



FACILITATOR GUIDE

# FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS

**We Are All Connected:  
Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor**

# FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS

## INTRODUCTION

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining with thousands of others to host an educational session highlighting the urgent need for concrete actions on climate change. In particular, this year's program focuses on the issues highlighted by the [Synod of the Amazon](#): integral ecology, the interconnectedness of all creation, and the urgent need to listen to the voice of indigenous communities as they confront development projects that do not respect native cultures and lands.

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 19 national partners, the Covenant has provided the Feast of St. Francis (FOSF) 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 caring for creation and the poor.

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 also marks the 40th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi being named the patron saint of those who promote ecology by St. John Paul II.

This program is designed with the 2019 Feast of St. Francis (October 4) in mind. However, we hope you will feel free to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis at a time that is convenient to your parish, school, or other group.

### **Adapt/Modify**

This is YOUR program and we hope you will feel free to adapt/modify to meet your needs, audience, or other factors. If you don't have 90 minutes, choose the segments that may work best for your community. If you need to split the educational sections and the activities, please do so.

### **Blessing of the Animals**

Many have asked us for a [Blessing of the Animals liturgy](#) and we are pleased to offer one for your use! You may choose to hold the blessing on October 4th and then hold a separate 90-minute Feast of St. Francis program on a day of your choosing, or you can do both on the same day. You will need to speak to your pastor (or deacon/lay leader) about leading the Blessing of the Animals.



## FACILITATOR NOTES

### Video

To view the video on the day of your presentation, there are two options:

- If you have internet access in the location of the program, you can view it directly from [YouTube](#).
- You can also [download and save the video](#) to your computer. There are also several apps that allow you to download and then use a video from the internet.

### What You'll Need

All the materials you will need for a successful educational event can be found in this Facilitator Guide. The program includes opening and closing prayers, readings, a video, discussion questions, and suggested activities.

1. **Participant Program Guide** (does not include facilitator notes or script) is found after the Facilitator Guide. Make enough copies for all your participants.
2. For **displaying the video**, you will need a computer, projector, speakers and a screen. If you are not downloading the video to your computer, you will need an internet connection. The projector will need to connect to your computer and speakers can be connected either to your computer or the projector, depending on your equipment.
3. For the **advocacy activity**: To participate in the recommended advocacy activity, you will need either a couple of laptops with internet access and/or you can ask participants to use their smartphones to access the [online action](#). You can also give all participants [this link](#): <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/ShahenBillSupport> for them to take the advocacy action on their own.
4. For the **tree-planting activity**:  
**NOTE:** This activity may need to be scheduled at a different time than the educational program. But if you can have all the materials ready for a short tree planting and blessing, you may wish to schedule it for 20-25 minutes during the 90-minute program.

### Why plant trees?

- Trees help lessen the impact of climate change. They absorb carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. In fact, an acre of mature trees absorbs annually the same amount of carbon dioxide produced by driving the average car 26,000 miles.
- Trees help us breathe clean air. Trees absorb pollutant gases (nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide and ozone) and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark.
- Trees help communities. Trees help communities achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability and provide food, energy and income. This is especially beneficial for poor and vulnerable communities.
- A new [study](#) found that adding 2.2 billion acres of tree cover would capture two-thirds of man-made carbon emissions. The Catholic community can have a dramatic impact if we all step up and plant trees.



**Consider which of these tree planting options that best fit your community:**

A) Plant a tree (or trees) on your church or school grounds, or somewhere in your local community (perhaps a local park). For information about how to plant trees in your community contact your local parks Department. [Arbor Day Foundation](#) and [National Wildlife Federation](#) both have free tree seedlings/saplings programs. You can also [check with your State Forester](#) for more information and grants or [here](#) for state by state information.

The tree planting could be accompanied by a blessing from your pastor. For liturgical resources suitable for tree blessings, [check this material](#) from our partner, Catholic Rural Life.

B) If tree planting in your community is not possible you may wish to consider donating to [TIST- the International Small Group and Tree Planting Program](#), an organization dedicated to planting trees and transforming lives in Africa. We are excited to partner with them to “grow clean air.” To donate to TIST, [go here](#). Every \$1 donation = one tree planted.

C) Give tree seedlings to parishioners/members of your group or to school students to plant at home. Challenge your parish or school community to have each member family plant at least one tree.

