near you or is available: <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/about-us/catholic-climate-ambassadors/>).
2. Send your young people on a mission to interview people in their parish or Catholic high school on the following questions, then report back to the large group what they discover:
 - a. Would you describe our (parish/school) as environmentally friendly?
 - b. What are we, as an institution/faith community, doing to care for God's creation?
 - c. How are we sharing the teaching of the Church about care for God's creation with our parishioners/students?

Materials Needed

- Prayer table with Bible (opened to Psalm 19:1-6), globe, cross, pillar candle, and matches or lightstick
- Laptop computer, LCD projector, and screen or blank wall if using a PowerPoint presentation

- **Resource 1, Opening Prayer**, seven copies for the readers
- **Handout 1, Catholic Principles on Climate Change**, copy-doubled, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- **Handout 2, Vatican Messages on Climate Change**, copy-doubled, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- **Handout 3, U.S. Bishops' Messages on Climate Change**, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- **Handout 4, Renewing the Earth – An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching**, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- **Handout 5, Ten Commandments for the Environment**, copy-doubled, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- **Handout 6, The Catechism and the Environment**, copy-doubled, enough for one-sixth of the participants
- Supplies for the activity: flip camera(s), MP3 player, newsprint, markers, scissors, tape, glue, colored construction paper, yarn, etc., laptop computer

Prepare in Advance

1. Invite eight youth to proclaim Scripture for the opening prayer, and give them a copy of **Resource 1, Opening Prayer: God Saw It Was Good**. Have them ready to take their places around the outskirts of the group, “surrounding” those who gather.
2. Choose slides and create a PowerPoint presentation for the opening prayer which includes pictures of creation in the order in which they are proclaimed in Genesis 1.
3. Have your supply table in a readily accessible place in the room.
4. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and name tags. **Hospitality is important:** As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

Session Outline

Welcome (5 minutes)

Greet the young people and invite them to be seated. Explain that you are going to do a “Stand If” activity with them. You will read several statements, and they are to stand for each of the statements which fits them. The statements are:

1. Stand if you got enough sleep last night.
2. Stand if you would eat chocolate cake for breakfast.
3. Stand if you love homework.
4. Stand if you care about the environment.
5. Stand if you share responsibility for harmful climate changes.
6. Stand if you think being Catholic affects how you treat the earth.
7. Stand if you think hurting creation is a sin.

Continue with the following, using these or your own words:

Tonight we are going to look at the reality of climate change through the lens of our Catholic faith. Sometimes we separate science and faith, yet Jesus challenges us to look at everything happening in our world—and our part in it—through his eyes. As disciples, we are called to care for God’s creation and take responsibility to protect our environment.

Let’s begin by praying with the first chapter of Genesis—the account of God creating the earth.

Opening Prayer: God Saw That It Was Good (5 minutes)

Invite the adolescents who are proclaiming Scripture to take their places. Dim the lights. Invite the participants to be part of the proclamation of the Word by responding to each reader with: “And God saw that it was good.”

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Creator God,
We come to you with gratitude for this beautiful world which you have shared with us. Help us to be good stewards of the resources of the earth. Help us to respect the earth as a gift from you to be cherished, not exploited. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus and in your Spirit. Amen.

Listen

Note to Leader: If you created a PowerPoint presentation to accompany the prayer, advance the slides as the readers proclaim the Word.

Reader 1:

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light.

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 2:

Then God said, “Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other.”

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 3:

Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear."

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 4:

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it."

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 5:

Then God said, "Let the water teem with an abundance of living creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky."

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 6:

Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds."

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 7:

Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground." God created man in his image; in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Reader 8:

Thus the heavens and the earth and all their array were completed. Since on the seventh day God was finished with the work he had been doing, he rested on the seventh day from all the work he had undertaken. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work he had done in creation.

All: **And God saw that it was good.**

Send Forth

Prayer Leader:

Creator God, you fashioned all of nature and declared it good. Help us to appreciate the world which you made holy, and to be good stewards of our earth. Open our hearts today (tonight) to learn what our Catholic faith calls us to do to cultivate and care for creation. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, and in your Spirit. Amen.

Jeopardy: Catholics and Climate (20 minutes)

Introduce the Jeopardy game with the following:

Before we explore what our Catholic faith has to say about climate change, let's see how much you already know. We're going to play Catholics and Climate Jeopardy.

Divide the group into teams of five or six. Tell them that they are going to play as a team. When you give the answer to a question, they are to confer and when they agree on the question, one of the team members should stand. Whichever team stands first gets to offer their question. If they get it wrong, the second team to stand gets to try. Take about 15 minutes to play the game. Keep track of points, and announce the winning team at the end of the game.

Exploring Church Teaching (30 minutes)

Introduce the instructions for small group work by saying:

Our planet is experiencing changes which are harmful to the earth and to present and future generations. Yet since the very first book of the Bible was written, we have been taught that God wants us to care for the earth. Today our Church has named care for God's creation as one of the seven basic principles of our social teaching. Church leaders have pointed out that it's not just an issue of damaging the earth. The poor are particularly vulnerable to the climate changes caused by abuse of the environment.

In this session, we are going to examine some of the recent statements of our Church which can guide us in making good choices in how we live on this planet. Each small group will receive excerpts from a particular Church document or Church leader. Your job is to read your excerpts and then share what strikes each of you the most. Then discuss what one teaching or concept you think teenagers of today need to know.

Once you have chosen your one idea, find a way to teach this concept to your peers. You can do an activity, create a Flip video, do a skit or song, create a **Facebook** posting, or anything else which would help to get the message out.

You will have about 25 minutes to read your quotes and create your plan. Try to make your presentation/activity no longer than three to three and a half minutes. Let me know if you have any questions during this time. And feel free to use any items on the supply table for your work.

We will share your ideas with each other when we finish.

Divide the large group into six smaller groups. Give each group one of the resource sheets with quotes from Church leadership (**Handouts 2-7**).

Give the groups time to do their work. Circulate around the room in case any groups have questions or seem stuck. Give a time check when there are ten minutes left, and again when there are five minutes left.

Teaching Church Teaching (20 minutes)

Invite participants back into the large group. Invite each of the six groups to present its work to the other groups. Allow for feedback if time permits.

Conclude this activity with the following:

Thank you for sharing! Knowing that our Church offers us guidelines and principles for making decisions about how we treat creation can help us make good and holy decisions.

Let's take our insights to prayer.

Closing Prayer: Care for All of God's Creation (10 minutes)

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Creator God, we are so grateful to you for creation, for all of the things which you have trusted to our care. Send us forth to listen more attentively to our Church as we strive to be better stewards of the earth. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Listen

Invite the reader to proclaim Psalm 19:1-6. Allow a few moments of silence after the reading.

Respond

Prayer Leader:

Let's respond to the Good News of the glory of God's creation. Our response will be:
God's creation is one, and it is good.

We pray for the wisdom to stop doing those things which cause climate change.
God's creation is one, and it is good.

We pray for the courage to challenge each other to be good stewards of creation.
God's creation is one, and it is good.

We pray for the holiness to see the hand of God in all of nature.
God's creation is one, and it is good.

Send Forth

Prayer Leader:

Loving God, help us to always remember what Pope Benedict has said—that your creation is one and it is good. Amen.

Thank the young people for their participation in tonight's session.

Joan Weber has been a fulltime staff member of the Center for Ministry Development's Certificate since 1995. She teaches the Justice and Service Course in the Youth Ministry Certificate Program, and is a Coordinator for Young Neighbors in Action, CMD's service-learning experience for teens.

Resource 1

Opening Prayer: God Saw It Was Good

Gather

Prayer Leader: Creator God, we come to you with gratitude for this beautiful world which you have shared with us. Help us to be good stewards of the resources of the earth. Help us to respect the earth as a gift from you to be cherished, not exploited. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus and in your Spirit. Amen.

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Creator God, we come to you with gratitude for this beautiful world which you have shared with us. Help us to be good stewards of the resources of the earth. Help us to respect the earth as a gift from you to be cherished, not exploited. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus and in your Spirit. Amen.

Listen

Reader 1:

After each reading, please respond with "And God saw that it was good."

