



## Creation Care Team

ENGAGE YOUR LEADERSHIP AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS



Having good relationships with your community's leaders will help your Creation Care Team succeed. This toolkit helps you think about how to connect with your leaders.

If you've found something else successful, we'd love to hear about it! Please drop us a line at [programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org](mailto:programs@catholicclimatecovenant.org).

Effective friendships with leaders and staff are built on constructive dialogue and in collaborative ministry. The best strategy to engage your leadership in creation care is to continually build human community. Get to know your leadership and staff, engage in dialogue, and build relationships. These steps will help your Creation Care Team succeed.

### 1) START WITH A FRIENDLY CONVERSATION.

- Talk with your pastor, other pastoral staff, and the key leadership (parish council, committee boards/chairs) to gauge their level of awareness about Catholic teaching on creation care. Invite them to be part of the team or to help with certain projects.
- Clearly connect the efforts of the CCT with our moral responsibility as a faith community. One key issue to bring up is how the climate crisis affects God's most vulnerable people.
- Explain how the CCT program fits into the mission of the parish, school, or community. Showing how the CCT will strengthen and invigorate many of the parish's mission could be a high point of your conversation.

You may discover that your leaders are not as well informed about Catholic teaching on climate change as they are about other areas of Catholic teaching. Use the resources available to you from the [U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops](#), [Catholic Climate Covenant](#), and current and previous popes to share the strong, decades-long teaching on this subject.

In your conversations with your leadership, you may want to discuss:

- How exploring new environmental perspectives within our faith will renew and energize many members.
- How engaging youth in a topic many of them care deeply about will help them see the connections with their faith and energize their involvement in the parish or school.
- How your CCT will involve people who have environmental interests in volunteer activities and new leadership roles.

**Don't get discouraged.** It sometimes takes patience to convince your church and/or school to "go green." In the initial stages of your CCT, support from your leadership is wonderful, but much can be done with less active support.

**2) LISTEN, LISTEN, LISTEN.** Always listen to concerns and feedback from your leaders other collaborators. Always be open-minded and proactive in keeping lines of communication open. If your leadership feels that their concerns and input are valued, they will be more open to participate and support your projects.

### **3) MAKE ALLIANCES AND FORM COLLABORATIVE RELATIONSHIPS WITH BUILDING STAFF.**

- Be sure to speak with your facilities manager, janitors, kitchen staff, and others involved in the day-to-day operation of the parish or school. This will help you better understand how the buildings work and build relationships with key people. A strong alliance with these supporters will be critical to many of your CCT projects and events.
- In addition, janitors and building staff will offer suggestions that could be helpful moving forward.
- At the same time, always be cognizant of the demands that will be made on building services and other staff. Offer to share the burden of new demands and find ways to ease any new responsibilities due to your CCT's successful work within the parish and community. Offer to assist with any additional work that may arise from a new or invigorated recycling program.

### **4) MAKE ALLIANCES WITH OTHER MINISTRY AREAS.**

- Always be on the lookout for how your team can make alliances with other ministry groups. Co-sponsoring programs and projects with other ministries will expand the scope of your work and involve more people.
- Visit key people on boards and committees to find allies, learn about past programs, encourage their input, and suggest a project that you can do collaboratively. Encourage them to see the Creation Care Team as a way to strengthen and renew their own committee's work.

Remember, you want to incorporate the work of the CCT into every aspect of the life of your community. Do not forget to reach out to the community throughout the course of the year. Successful alliances mean continual, on-going collaboration, not a one-time conversation.

**5) LISTEN** to the feedback you get from your leaders to assess their ongoing level of awareness and interest in the CCT. Keep the conversations with leadership and staff positive and affirming by bringing up the good things that are already being done by leaders and staff members. In your communications to the community (newsletters, blogs, bulletin items) be sure to praise and be thankful for your leadership's and staff's support so that the entire community is aware of their efforts on behalf of the CCT.

