

# Feast of St. Francis 2016

DIAL DOWN THE HEAT:  
CULTIVATE THE COMMON GOOD  
FOR OUR COMMON HOME



**Catholic Climate Covenant™**  
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

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## INTRODUCTION

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining with thousands of others to host an educational session highlighting the urgent need to engage in civil dialogue on climate change and on how we, in an era of political polarization, can find common ground to protect the earth, our common home. Since 2006, Catholic Climate Covenant has inspired and equipped Catholics to care for creation and care for the poor. Since 2012, in collaboration with our 14 national partners, the Covenant has provided the Feast of St. Francis program, a template for a 90-minute program focused on Catholic social teaching and creation care.

## WHAT IS THIS EVENT?

By hosting a Feast of St. Francis event, you are joining thousands of Catholics and other people of faith who want to learn, grow, and respond to the Church's teaching on climate change and caring for creation and the poor.

## WHY NOW?

This program is designed with the 2016 Feast of St. Francis (October 4) in mind. However, we hope you will feel free to implement the program at a time that is convenient to your parish or school.

As you know, Pope Francis was so inspired by St. Francis of Assisi that he is the first Roman pontiff to take the saint's name. He has challenged us to make care for creation and care for the poor a cornerstone of our Catholic witness.

This year marks the 37th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi being named the Patron Saint of those who promote ecology by St. John Paul II.

This year is also an election year in the United States. The conversation about climate change has become extremely polarized and even confrontational at times. Sadly, in the U.S. Congress the issue of climate change has been set aside at a time when urgent action is direly needed. The Church has a role to play in bridging the divide and in figuring out how to create safe spaces in our parishes and schools to have better dialogue on difficult issues such as climate change. We need to be able to hold civil and "courageous conversations," and create common ground by forming more "both/and" arguments and less "either/or."

## YOUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR:

While the Covenant is producing these materials around a particular date, you should feel free to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis at a time that is convenient to your parish or school.

This is YOUR program. If you feel that you would like to adapt it to your particular needs, audience, or other factors, please do so.

As a facilitator it is your job to keep the conversation going among all the participants of the program and to keep the program on schedule. Because you want the group to achieve the stated outcomes, you often serve in the role of making the discussion easier for



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the participants. You encourage all to participate and you decrease the likelihood of any one person dominating the discussions. If you do have someone who tries to control the agenda, remind them that this program is about understanding how the Catholic Church is responding to the issue as articulated by recent popes and other Church leaders, including the U.S. Catholic bishops. Say to that person that you will be happy to try and address her/his concerns at the conclusion of the program. The resources in Appendices A, B, and C provide a great framework, from a Catholic perspective, for understanding and facilitating civil and constructive dialogue.

## OUTCOMES

At the end of this 90-minute program, you and your community will:

- Connect the dots from St. Francis to Pope Francis.
- Learn that climate change is already impacting communities around the world and that their stories can play an important role in cultivating common ground.
- Understand the need to “dial down the heat” and find common ground when talking about climate change in an era of ongoing polarization.
- Deepen your knowledge of what Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’* calls us to do, especially since the pope recognizes that there is an urgent need for a “new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet.” (*Laudato Si’* 12)
- Build leadership on these issues in our faith communities and beyond to respond to *Laudato Si’*’s moral call to care for creation and the poor, and enter into civil dialogue.
- Be able to answer why faith communities ought to lead in these discussions and what the faith community brings to the table that’s unique?

## WHAT DO YOU NEED?

All the materials you will need for a successful educational event can be found in this Program Kit.

You will need:

- Internet capability (See below if you will not have access to Wi-Fi/internet at the event location).
- One or more computers with internet connection (multiple computers will help with the advocacy activity and with the St. Francis Pledge).
- A projector (with speakers) connected to a computer.
- For the activities: Choose an activity (listed below) you think is most suited to your group and collect the materials needed for that particular activity.