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless wasteland, and darkness covered the abyss, while a mighty wind swept over the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

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Creator God, you fashioned all of nature and declared it good. Help us to appreciate the world which you made holy, and to be good stewards of our earth. Open our hearts today (tonight) to learn what our Catholic faith calls us to do to cultivate and care for creation. We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus, and in your Spirit. Amen.

Catholic Principles on Climate Change

Catholic teaching on climate change embraces the principles of prudence, poverty, and the common good. These three principles form the foundation of the work of the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change.

1. Prudence

“Prudence is intelligence applied to our actions ... a thoughtful, deliberate, and reasoned basis for taking or avoiding action to achieve a moral good.”

—U.S. Bishops

The Coalition accepts overwhelming scientific consensus about climate change. There is nearly unanimous agreement that human actions are creating a warming planet. As stewards of all creation, we must identify wise, careful actions that will reverse this climate change and avoid its potentially dangerous impact on all life—especially human life.

State and local Catholic leaders can play a central role in bringing together scientists, theologians, business and labor leaders, government officials, human service providers and other stakeholders to shape a wise and careful approach consistent with our principles. With such leadership, the Catholic community will answer God’s call to be faithful stewards.

2. Poverty

“... any successful strategy must also reflect the genuine participation and concerns of those most affected and least able to bear the burdens ... [this] is a moral and political necessity ...”

—U.S. Bishops

Natural disasters take the greatest toll on poor people. Inadequate transportation, lack of insurance, poor housing, and little if any cash reserves put them on the edge of the precipice. To survive severe storms, prolonged droughts, extended heat waves and other climate-related events, these vulnerable sisters and brothers must receive assistance—both public and private.

The Coalition seeks to find constructive ways to approach climate change from the bottom up. We strive to bring the voice of the poor to the public debate about climate change and ensure that resources are available to the most vulnerable.

3. The Common Good

“Responses to global climate change should reflect our interdependence and common responsibility for the future of our planet. Individual nations must measure their own self-interest against the greater common good and contribute equitably to global solutions.”

– U.S. Bishops

Climate change provides an opportunity to act with courage and creativity as individuals, as people of faith, as a nation. As a wealthy nation and as the top contributor to greenhouse gases, we in the United States must help to shape responses that serve not only our own interests but those of the entire human family. The Coalition assists the Catholic community in linking personal stewardship and care for creation with our moral responsibilities to practice solidarity.

Source: www.catholicsandclimatechange.org/church_teaching/index.html

Vatican Messages on Climate Change

“At a time of world food shortage, of financial turmoil, of old and new forms of poverty, of disturbing climate change, of violence and deprivation which force many to leave their homelands in search of a less precarious form of existence, of the ever-present threat of terrorism, of growing fears over the future, it is urgent to rediscover grounds for hope. Let no one draw back from this peaceful battle that has been launched by Christ’s Resurrection. For as I said earlier, Christ is looking for men and women who will help him to affirm his victory using his own weapons: the weapons of justice and truth, mercy, forgiveness and love.”

– Pope Benedict XVI, *Urbi et Orbi*, Easter 2009

“The brutal consumption of creation begins where God is not, where matter is henceforth only material for us, where we ourselves are the ultimate demand, where the whole is merely our property and we consume it for ourselves alone ... I think, therefore, that true and effective initiatives to prevent the waste and destruction of creation can be implemented and developed, understood and lived, only where creation is considered as beginning with God.”

– Pope Benedict XVI, August 2008

“... make the responsibilities visible so that we may respond to this great challenge: to rediscover the Face of the Creator in Creation, to rediscover in the Creator's presence our responsibilities for his Creation, which he has entrusted to us, to form the ethical capacity for a lifestyle that we must adopt if we wish to tackle the problems of this situation [of climate change] and if we really want to reach positive solutions.

“Do not be fooled by those who see you as just another consumer in a market of undifferentiated possibilities, where choice itself becomes the good, novelty usurps beauty, and subjective experience displaces truth...”

“My dear friends, God’s creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity.”

– Pope Benedict XVI at World Youth Day, June 2008

“Prudence does not mean failing to accept responsibilities and postponing decisions; it means being committed to making joint decisions after pondering responsibly the road to be taken, decisions aimed at strengthening that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying.

"If the protection of the environment involves costs, they should be justly distributed, taking due account of the different levels of development of various countries and the need for solidarity with future generations."

– Pope Benedict XVI, World Day of Peace Message, December 2007

U.S. Bishops' Messages on Climate Change

Bishops' Statement on Climate Change (2001)

Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good

“As people of faith, we are convinced that “the earth is the Lord's and all it holds.” (Ps 24:1) Our Creator has given us the gift of creation: the air we breathe, the water that sustains life, the fruits of the land that nourish us, and the entire web of life without which human life cannot flourish. All of this God created and found “very good.” We believe our response to global climate change should be a sign of our respect for God's creation.”

“At its core, global climate change is not about economic theory or political platforms, nor about partisan advantage or interest group pressures. It is about the future of God's creation and the one human family.”

“The virtue of prudence is paramount in addressing climate change. This virtue is not only a necessary one for individuals in leading morally good lives, but is also vital to the moral health of the larger community. Prudence is intelligence applied to our actions. It allows us to discern what constitutes the common good in a given situation. Prudence requires a deliberate and reflective process that aids in the shaping of the community's conscience. Prudence not only helps us identify the principles at stake in a given issue, but also moves us to adopt courses of action to protect the common good. Prudence is not, as popularly thought, simply a cautious and safe approach to decisions. Rather, it is a thoughtful, deliberate, and reasoned basis for taking or avoiding action to achieve a moral good.”

“Now we face two central moral questions:

1. How are we to fulfill God's call to be stewards of creation in an age when we may have the capacity to alter that creation significantly, and perhaps irrevocably?
2. How can we as a “family of nations” exercise stewardship in a way that respects and protects the integrity of God's creation and provides for the common good, as well as for economic and social progress based on justice?”

“Responses to global climate change should reflect our interdependence and common responsibility for the future of our planet. Individual nations must measure their own self-interest against the greater common good and contribute equitably to global solutions.”

Renewing the Earth— An Invitation to Reflection and Action on Environment in Light of Catholic Social Teaching

U.S. Bishops' Statement from 1991

“Our mistreatment of the natural world diminishes our own dignity and sacredness, not only because we are destroying resources that future generations of humans need, but because we are engaging in actions that contradict what it means to be human. Our tradition calls us to protect the life and dignity of the human person, and it is increasingly clear that this task cannot be separated from the care and defense of all of creation.”

“It is to the Creator of the universe, then, that we are accountable for what we do or fail to do to preserve and care for the earth and all its creatures.”

“By preserving natural environments, by protecting endangered species, by laboring to make human environments compatible with local ecology, by employing appropriate technology, and by carefully evaluating technological innovations as we adopt them, we exhibit respect for creation and reverence for the Creator.”

“Created things belong not to the few, but to the entire human family.”

“As individuals, as institutions, as a people, we need a change of heart to preserve and protect the planet for our children and for generations yet unborn.”

“The whole human race suffers as a result of environmental blight, and generations yet unborn will bear the price for our failure to act today.”

Ten Commandments for the Environment

Woodeene Koenig-Bricker's book on Pope Benedict XVI speaking out for creation and justice

"The Bible lays out the fundamental moral principles of how to confront the ecological question. **The human person, made in God's image, is superior to all other earthly creatures, which should in turn be used responsibly.** Christ's Incarnation and His teachings testify to the value of nature: Nothing that exists in this world is outside the divine plan of Creation and Redemption." (p. 27)

"The social teaching of the Church recalls two fundamental points. **We should not reduce nature to a mere instrument to be manipulated and exploited. Nor should we make nature an absolute value,** or put it above the dignity of the human person." (p. 41)

"**The question of the environment entails the whole planet,** as it is a collective good. Our responsibility toward ecology extends to future generations." (p. 51)

"It is necessary to confirm both the primacy of ethics and the rights of man over technology, thus preserving human dignity. **The central point of reference for all scientific and technical applications must be respect for the human person,** who in turn should treat the other created beings with respect." (p. 65)

"**Nature must not be regarded as a reality that is divine in itself, removed from human action.** It is, rather, a gift offered by our Creator to the human community, given to human intelligence and moral responsibility. It follows, then, that it is not illicit to modify the ecosystem, so long as this is done within the context of a respect for its own order and beauty, and taking into consideration the utility of every creature." (p. 77)

"Ecological questions highlight the need to achieve a greater harmony both between measures designed to promote economic development and those directed to preserving the ecology, and between national and international policies. **Economic development, moreover, needs to take into consideration the integrity and rhythm of nature, because natural resources are limited.** And all economic activity that uses natural resources should also include the costs of safeguarding the environment into the calculations of the overall costs of its activity." (p. 89)

"Concern for the environment means that we should actively work for the integral development of the poorest regions. **The goods of this world have been created by God to be wisely used by all. These goods should be shared, in a just and charitable**

manner. The principle of the universal destiny of goods offers a fundamental orientation to deal with the complex relationship between ecology and poverty.” (p. 101)
“**Collaboration, by means of world-wide agreements, backed up by international law, is necessary to protect the environment.** Responsibility toward the environment needs to be implemented in an adequate way at the juridical level. These laws and agreements should be guided by the demands of the common good.” (p. 115)

“Lifestyles should be oriented according to the principles of sobriety, temperance, and self-discipline, both at the personal and social levels. **People need to escape from the consumer mentality and promote methods of production that respect the created order, as well as satisfying the basic needs of all.** This change of lifestyle would be helped by a greater awareness of the interdependence that ties together all the inhabitants of the earth.” (p. 125)

“**A spiritual response must be given to environmental questions, inspired by the conviction that creation is a gift that God has placed in the hands of mankind, to be used responsibly and with loving care.** People’s fundamental orientation toward the created world should be one of gratitude and thankfulness. The world, in fact, leads people back to the mystery of God who has created it and continues to sustain it. If God is forgotten, nature is emptied of its deepest meaning and left impoverished.” (p. 135)

The Catechism and the Environment

“Our Creed begins with the creation of heaven and earth, for creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God’s work.” (198)

“Creation is the foundation of ‘all God’s saving plans,’ the ‘beginning of the history of salvation’ that culminates in Christ.” (280)

“Creation is the common work of the Holy Trinity.” (292)

“The world was made for the glory of God. St. Bonaventure explains that God created all things ‘not to increase his glory, but to show it forth and to communicate it’.” (293)

“Because creation comes forth from God’s goodness, it shares in that goodness – ‘And God saw that it was good...very good’.” (299)

“Use of the mineral, vegetable, and animal resources of the universe cannot be divorced from respect for moral imperatives.” (2415)

“There is a *solidarity among all creatures* arising from the fact that all have the same Creator and are all ordered to his glory.” (344)

“God speaks to man through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to man’s intelligence that he can read there traces of its Creator (cf. Wisdom 13:1; Romans 1:19f; Acts 14:17). Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both his greatness and his nearness.” (1147)

“Those *responsible for business enterprises* are responsible to society for the economic and ecological effects of their operations.” (2432)

“In his use of things man should regard the external goods he legitimately owns not merely as exclusive to himself but common to others also, in the sense that they can benefit others as well as himself. The ownership of any property makes its holder a steward of Providence.” (2404)

“Those who hold goods for use and consumption should use them with moderation, reserving the better part for guests, for the sick and the poor.” (2405)

“Man’s dominion over inanimate and other living beings granted by the Creator is not absolute; it is limited by concern for the quality of life of his neighbor, including generations to come; it requires a religious respect for the integrity of creation.” (2415)

“Created in God’s image and called to know and love him, the person who seeks God discovers certain ways of coming to know him. These are also called proofs for the existence of God, not in the sense of proofs in the natural sciences, but rather in the sense of ‘converging and convincing arguments,’ which allow us to attain certainty about the truth.

These ways of approaching God from creation have a twofold point of departure: the physical world and the human person.” (31)

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Climate Change: Stories of Hope

By Susan Searle



Purpose

This 90-minute session introduces youth to the pressing issue of climate change affecting our planet. However, instead of focusing on the negative and often scary issues around climate change, this session takes a more hopeful and inspiring approach. This session centers on individuals and organizations that are striving to improve environmental conditions and care for God's creation.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|-----------|--|
| 7:00 p.m. | Welcome / What is Climate Change? Watch "What is Climate Change" (see #1 in Prepare in Advance) |
| 7:10 p.m. | The Domino Effect of Climate Change |
| 7:30 p.m. | Stories of Hope <i>Optional: Watch "The Best Speech - Severn Suzuki"</i> |
| 7:45 p.m. | How to Be a Story of Hope: Group Presentations |
| 8:00 p.m. | Transforming Trash into Art |
| 8:20 p.m. | Closing Prayer |
| 8:30 p.m. | Good Night! |

Extend the Session Ideas

- Host a recycled art auction for charity. Encourage youth to sell the sculptures they made in this session in a silent auction for charity. Combine the auction with a pot luck dinner and invite the entire parish community to participate.
- Reverse Scavenger Hunt: Instead of having youth collect items for your trash to art activity before the session, incorporate a reverse scavenger hunt into your session. Gather at a local park or school yard and split your group into teams. Have them canvas the area for trash and give points for trash collected. After a specified time limit gather the group and award points to see which group was most effective in cleaning the environment.
 - 6 points - plastic bags and plastic bottles
 - 5 points - soda cans, glass bottles
 - 4 points - for identifiable trash
 - 3 points - for unidentifiable trash
 - 2 points - for cardboard

(Source: NFCYM website, www.nfcym.org)

- Plan a Catholic “youth environmental summit” for your city. Invite all the area youth ministries to make information booths that demonstrate ways to make a difference in the environment. Highlight the themes of Catholic social teaching and how they relate to climate change. Invite all the parishes (bishop too!) to attend! Be sure to invite the local media as well to cover how young people care for the environment.

Materials Needed

- Newsprint
- Boxes of dominos, approximately 100 dominos per each small group of 6-8 participants (ask for volunteers from the youth ministry or from the parish at large to bring these if the parish doesn’t have them)
- Colored index cards
- Markers
- Art materials: hot glue guns and glue sticks (1 per every 4-6 youth), string, colored yarn, scraps of material, - anything lying around that could be considered junk.
- Video, “What is Climate Change?” at <http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/students/> (5:00)
- *Optional:* Video, “The Best Speech – Severn Suzuki” at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xPx5r35Aymc> (6:49)
- Laptop and LCD projector, if showing ‘What is Climate Change?’
- **Resource 1, The Domino Effect of Climate Change**, copy double-sided, one copy for each small group of 6-8 participants (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Handout 1, Stories of Hope: EcoLogical**, one for each person in small group 1
- **Handout 2, Stories of Hope: Paper or Plastic**, one for each person in small group 2
- **Handout 3, Stories of Hope: “Celebrating Creation” Prayer Beads**, one for each person in small group 3
- **Handout 4, Stories of Hope: Team WIN**, one for each person in small group 4
- **Handout 5, Stories of Hope: Give Running**, one for each person in small group 5
- **Handout 6, Stories of Hope: Friends of Nature**, one for each person in small group 6
- *Optional:* CD or MP3 player and recording of nature sounds (ocean waves, birds singing, thunderstorm, etc.)

Prepare in Advance

1. View the short (about five minutes) video *What Is Climate Change?* prior to the session. Set up your laptop and projector so everyone will be able to see and hear.

2. As the young people are working on their domino course, they may need some additional information regarding some of the effects of climate change. For example, how will climate change increase malaria? We know that the mosquito is going to higher elevations and with more extreme weather, they're thriving but not sure that the kids will make that connection. Read through the resource sheet and make notes of where your young people may need additional information in order to complete their task.
3. Regarding climate change at the beginning of the session, consider reading the Vatican statement on climate change: http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_academies/acdscien/2011/PAS_Glacier_110511_final.pdf. Consider also listening to the recorded interview of Dan Misleh, Executive Director of Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, with the lead researcher on the Vatican statement on climate change. Use this link: <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/05/05.10.11-Ramanathan-Interview.mp3>.
4. Determine your meeting space. You will need an open area of about 4' wide by 6' long for youth to build their domino courses.
5. Send home in advance of your session for youth to bring one large trash bag filled with items that would normally be thrown away. Tell youth to be sure to only bring clean, rinsed-out items. Example items: Empty plastic milk cartons, old toys, boxes, plastic utensils, broken electronics, cans, anything that might be considered "junk."
6. Set up tables and chairs for small group work. Set up tables for refreshments and sign-in. Have one or two people at the sign-in table with a check-in sheet and nametags. **Hospitality is important:** As the leader, do not use the gathering time before the session begins to take care of last-minute preparations. Spend the time moving among the participants, greeting and speaking with them.