NOTE: If you will not have internet capability at your event site, please download the video and the PowerPoint presentation to your computer or laptop for projection. You will still need a computer, a projector, and speakers.



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## IN THIS PROGRAM KIT, YOU'LL FIND:

1. Facilitator's Guide, which will help you make your event successful. It includes processes and action steps.
2. APPENDICES:

We highly recommend that you spend some time reviewing the additional information in the appendices at the end of this document prior to your event. This will enable you to become well-versed in the current science of and Church teaching on climate change, and provide a certain level of comfort with potentially difficult questions. The resources also give you a great summary of how to conduct civil dialogue on controversial issues. Feel free to print copies of these resources or have links available for program participants.

### APPENDIX A: Handling Difficult Questions

We particularly recommend that you take the time to review the [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and [Courageous Conversations about Climate Change](#). These are excellent and thorough resources that will help you handle any audience member who voices his/her discontent with either the science of climate change or the Church's involvement in the issue and give you tips as to how to conduct civil dialogue on climate change.

APPENDIX B: USCCB RESOURCES "[Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship](#)" and [Avoiding Ideological Conflicts](#)

APPENDIX C: [Civil Discourse for the Common Good](#) from the Leadership Conference of Women Religious.

APPENDIX D: Handouts

Also included below are other resources you will want to have during your event:

For Group Activity:

- a. If you choose the Scavenger Hunt activity you will need the [Scavenger Hunt Checklist](#)
- b. If you choose the "Calculate My Carbon Footprint Activity" you will need this [worksheet](#).

For Advocacy Activity:

- a. [Advocacy page link](#)

For Next Steps:

- a. St. Francis Pledge [Sign Up Sheet](#) (to be printed and used to gather names/zip code/ emails) and St. Francis Pledge [webpage](#) (for those with computers/internet)
- b. If you choose the "Start a Creation Care Team" as a next step: [CCT](#) and [Getting Started](#) handout
- c. If you choose the to schedule the "Legislator Visit" as a next step: ["Setting Up a Meeting with Your Legislator"](#)
- d. [Opening and closing prayers](#)

APPENDIX E: Resources

- a. [Laudato Si' in Summary & in Action](#)
- b. [10 Ways Your Parish Can Make a Difference](#)



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## FACILITATORS GUIDE

### Welcome, 5 minutes

Welcome the group to the event. You may want to begin with a round of first-name introductions, and then move to the [opening prayer](#).

### PowerPoint Presentation, 20 minutes

After your welcome and introductions, watch the “Dial Down the Heat” [PowerPoint presentation](#). Note that the video for this program is in the PowerPoint presentation. You can also go to YouTube [here](#) to watch the video.

You might introduce the presentation by saying, “We’re going to watch a PowerPoint presentation about how we can respond to Pope Francis’ call for courageous action on creation care. It will explore how, in a time of great political polarization, we must enter into dialogue and civil conversation in order to cultivate the common good and protect our common home, the earth. We will watch and hear stories from people and communities already impacted by climate change. Afterward, we’ll have a discussion and activities.”

You will need some volunteers to read some of the slides. Do not spend more than 30 seconds on each “silent reflection” slide.

Turn projector on and watch [PowerPoint Presentation](#) which includes:

- Prayers, quotes and reflection questions on Laudato Si’: Care for Our Common Home
- Short summary of how to engage in civil dialogue
- A video which introduces the Church’s position on climate change and creation care as well as stories from already climate-impacted communities
- Discussion questions
- Advocacy activity, group activity, and next steps

### Discussion, 15 minutes

After watching the presentation, discuss it. If your group has more than 10 people in it, you might want to break into small groups.

These discussion questions also appear in the PowerPoint presentation (after the video). You may wish to read the discussion questions (below) or keep them up on the screen as they are also listed on the PowerPoint. The questions will help participants find their personal connections to climate change, explore how it relates to our faith, and think about ways to make a difference.