Session Outline

Welcome / What is Climate Change? (10 minutes)

After greeting and welcoming youth, explain that tonight's session will be focusing on the urgent issue of climate change and what communities and individuals are doing to improve the situation. The heart of this evening will be stories of hope from the people who are working first hand to improve the environment. Let youth know that they will also be thinking of ways they too can help the environment. Using a sheet of newsprint and a marker to record answers, ask the group to describe the issue of climate change.

Climate Change: Stories of Hope

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After acquiring a few answers from the group, make the following points:

- Climate change is occurring globally.
- Scientists believe that, as the climate warms, stronger and more frequent weather events such as storms and droughts will result in greater loss of property and life.
- Scientists believe that the melting of our mountain glaciers impacts those who depend on the water supply from glaciers and those facing rising sea levels and stronger storm surges.
- Global warming is caused by an excess of greenhouse gases. These excess gases come from a variety of sources but mostly from burning fossil fuels.

Show the short film “What is Climate Change?” to help participants understand what the term means and to see some examples.

The Domino Effect of Climate Change (20 minutes)

Divide participants into groups of six to eight. Give each group 100 dominos (each group will need the same amount of dominos), note cards, markers and a copy of **Resource 1, The Domino Effect of Climate Change**. Explain to participants they will be building a dominos course (with dominos standing on end). They will also be using their index cards, a marker, and the directions on **Resource 1**. Their task will be to illustrate with their domino course how climate change has a domino effect on creation. Inform youth that they will only have ten minutes to set up their courses so they will need to work together quickly. Challenge them to ask questions about the causes or effects of climate change if they don't know them (e.g., if they ask why malaria is on the effects list, it is because the mosquito population has moved to higher elevations and is flourishing).

Note to Leader: Tell youth not to topple their domino courses until you give the word! Once everyone has completed the task, invite each group to share and explain how they built their course. Next, youth can topple their dominoes (start with first domino) to simulate how the climate change affects the planet. If the domino course stops, feel free to help the course by knocking down the domino that broke the flow to continue the simulation.

Ask the entire group:

- What did you learn about climate change from this activity?
- How connected to the environment are human beings?
- How does human activity affect the environment?

Stories of Hope (15 minutes)

Ask youth if they know that our present pope is often called “the Green Pope.” Share with youth the following information about the Church:

- In 2008, Pope Benedict XVI and his leadership spearheaded renewable energy projects right in Vatican City by installing 2,400 [solar panels](#) atop the pope's audience hall, which prevents 230 tons of carbon dioxide from being emitted annually.
- In the pope's first social encyclical, [Caritas in Veritate](#) (Charity in Truth), he proclaimed there is a “covenant” between humans and the environment, and “responsibility is a global one, for it is concerned not just with energy but with the whole of creation, which must not be bequeathed to future generations depleted of its resources.” He highlighted in particular the responsibility of wealthy developed nations to take the lead on these efforts.
- Other Catholic organizations taking the lead in this issue are The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and Catholic Relief Services.

Next, share with youth that they will be learning about different people and organizations who are working to help combat the negative effects of climate change. Begin by showing the YouTube video, “The Best Speech – Severn Suzuki.” Then engage them in reflecting on what they heard and saw by asking them the following questions:

For whom/what is Severn advocating? Who/What are the groups most affected by climate change?

She says, “If you don’t know how to fix it, please stop breaking it.” “If a child on the streets who has nothing is willing to share, why are we who have everything so greedy?” To whom would you address these questions?

She advocates for money which is currently spent on war being spent instead on protecting the environment. How would you argue for this position?

Where is the hope in her message? How hopeful are you that we can solve the problem of global warming?

Ask youth to return to their small groups (or divide them into new groups). Give each member of a group one of the handouts to read over and discuss (Handout 1 to group #1, etc.). Tell groups that they are going to do a presentation to the rest of the participants based on the information from their handout. They are to share the information they learned and also come up with ways their youth ministry could do a similar thing in their community. Presentations could be in the form of a skit, a poster, or some other creative idea.

Note to Leader: If you have more than six small groups, use the CRS stories attached for more examples.

How to be a Story of Hope: Group Presentations (15 minutes)

Invite participants back into the large group and invite each small group to share its presentation. Then conclude with the following:

The stories you have just shared give all of us hope in our quest to care for God's creation and reduce the negative effects which our lifestyles have on the environment.

Transforming Trash into Art (20 minutes)

Use the "junk" students brought to this session. Invite youth to make sculptures that look like either people or animals. Their sculptures should represent those who ultimately will be most affected by climate change. Youth can use either hot glue, masking tape, or string to attach things together.

Art Show (5 minutes)

Have youth display their sculptures for all to see. Consider displaying their artwork in the parish center, gathering space before Masses, etc.

Closing Prayer: Guided Meditation (5 minutes)

Note to Leader: If possible, have youth go outside for this meditation or use a CD recording of nature sounds (ocean waves, birds singing, thunderstorm, etc.) for background to the guided meditation.

Gather

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

Loving God,
We ask your blessings upon us and upon the beautiful earth which you have entrusted to our care. Help us to be better stewards of that earth. Give us the wisdom and the hope that we need to leave our world in better shape than we received it. We ask this in the name of your Son Jesus and in Your Spirit. Amen.

Listen

Before beginning the meditation ask everyone to sit comfortably, take a deep breath, and close their eyes.

Read slowly...pause between the lines.

As we close our time together, let us reflect on what you have seen, heard and experienced about climate change in this session.

With your eyes closed, take a deep breath...
Allow yourself to release any tension you may feel in your body...
Breathe in and be at peace...
Use your mind to imagine a forest... a mountain... the ocean...
Imagine places in nature that heal your spirit...

Climate Change: Stories of Hope

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Notice how you feel close to God in nature...
Nature helps us to recognize God's presence...
For God, there is no separation between spirituality and creation...
God is everywhere...
God is in the air we breathe...
God is in the water we drink...
God is within you...
Nature: The tree, the animals, the ocean, all of nature is an essential teacher of our spirituality...
We need access to clean flowing rivers to remember that our lives continually flow on...
We need a green forest with majestic pines to remember that our faith is ever-growing...
We need the beauty of a clear still lake to remember that God sees right through to our soul...
We need the vastness of the world's oceans to remind us that God's love is everywhere...
We need to look into another person's eyes to remember that we are all loved by our creator...
We are part of nature...
Nature is part of who we are...
When nature suffers, we suffer too...
We are responsible to care for God's creation...
We are called to be stewards of this planet...
Imagine a world where there is no trash littered on the road...
Imagine a world where the sky is always bright blue and not hazy from pollution...
Imagine a world where people across the globe aren't suffering from the effects of pollution because the air is clean and fresh...
Imagine a world where the fish and sea life do not have to swim in waters polluted with oil...
Imagine a world where many animal natural habitats are not disappearing...
Imagine our world clean the way God created it to be...
Imagine our world where there are resources for all people...
Imagine our world where everyone breathes clean air and drinks clean water...
Now see yourself as part of that world...
Take a few minutes and listen to how God may be calling you to care for the planet...

Pause for a few moments then guide participants slowly from their meditation. Take your time leading youth to open their eyes and move their bodies.

Respond

Invite participants to journal on the following question: What is God calling me to do to care for the earth, its resources, and its people?

Ask participants to share with the large group one thing they can commit to doing as a result of their journal reflection.

Go Forth

End with the following:

Thank you, God, for loving us so much that you gave us the earth on which to live. We praise you for your awesome creation and we ask you to give us the strength and the conviction to live up to our commitments.

We pray together:

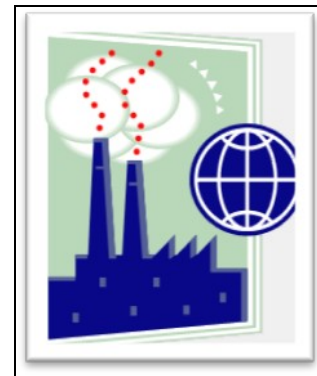
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

All websites and links mentioned in this session were accessed successfully on June 23, 2011.

Susan Searle is adjunct faculty for the Center for Ministry Development's Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies Program, YouthLeader, and Just5Days programs. Susan is also an Ambassador for the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change, and available to give presentations, workshops, and retreats on this important issue to your parish youth ministry. Contact her at: smsearle@msn.com.

Resource 1

The Domino Effect of Climate Change



Your challenge:

Set-up a dominos course that illustrates the effects of climate change on creation. As a group, choose a cause of climate change from the list provided below. Then, discuss and choose some of the possible effects related to the cause your group chose. Using your marker, label a note card with each of the causes and effects. Next, begin to set up your dominos course so that your causes are connected to the effects. For about every ten dominos, place a note card with one of the effects written on it. For example, deforestation (place 10 dominos) destroys habitats for animals (more dominos), causes animals to migrate (more dominos), and causes erosion of the land (dominos).

Continue building your course until you use all your dominos. You may also connect other causes and effects to your original cause.

Helpful hints for setting up your course:

1. When setting up dominos in a straight line, leave a space about the width of one domino between the dominos.
2. When setting up dominos in a curved line, leave less than half an inch between each domino.
3. Set up dominos in groups of ten, then leave some space and set up another group.
4. When the course is almost finished, fill the spaces in between. By leaving space, if a domino is accidentally knocked down during setup, all the dominoes in the course won't be knocked over.
5. REMEMBER: you only have 10 minutes to set-up your course.

Causes and Effects: Choose several different causes and effects of climate change, and write them on a separate note card to be used in your domino course. You may use a cause and effect more than once in your course. As a group, decide how to illustrate climate change by connecting different causes and effects together in a domino course.

Some Possible Causes of Climate Change:

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|
| Burning of fossil fuels | Deforestation | Using too much electricity |
| Decomposition of waste in landfills | Use of fertilizers | Carbon dioxide emissions |
| Overconsumption | | |

Some Possible Effects of Climate Change:

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Decreased snow pack | More severe storms | Threatened cultures |
| Rising sea levels | Water shortages | Species extinction |
| Flooding | Extreme heat waves | Reduced growing seasons |
| Drought | Loss of biodiversity | Loss of crops |

Climate Change: Stories of Hope

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| | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Erosion of roads | Hurricanes | Heavy rains |
| Melting ice caps | Decreased stream flow | Landslides |
| Spread of disease | Malaria | Lack of safe drinking water |
| Loss of family income | Climate change refugees | Loss of livestock |
| Malnutrition | Coastal flooding | Bleaching of coral reefs |
| Wildfires | Earthquakes | Migration of animals disrupted |
| Loss of employment | Death of marine life | Extinction of some species |
| Loss of housing | More diseases | Food becomes more expensive |
| Typhoons | Loss of rain forest | Desertification |
| Loss of essential pollinators | Loss of soil organisms | Decreased grain yields |
| Hunger | Lack of education | Unusable farming land |
| Increased cost of housing | More global poverty | Mudslides |

Handout 1

Stories of Hope: EcoLogical

When we started our project in a small town called Homer, Alaska, we had no possible notion of what we were actually getting ourselves into. We were simply four young teenage girls truly wanting to alter the way our town was living. We wanted to see change, both in family homes and the general public.

We got our local middle school lunchroom to switch from using polystyrene trays to reusable plastic trays. We also introduced a “Tin Bin” to our local landfill, and we held a community-wide “Trash into Fashion” show.

Then we won the [President’s Environmental Youth Award](#) and suddenly we were going to Washington, DC, to accept our award. Before the awards ceremony, we got to talk with Lisa Jackson, the Administrator of EPA. She was authentically interested in what we did, and what we had to say. The award ceremony itself blew my mind. All of the winners stood in front of the White House on risers. President Obama simply walked around the corner. He was sincere, talking to us as one completely normal person might talk to another, as if he had forgotten that he was the president, and was simply a friend. He talked of how great our accomplishments were, and also of how important it was that we didn’t stop here, that we kept going, because “we are the future.” Each and every winner shook his hand, and got to look him in the eye. I wanted to talk, to thank him for his hard work, to chat about the world, and to ask what being the president of the United States is like, but even if I had the chance, I don’t know if I would have been able to get the words out. I was in awe.

About the author: Hannah Baird is a middle school student from Homer, Alaska. Hannah, along with one high school student and two other middle school students, recently received recognition for their environmental EcoLogical project.

Source: “EcoLogical” on June 25, 2010 at <http://blog.epa.gov/blog/category/studentsforclimateaction/>.
Permission requested.

Handout 2

Stories of Hope: Paper or Plastic?

One day in my Global Environmental Issues class, a professor showed us a video on the floating island of plastic in the Pacific Ocean, commonly called the Great Pacific Garbage Patch. I never knew the trouble that the convenient plastic bag could cause. On that day I decided to make a change in my life to reduce my contribution to the garbage patch and my carbon footprint in general. I wanted to do something productive to make a difference. I decided to stop using plastic bags. It may be a small step but at least it's a step in the right direction. By switching to reusable bags I became a little greener and much happier.

I bought my first bag on Earth Day 2007 and I haven't looked back. Now I use that bag and the few others I have accumulated every time I buy groceries or take a trip to the mall. Being a very poor college student, I never need more than one or two reusable bags when I shop. Those few bags carry for me about the same amount approximately seven plastic bags would hold – not to mention they are foldable and fit into my purse that I carry everywhere.

Now, with my reusable bags, I am helping the planet and making my walk to the apartment with the groceries much easier. Let's face it: Two bags are easier to manage than seven that have a tendency to rip and tear. Next time a cashier asks you, "Paper or plastic?" say, "Neither!" and pull out your reusable shopping bag instead.

About the Author: Ashley White is a current undergraduate student at Virginia Tech. She is interning with OCHPEE for the summer.

Source: "Paper or Plastic," Tuesday, July 28, 2009 at:
<http://blog.epa.gov/blog/category/studentsforclimateaction/>
Permission requested.

Handout 3

Stories of Hope: “Celebrating Creation” Prayer Beads

The Earth Care ministry of St. John Fisher Chapel University Parish in Troy, Michigan designed “Celebrating Creation” prayer beads to encourage its members “to give glory and praise to our God, who made the heavens and the earth.”

Each of the clay beads, full of color and light, was hand made by a member of the Earth Care ministry before being strung together like a bracelet and assembled in a small pouch. Prayer suggestions and a poem are included with each set of beads, which are used as a reminder to act and pray on behalf of creation; as a tool in prayerful meditation, walking, or sitting in nature; and as a way to connect environmental concerns with justice, peace, and nonviolence throughout all creation.

Sample meditations included with the beads guide individuals and groups to focus their prayer in three areas:

1. gratitude for the gifts of the Earth, and the precious gift of life,
2. a form of destruction that is occurring, such as clear-cutting of forests, species extinction, toxic chemical pollution, global warming, etc., and ways to promote the healing of the earth such as advocacy, recycling, carpooling, land restoration, etc.

The beads have been instrumental in helping members of the community gain a deeper sense of oneness with all of creation, and integrate their prayer lives with action to protect and restore creation. The Earth Care Ministry has sold over 200 sets of the prayer beads since April 2004. They are available online.

Source: <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/real-stories/pray/celebrating-creation-prayer-beads>

Used with permission.

Handout 4

Stories of Hope: Team WIN

Sixteen-year-old Alex Lin is committed to solving the international e-waste dilemma. To call the work of Rhode Island teen Alex Lin impressive would be an understatement. This 16-year-old first learned about the environmental problems associated with e-waste after stumbling upon a 2004 Wall Street Journal article on the subject.

Since then, he and his student-led community service team, Team WIN, have overseen the recycling of 300,000 pounds of e-waste, successfully lobbied the Rhode Island state legislature to pass a statewide bill banning the dumping of e-waste, created media centers in developing countries using refurbished computers, secured grants to fund the projects, and created a national PSA on the subject of e-waste.