#### Discussion Questions

- » Why did you feel called to come here today?
- » What aspects of the video we just watched especially resound with you?
- » How do the stories highlighted in the video help us engage the issue of climate change?
- » How do we best respond to Pope Francis’ call for both “urgent action” and “civil dialogue”?



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Activity (Choose one of three), 20 minutes

After your discussion, move to an activity. A hands-on activity will help your group better understand how climate change affects our daily lives and what we can do about it.

As the group leader, you should take time before the event begins to select one of the three activities we have suggested. You will also need to gather the necessary supplies (depending on your choice) ahead of your meeting.

Please choose one of these suggested and conduct it following your video discussion.

We are providing three possible activities for your gathering. As a facilitator, you will choose the activity that best fits your community and its needs. The materials needed for each activity are outlined below. Choose one!

## 1. Tell Your Story!

Materials needed: Newsprint paper, markers, tape.

If your group is larger than 10 persons, divide into smaller groups. Each group should be given a piece of newsprint and a marker. Each group will need to choose a scribe to write on the provided newsprint. You may wish to write down these questions on newsprint and have them available for the group. Or you could project the questions onto the screen.

Script: We just learned about the power of story in helping us to “dial down the heat.” In this activity you will share with your group your own “story” about climate change and creation care. You will have 10 minutes to meet and discuss the following questions:

- 1) Have you ever had a discussion about climate change that got heated and disagreeable?
- 2) Has climate change impacted you, your family, your friends, your community? As you tell your stories, be open to hear each person’s story, not just their opinions about climate change..
- 3) As a group, think of 1-2 ways you could “dial down the heat” when discussing climate change with someone who may not share your views. Could sharing your own story about climate change or of an impacted community help “dial down the heat” in a climate change discussion?

The scribe will write on the newsprint the 1-2 recommendations of how to “dial down the heat” when discussing climate change issues with family, friends, and policymakers. You will have 10 minutes for this small group activity.

Report-back (10 minutes): Have the scribe tape (if allowed) the newsprint to the walls around the room. Each group’s scribe/reporter should read the recommendations to the full group. If taping is not allowed, then ask for a volunteer from each group to hold the newsprint while the scribe/reporter reads out the recommendations.



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## 2. "Dial Down the Heat" Scavenger Hunt

Materials needed: Paper, pencil/pens, [scavenger list](#).

This activity is designed for your participants to hopefully walk around your facilities and discover ways to "dial down the heat." They will be actively searching for ways that your buildings/facilities can be made more energy efficient and sustainable. If you have a very large group, break into small groups where each group is assigned one or two of the items from the Scavenger Hunt List.

Script: Each group will take a copy of the scavenger list and walk for 10 minutes around the facility. Please do not disturb other groups that may be meeting in the building. As you walk around you will be searching for the items on the scavenger list. Put a checkmark on each item if you find it in use in the facility.

Scavenger Hunt List:

- 1) Is there a programmable thermostat? If "yes," can you tell if it is actually programmed to use energy efficiently? \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Are there fans in use to keep rooms cool instead of using AC? \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Are your computers, electronics, etc. plugged into "smart strips" that will turn off when not in use? \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Have all the incandescent lightbulbs been changed to CFLs (compact fluorescent light) or LEDs (light-emitting diode)? \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Are recycling bins available in every room? Are they being used? \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Are there reminders on the wall near the light switches to "turn off the lights" when room not in use? \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Are the windows in the building energy efficient? \_\_\_\_\_

The group(s) should come back at the end of 10 minutes. Each group should report back on their findings. Report-back time is 10 minutes. Was there anything NOT found? How can you work as a group to remedy the lack of energy efficiency/sustainability in the facility?

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## 3. What's Your Carbon Footprint?

Materials needed: [Carbon Footprint Calculator Sheet](#), Newsprint, tape, markers, pencils, pens.