The 2006 bill banning the dumping of e-waste set the stage for a more stringent extended producer responsibility (EPR) bill passed in 2008. "Now Rhode Island requires manufacturers to take back their computers and televisions and to pay for the collection and recycling of them," said Sheila Dormody of Clean Water Action.

Connections that Lin made in international conferences and competitions made it possible for the WIN Network to go global, with satellite WIN Teams in Cameroon, the Philippines, Mexico, Kenya, and Sri Lanka. "I would like to tell youth to reuse whatever you can, and upgrade instead of buying something new. Every little bit counts towards helping the environment!" - Alex

Source: <http://earth911.com/news/2010/04/19/how-kids-are-saving-the-planet/>
Used with permission.

Handout 5

Stories of Hope: Give Running

Greg Woodburn had been a competitive track and cross country runner since elementary school, competing in multiple national championships, when an injury suddenly derailed him his freshman year of high school.

Unable to race, he realized in its absence just how much he loved the sport. In his words, “while running is hard, *not* running is harder.” While injured, he began to think of underprivileged kids who couldn’t enjoy the great sport of running – not because of injury, but because they couldn’t afford running shoes.

At just 15-years-old, he started [Give Running](#) in 2006, a nonprofit organization that collects and donates used running shoes, in good condition, to underprivileged youth and orphans.

By the end of the first year, he was able to collect and clean-up more than 500 pairs of running shoes, which were sent to kids in inner-city Los Angeles, as well as overseas to Sudan, Uganda, and Kenya.

“The feedback from youth in Africa has been especially moving for me. Not only were these the first running shoes any of them had owned, but they were the also first [pair of] shoes many of them had ever had,” writes Greg.

The organization has donated shoes to additional countries including Liberia, Mali, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and Haiti. More than 6,000 pairs of shoes have been donated as of March 2010, exercising the reach of reuse at its finest.

Source: <http://earth911.com/news/2010/04/19/how-kids-are-saving-the-planet/>
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Resource 6

Stories of Hope: Friends of Nature

Twelve-year-old Indonesian student Adeline Tiffanie Suwana had great care and concern for the environment after seeing the effects of natural disasters and flooding on her country.

She learned about the importance of mangroves in preventing damage during natural disasters and decided to do something to improve mangrove conditions.

She began by forming a community of young people called [Sahabat Alam](#), which means "Friends of Nature." The community is now comprised of 1,700 members throughout Indonesia.

Adeline organizes students to plant coral reefs, help with fish breeding and turtle protection, plant mangrove trees, and engage in environmental cleanups and education activities.

Adeline and Sahabat Alam also operate the Electric Generator Water Reel project where they connect remote villages to an electric grid, providing potential economic growth to villagers and improving health and education facilities. They utilize clean renewable energy (hydro) to power these villages.

Her ideas have been presented in schools, with cooperation of governmental agencies and have led to the production of a television program on the subject. She was invited as a delegate by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) to the 2009 Tunza International Children's Conference and awarded the 2009 Action for Nature International Young Eco-Hero award for her efforts.

Source: <http://earth911.com/news/2010/04/19/how-kids-are-saving-the-planet/>
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Operation Impact

By Jane Angha



Purpose

This session for all ages is designed to encourage participants to make little changes in their lives and lifestyles that will have a big impact on the environment and the future of the planet. Participants will examine the causes and consequences of climate change, their personal connections and contributions to it, and how to reduce and reverse their carbon footprint. They will also learn about the Catholic Church's teachings on this issue.

Session at a Glance

| | |
|-----------|--|
| | Extend the Session: Dinner (<i>add 60 minutes</i>) |
| 7:00 p.m. | Gathering |
| 7:05 p.m. | Welcome/Opening Prayer |
| 7:15 p.m. | Opening Session |
| 7:30 p.m. | Age-Specific Learning Sessions |
| 8:10 p.m. | Large Group Sharing |
| 8:25 p.m. | Closing Prayer |
| 8:30 p.m. | Good Night! |

Extend the Session: Dinner (60 minutes)

This session can be extended with a dinner before the event. Provide a meal that models simplicity: locally grown food, meatless menu, glass dishes or biodegradable/compostable products, fair trade chocolate, and coffee for dessert. See **Resource 1** for recipes and plans.

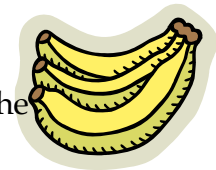
Materials Needed

- **Opening Session/Opening Prayer/Closing Prayer**
 - Small suitcase
 - Water bottle
 - Food (in a brown lunch bag)
 - Picture of a house or a small doll house
 - *Optional:* cell phone, iPod, television, toys, sports equipment, and any other items purchased out of want not need
 - ["River of Glory"](#) by Dan Schutte (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
 - ["Rain Down"](#) by Jaime Cortez (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
 - ["City of God"](#) by Dan Schutte (*Spirit & Song*, OCP)
 - CD or MP3 player and speakers (if musician is not available)
 - **Resource 2, Opening Prayer**, three copies for the readers

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- **St. Francis Pledge Sign-Up Form** (see #9 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Adult Session** (see #2 in Prepare in Advance)
 - Pens, for each participant
 - Paper, for notetaking
- **Young Adult Session**
 - Newsprint
 - Markers
 - Laptop computer
 - LCD projector
- **High School Youth Session**
 - News print
 - Markers
- **Middle School Youth Session**
 - Random props
 - Markers
 - Paper
 - Video recorder/camera
- **Elementary Children session**
 - Inflatable beach balls, one for each participant
 - Sharpie permanent markers
 - Paper
- **Preschool Session**
 - One of the following books: *Mortimer's First Garden* by Karma Wilson, *One Watermelon Seed* by Celia Barker Lottridge, or *The Trellis and the Seed* by Jan Karon
 - Recycled coffee/tea cups from local thrift store, one for each participant
 - Potting soil
 - Variety of vegetable seeds and fresh vegetables that match the seeds (see #3 in Prepare in Advance)
- **Dinner** (see #4 in Prepare in Advance)
 - **Resource 1, Dinner Menu and Decorating Ideas**
 - **Resource 3, Age-Specific Session Outlines**, copies for the catechists and helpers
 - Laptop computer, LCD projector, speakers, and cables
 - Video, "[Journey of Bananas: From Land to Your Hand](#)" (4:37) or "[Journey with Tropicana Banana](#)" (5:31) – both may be downloaded from YouTube
Note to Leader: Your audio/visual set up needs to be adequate for everyone to be able to hear/see the video.
 - Compostable/Biodegradable paper products



Prepare in Advance

1. Invite a team of volunteers to help out as meal preparers if needed, welcome and hospitality, table leaders, age-specific learning session catechists and helpers. Get help for the technology needed for the session. Review their tasks prior to the session.
2. *For the adult session:* Invite a local expert on climate change, environment, or global warming to speak with the adults. Ask the speaker to focus on ways they can make a difference now with a few changes in their lives and lifestyles. Check to see if a Catholic Climate Ambassador is available by going to <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/about-us/catholic-climate-ambassadors/>. See **Resource 3** for more details in preparing this session.
3. *For the preschool session:* Cut up the fresh vegetables to serve to the children. Let parents know what will be served in case of allergies.
4. *For the dinner* (Extend the Session option): Invite a team of people to help plan and prepare the meal as well as clean up afterward. In addition, invite people to be table leaders, one for each table of people.
5. For the opening prayer, you will need four readers. The first reader will proclaim Leviticus 25:1-7, 10-12. The other three readers need a copy of **Resource 2**.
6. Have a take home gift for all participants: reusable water bottle, faucet aerator, reusable grocery tote, etc. Solicit local stores for donations and offer to advertise their generosity.
7. Make signs that let people know where to go for age specific sessions, have volunteers ready to help get people to and from spaces.
8. Download and print the Pledge Sign Up form for the closing prayer at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/St.-Francis-Pledge-Sign-Up-Form.pdf>. After the meeting, enter all of this information online at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>.

Session Outline

(Optional) Dinner (60 minutes)

Step 1: (8-10 minutes) Banana Video

Welcome everyone, and introduce the video saying something like this:

Who likes bananas?

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Let folks raise their hands.

I do too! Where do they come from? How do they get to us? Well, it is a very interesting journey that every banana takes. It is not easy to get to our table to have for breakfast or a snack. Let's watch a little movie of a banana's journey.

Show the clip. Ask the following questions to be talked about at the tables:

1. What surprised you about the movie?
2. What did you learn about bananas, and their journey?
3. Who is behind all this production and travel for a banana?

At the end of dinner, say something like:

There are so many things that we take for granted, like bananas that travel pretty far to get to us. It's good for us to stop and think about where our food and goods come from. A lot of time, energy, hard work and resources go into bringing us the things we need and many things we just want or like to have.

We ate a simple meal tonight... one that was grown mostly locally. We ate on dishes that help to save the environment. We had treats of coffee and chocolate that we grow on farms that treat the land and workers with respect and dignity. We hope this will spark your imagination to find ways at home to do the same. Eat locally-grown foods, support fair trade, be mindful of what you eat and how much. Take care when it comes to waste. Recycle and compost trash and mainly, use just what you need...no more.

Thank you for joining us for dinner and thanks to all who helped prepare and serve it!

Gathering (5 minutes)

As people gather, have the welcome team welcome, greet and invite people to make a nametag and find a seat. The team should mingle and visit, making everyone feel welcome. Have upbeat music playing and focus hospitality, not last minute details or preparations.

Welcome (5 minutes)

Welcome everyone! We are so happy you are here tonight to learn about the climate, how it is changing, and how our lives and lifestyles have had an impact on the earth. We have come to find out what we can do to make sure the earth has a bright future and is here for generations to come. As our U.S. Catholic Bishops have said: "We believe our response to climate change should be a sign of our respect for God's creation."

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good

Let's begin our time together with prayer.

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Gather

Sing the opening song, "River of Glory."

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

God of Creation, we come together to listen to your word and to find ways to care for the earth you gave to us. The earth is a beautiful gift for all. Blue skies, green grass, fish in the oceans and rivers, plants and vegetables grown in the rich dark soil. You have given us watermelon, apples; pumpkins and peaches and the list goes on. We know the earth is in danger, and we pray that you teach us how to be good caretakers and stewards of this gift. We pray this in your Son's name. Amen.

Listen

Invite the first reader to proclaim Leviticus 25:1-7, 10-12. Allow a few moments of silence, then invite the second reader to begin.

Respond

Reader 2:

Our response is: Show us the way, Lord.

There is an order to the universe that God intended—people should be close to nature and respectful of her seasons and rhythms and the earth would provide all they would need. We are challenged to look at our relationship with the earth and see how much of the earth's resources we use and try to live more simply so the earth can continue to provide for all people. We pray... **Show us the way, Lord.**

Reader 3:

We humans have gotten far away from our connection to the earth. Our way of life keeps us far away from growing and planting, tending and harvesting. We often aren't sure of our water and food sources and how they are treated or who has access to the basic things of life and who does not. We are challenged to slow down, listen, look and respond to God's creation. We pray... **Show us the way, Lord.**

Reader 4:

We are challenged now by global climate change and extremes in nature that threatens plants and animals and us, God's beloved creation. There are serious problems around the world that need our attention—poverty, famine, drought, and natural disasters. In a world where there is enough...we are challenged to work at repairing and renewing the earth, so everyone has what they need. We pray... **Show us the way, Lord.**

Go Forth

Prayer Leader:

We face challenges today, this is true, but we are not alone. God, who created all things, is a God of forgiveness and hope. We ask in urgency, that God might show us how to live differently—respecting all creation and being good stewards of this amazing gift—Planet Earth! We pray... **Show us the way, Lord. Amen!**

Sing “Rain Down” to close the prayer.

Opening Session: What Do I Really Need? (15 minutes)

Begin by saying:

I need a couple of volunteers to help me out.

Invite a child or two up to the gathering space.

Thank you for helping me tonight. As you see, there is a pile of pretty nice things up here isn't there? Can you tell people what you see?

Wow, these are really great things. However, if you were going on a trip and had to live all by yourself on a desert island or a new planet, and you had to use this suitcase to take what you need...what would you pack?

Let the volunteers pick a few things and put them in the suitcase. Ask:

Is all you will need?

Ask the audience if they would have chosen differently and why. Help the volunteers pack the basics – food, water, shelter. The rest can only come if it fits or can be used. Share with the group the final packing list – and thank the volunteers for helping you share an important message. (Have fun with this activity!)

All the things up here tonight are things we might have in our homes and live with each day. We have come to rely on them, enjoy them, and *almost* need them! All these items and the ones millions of other people purchase are having an impact on the earth.

Our volunteers started out thinking about all the things they like or feel they need to live—but once they saw they only had a tiny suitcase, they figured out what was most important. It's like that with the earth, too. If we can slow down a bit and think about what we are doing and using and consuming, we might be able to lighten our load... our footprint on the earth. We will all have a chance tonight to learn how we can have a positive impact on the earth and make sure it is healthy and beautiful for future generations.

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Age-Specific Sessions (40 minutes)

At this time, give directions for age specific sessions, where they are being held, etc.

Large Group Sharing (15 minutes)

Once everyone is gathered back together begin by saying:

I hope everyone had fun while learning some important things tonight! We want to hear from some of you about what you did... some of you created something, starred in a movie, designed a t-shirt, etc.... so let's hear from you.

At this time, invite people forward to share what they accomplished. Compliment and thank the volunteers after they share.

Note to Leader: Make sure this portion of the evening moves along swiftly; you may need microphones so folks can hear the volunteers.

When the sharing is complete, continue by saying:

This is incredible! It is hard to believe all you learned in just a short time tonight. We encourage you to keep on learning what you can do to live more simply, protect the earth and to take Pope Benedict's words to heart. He challenges us with this statement, "The environment is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole." (48)

We aren't alone in this... we have God, our faith community, family, friends, and all humanity who need the earth to be healthy and whole. It will take everyone working hard to fix our mistakes, to think differently about what we need to live a happy life and to imagine a future for the earth that will bring food, shelter, joy, and wonder for generations yet to come. As our U.S. Catholic Bishops tell us: "Global climate change is about the future of God's creation and the one human family. It is about our human stewardship of God's creation and our responsibility to those generations who will succeed us."

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops
Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good

Let's close with prayer.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Prayer Leader: *(begin with the Sign of the Cross)*

God,
We have learned so much tonight and there is still so much we need to know. There have been saints, wise men and women, and people passionate about their faith and all creation who can teach us. We will close with the St. Francis Pledge, promising to make a difference in the world each day.

I/We Pledge to:

- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- **ASSESS** how we-as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations-contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

This is our challenge...this is our promise, and so we pray all this in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Make any announcements and thank all who helped with the evening in any way and the participants for coming! Invite everyone to sign the pledge form before they leave. Don't forget to enter the pledge information at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>.

Sing "City of God" to close the prayer and session.



Websites and links in this session were accessed successfully on August 11, 2011.

This session was written by Jane Angha, Project Coordinator for Young Neighbors in Action at the Center for Ministry Development. Jane also teaches the Justice & Service course in the Certificate in Youth Ministry Studies Program.

Resource 1

Dinner Menu and Decorating Ideas

The meal should be as simple as possible, but delicious. Use as many locally grown items as possible. Use regular dishes if possible, or biodegradable/compostable paper products if necessary. Serve water to drink and be sure to decorate the tables with some of the ideas below. Here are some recipes to try. You will need to adapt the recipes to the number of people expected to attend.

Middle Eastern Stew and Rice (serves 8)

- 2 cups basmati or long grain rice
- 4 cups water
- 1 tsp. salt

Bring these ingredients to a boil, cover, and simmer on medium low heat for two minutes.

- 1 cup of yellow split peas, cooked in 3-4 cups of water till tender. Drain and save for stew.
- 2 medium onions, chopped and sautéed in 4 tablespoons oil. When lightly browned, add 1 small can of tomato paste or five fresh tomatoes chopped. Add split peas, garlic powder, salt, and pepper to taste. Simmer for 30 minutes on low heat.

While simmering, slice 3-5 potatoes into French fries and sauté in vegetable oil over medium high heat until golden brown. Add to stew just before serving.

Serve with salad of any seasonal vegetables, and local bakery bread.