Script: This activity will allow each of you to estimate your own personal/family's carbon footprint. For a more exact carbon footprint calculator go to the carbon footprint calculator at the end of your worksheet. You will have 5 minutes to complete this worksheet.

Give each person a copy of this worksheet and a pencil/pen. At the end of 5 minutes have them discuss their results with their two closest neighbors for 5 minutes.

Script: As this worksheet shows, the more you consume, the greater your carbon footprint. Each time something is consumed, the earth's natural resources are used. By knowing your carbon footprint, you can understand your personal impact on creation.

On newsprint that is taped around the room (or if tape is not allowed, place the newsprint on tables) invite participants to write down ONE thing they will commit to do in order to reduce their carbon footprint. (5 minutes)

Invite everyone to walk around and read all the commitments that have been written on the newsprint. (5 minutes)

### Advocacy, 10 minutes

After your activity, invite the group to advocate for moral climate policies. As the group wraps up its activity, you might say:

Script: "The activity we've just done was a positive step in our own lives. We also need our political leaders to take positive steps. Their decisions will affect millions of people. Right now, meaningful climate change legislation is stalled in the US Congress. Nevertheless, the faith community has an important role to play in raising the moral concerns about climate change to policy-makers.

During his September 17th speech to the U.S. Congress, Pope Francis said: "This common good also includes the earth, a central theme of the encyclical which I recently wrote in order to "enter into dialogue with all people about our common home....We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all!"

Let's remind our nation's lawmakers that they are to promote the common good and protect the most vulnerable. Right now, you are encouraged to send a letter to your U.S. legislators urging civil dialogue and calling for action on climate change.

- On a computer at the front of the room, navigate to [this website](#). If your group has more than 10 people in it, you might want to set up an extra laptop (or two) in advance, so that the advocacy doesn't take too much time.
- Invite participants to come to the computer(s) and sign the letter.
- After each person signs, you will have to navigate back to [this webpage](#) again, and click the "Not [previous user]" button.



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## Next Steps, 10 minutes

Next Steps: Three possible next steps are provided below. We recommend that all FOSF participants be given the opportunity to sign the [St. Francis Pledge](#) if they have not already done so. As a facilitator, you should choose one of the other next steps that best fits the needs of your community.

1. FOR EVERYONE: Sign the Pledge of St. Francis (Pass out the [Sign-up Sheet](#) or go [here](#) to sign online)

Choose one of the following next steps:

2. Start a Creation Care Team:

Does your group have an established Creation Care Team (CCT)? If not, ask them whether they'd like to continue working to understand and solve climate change.

Script: "Do we want to get together as a group? Catholic Climate Covenant invites us to start a Creation Care Team to work together to create more sustainable facilities, advocate for faith-informed climate policies and help transform our community to be, in Pope Francis's words, 'protectors of God's gifts'" (Pass out copies of the CCT Handout the CCT Getting Started Toolkit and discuss the possibility of starting a Creation Care Team in your parish, school or religious community.)

If your group chooses to continue getting together and to start a Creation Care Team, pass the group interest sheet available [here](#).

Ask for two volunteers to take the next steps in getting the group together. This includes:

- » choosing a meeting place and time
- » making sure that everyone on the sign-up sheet is invited
- » registering your new CCT with Catholic Climate Covenant ([www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org/CCT](http://www.CatholicClimateCovenant.org/CCT))

3. Setup a Meeting With Your Legislators:

If your group already has a Creation Care Team, or if you prefer not to continue meeting as a group, an alternative next step would be to schedule a meeting with your federal legislators (Representative and/or Senators) for after the elections. See "[Setting Up a Meeting with Your Legislator](#)." (Please [email](#) us if you do meet with your legislators! We would like to keep a list of legislative meetings.)

## Conclusion, 5 minutes

1. Congratulate your group on a job well done!
2. Remind them that Catholic Climate Covenant is a great place to learn more about the Church's teachings on creation and the poor.
3. Thank everyone for coming.
4. Lead people in the [closing prayer](#).