Vegetable Soup (serves 12)

- 2 large onions
- 4 carrots
- 3 stalks celery
- 2 zucchini, sliced
- 1 green pepper, diced
- 1 can kidney beans
- 3-4 cups fresh spinach
- 2 cans chopped tomatoes or 5 fresh tomatoes, chopped
- 1 cup barley
- 1 cup small pasta noodles
- 2 potatoes, diced

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- 3 quarts vegetable broth
- 1 quart water
- Salt, pepper, garlic and Italian seasoning, to taste

Heat ½ cup of vegetable oil in soup pot. Sauté the onions, celery, zucchini, green pepper, spinach, and potatoes. When lightly browned, add rest of vegetables, broth, water and barley. Cook for an hour on medium heat. Add pasta the last 20 minutes of cooking.

Serve with local seasonal vegetables for salad, and fresh local bakery bread.

Dessert Ideas

- Fair trade coffee and chocolates
- Brownies, made from fair trade cocoa
- Fruit cobbler, crisp or pie (use fruit that is in season)

Table Decoration Ideas

Flowers in season, branches from trees in vases, leaves in baskets, river stones in small bowls, small rocks that have been painted, canning jars with coffee beans or beans of any kind and votive candle. Quotes or ideas for going green at each table setting.

Music

Download some background music that focuses on the environment at www.planetpatriot.net or www.grinningplanet.com.

Table Leaders

Questions to discuss at the tables:

1. What are some ways you try to save energy at home?
2. Why do we need to save energy?
3. What will happen if we run out of things on earth?
4. Why does climate change affect the poor most significantly?
5. What does climate change mean?
6. What worries you most about the earth, the future?
7. What can the church do about climate change?
8. Who is supposed to take care of the earth and how?
9. What are some new things you can start doing today that might help the earth?
10. What do you want the earth to look like in 10, 20, 30 years?

Note to Leader: Choose questions that will be appropriate for the people at your table. They will also have time to watch the video from YouTube.

Resource 2

Opening Prayer

Reader 2:

Our response is: Show us the way, Lord.

There is an order to the universe that God intended—people should be close to nature and respectful of her seasons and rhythms and the earth would provide all they would need. We are challenged to look at our relationship with the earth and see how much of the earth's resources we use and try to live more simply so the earth can continue to provide for all people. We pray... **Show us the way, Lord.**

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Resource 3

Age-Specific Session Outlines

Adult Session

Invite a local expert to talk about climate change in light of faith. Contact a Catholic Climate Ambassador at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/about-us/catholic-climate-ambassadors/>. Or ask your local college or university, diocesan Social Justice Office, seminary, or local business owners for names of possible speakers who might feel comfortable speaking in a church/school setting. When you invite the speaker, ask him/her to address some of the following points and describe the audience and evening so they have an idea of what is expected.

- What is climate change?
- What are some of the imminent issues surrounding climate change?
- How can our faith speak to the issues the earth faces? What does Catholic social teaching about care for God's creation, the preferential option for the poor and vulnerable, and global solidarity challenge us to do about climate change?
- What can be done personally, corporately, politically, and religiously to remedy things?
- What can we expect in the next decade if things do not change?
- How does one reverse climate change?
- What are some issues we face locally that can be remedied?
- What is being done locally to care for the environment?
- Where do we go from here?

Give the speaker a timeframe for the presentation. Ask if they will need a projector, handouts made, microphone, etc. Plan ahead to give a stipend or donation.

Young Adult Session

Select some resources from the following websites available for the young adults to use to create a blog, bulletin and website questions, and information nuggets:

- www.pewclimate.org (global warming)
- CAFOD (policy papers and resources for young people)
- <http://crs.org/public-policy/climate-change.cfm> (resources, stories for young people, college-age young adults, and adults)
- <http://www.coc.org> (Center of Concern's resources on ecology and development; trial membership available to access the information)

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Directions

1. Present the resources and invite the participants to come up with a list of issues facing the planet from their perspective.
2. For each issue, participants are to read, discuss, and then write a summary statement and a challenge for people to do something about it (a solution). This should be in the form of an information nugget that will go on the parish website, in the bulletin or the group can create a Facebook page or web page that will address the issues they uncovered and offer opportunities for dialogue, comments, challenged and solutions.

High School Youth Session

The participants will look at information from Catholic Relief Services on global climate change. For more resources, take a look at Genesis 1:1-31 and a message from the U.S. Bishops, *Global Climate Change*, 2001 at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/human-life-and-dignity/environment/global-climate-change-a-plea-for-dialogue-prudence-and-the-common-good.cfm>.

Directions

1. Facilitate discussion that will include:
 - Definition of Global Climate Change.
 - Who is at risk and most affected by global climate change?
 - What are the long-term effects of the issue?
 - What are some solutions?
 - What can be done now by you, your family, your school, your parish, your community?
2. Divide participants into small groups. Each group will design a logo or t-shirt to get the message across that something can be done to fight Global Climate Change. Images, words, Scripture, and symbols all can be used. Be prepared to share with the larger group.

Middle School Youth Session

The participants will create a Public Service Announcement about ways one can reduce consumption and fight against Global Climate Change.

The leader facilitates a discussion first to define Global Climate Change and then help youth create a list of ways to reverse the effects of climate change and be a positive influence in their homes and families, schools, parishes, and communities.

Background information and resources can be found at:

<http://catholicclimatecovenant.org>, <http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-basics/kidspage.cfm> (global warming, kids page), www.energystar.gov, Genesis 1:1-31, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence, and the Common Good*, 2001.

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Directions

1. Share some of the background information with the youth and help them define Global Climate Change.
2. Next, brainstorm a list of ways to help reduce climate change ranging from the simple and personal to the global and political.
3. Give into small groups of five, and create a public service announcement that will get the message of global climate change out to the world and give people ideas on how to make changes that will have a positive impact on the planet.

Note to Leader: Be sure to include that a faith perspective always keeps people and human dignity front and center on the fight against climate change. Their message must have a faith perspective!

Elementary Children Session

In this session, the children will discuss climate change and come up with ways to save energy, lower consumption, and reduce at home. The leader will share information from: CAFOD – the youth booklet and <http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-basics/kidspage.cfm> (information on global warming basics on their kids' page).

Directions

1. Share some information on climate change, and ask the children to give their ideas and share what worries them.
2. Ask the children to create a list of questions for their families to discuss regarding climate change.
3. Provide a brief summary of the Church's teaching on the issue. Families can discuss how God is calling them to care for creation in response to global climate change and come up with some solutions to climate change. These will range from simple things around the house, and for them personally.
4. Once the list is made, post it for all to see.
5. Give each child an inflatable beach ball to blow up (or have them ready) and a Sharpie permanent marker. Instruct them to write some of the ideas on the ball in different places. After each one they write, they need to blow on it to dry, and then move around the ball writing ideas down.
6. Once the ball is finished, they can take it home as a discussion starter to use before dinner or whenever they spend time together as a family.

How to play the game: Toss the ball to a friend or family member, wherever their right thumb lands, they are to read the question or comment closest to it and discuss or answer it. After the question is answered, the person tosses it to another one. This can go on until all have had a chance to talk.

Some questions to use: What are three things I can do today that will reduce my water usage? How long is long enough to take a shower? What are some energy sources that are good for the environment?

Preschool Children Session

In this session, the children learn what it takes to care for one of the smallest of God's creation—a seed. They will have an opportunity to plant a seed into a recycled coffee or tea cup and then enjoy some of the fruit or vegetables (of the seeds) they planted. The choice is up to the leader and what is available in your growing area. Some examples: peas, beans, cucumber, sunflower, tomato, lettuce (whatever is going to be eaten with the children should be shared with parents in case of allergies).

Directions

1. Read one of the following stories (or another of their choice) to the children: *Mortimer's First Garden* by Karma Wilson, *One Watermelon Seed* by Celia Barker Lottridge, or *The Trellis and the Seed* by Jan Karon.
2. After the story, discuss what it takes to care for a seed. Ask the children what things they care for at home. Do they care for their yard, toys, animals, and family?
3. After the discussion, have them sit at tables where the cups have been set out and buckets of potting soil are ready with scoops. Let them fill their cup and choose a seed to plant.
4. Once that is done, have them wash up and enjoy some vegetables or fruits of the seeds they have just planted. While enjoying the snack, talk about how much care will go into taking care of the seed until it grows into a fruit or vegetable ready to eat and enjoy.