**NOTE:** If your parish, school, or religious community plants a tree (or trees), please let us know [here](#) so we can keep track of how many trees the U.S. Catholic community is planting.

5) **Start/Register a Creation Care Team:** Please see this [Creation Care Team Handout](#) for information on this program. Creation Care Teams (“green teams”) are a great long-term activity that will engage your community and encourage them to reduce their carbon footprint, create sustainable facilities, and educate/organize on creation care. Register and we will resource you with a monthly email full of programmatic activities and projects. The resources are free! Questions? Contact [Paz@CatholicClimateCovenant.org](mailto:Paz@CatholicClimateCovenant.org).



# FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS

## 2019 Program Guide WITH FACILITATOR NOTES AND SCRIPT

NOTE: Facilitator instructions are in orange. *Italics* denote the script.

### OPENING PRAYER (2 MINUTES)

#### The Earth is the Lord's

*L: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof."  
Creation reminds us, O God, of your love.*

All: By grace we are learning, as year leads to year,  
We're called to be stewards, your caretakers here.

*L: Your rainforests nurture the world that we share.  
Your wetlands give animals shelter and care.*

All: Your coral reefs cradle the life of the sea.  
You've shown us, in love, what your good world can be.

*L: Too often, O God, we abuse your good earth.  
We fail to remember its beauty and worth.*

All: We take from creation much more than we need,  
We threaten your world through indifference and greed.

*L: May we be good stewards of all that you give,  
Protecting creation wherever we live.*

All: May we be a church that renews and restores  
And lovingly cares for this earth that is yours.

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Permission is given for the use and adaptation of this hymn for the 2019 Feast of St. Francis

### READINGS (10 MINUTES)

(Ask for five volunteers for the readings)

#### Reading #1: We Are One Body in Christ

"For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ—and individually parts of one another." ~Romans 12: 4-5

#### Reading #2: Everything is Connected

"[W]hen our hearts are authentically open to universal communion, [a] sense of fraternity excludes nothing and no one. It follows that our indifference or cruelty towards fellow creatures of this world sooner or later affects the treatment we mete out to other human beings. We have only one heart, and the same wretchedness which leads us to mistreat an animal will not be long in showing itself in our relationships with other people. Every act of cruelty towards any creature is 'contrary to human dignity'. We can hardly consider ourselves to be fully loving if we disregard any aspect of reality:



'Peace, justice and the preservation of creation are three absolutely interconnected themes, which cannot be separated and treated individually without once again falling into reductionism'. Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage, woven together by the love God has for each of his creatures and which also unites us in fond affection with brother sun, sister moon, brother river and mother earth." ~*Laudato Si'* 92

### Reading #3: Recognition and Respect for All

"The human environment and the natural environment are deteriorating together, and this deterioration of the planet weighs upon the most vulnerable of its people. The impact of climate change affects, first and foremost, those who live in poverty in every corner of the globe. Our obligation to use the earth's goods responsibly implies the recognition of and respect for all people and all living creatures. The urgent call and challenge to care for creation are an invitation for all of humanity to work towards sustainable and integral development." ~*Joint Message of Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew on the World Day of Prayer for Creation, Sept. 1, 2017*

### Reading #4: Listening and Interpreting Nature and God's Messages

The history of the universe and nature is being told to us by the stars, by the Earth, by the uprising and elevation of the mountains, by the animals, the woods and jungles, and by the rivers. Our task is to know how to listen and interpret the messages that are sent to us. The original peoples knew how to read every movement of the clouds, the meaning of the winds, and they knew when violent downpours were coming... We have forgotten all that. ~*Fr. Leonardo Boff*

### Reading #5: The Art of Living Well

Indigenous peoples are a living appeal for hope. They remind us that human beings have a shared responsibility in the care of the "common home." And if certain decisions taken thus far have ruined it, it is never too late to learn the lesson and adopt a new lifestyle. It is about adopting a way to move forward which, leaving behind superficial approaches and harmful or exploitative habits, overcomes atrocious individualism, convulsive consumerism and cold selfishness. The earth suffers and the native peoples are familiar with the dialogue with the earth; they know what it means to listen to the earth, to see the earth, to touch the earth. They know the art of living well, in harmony with the earth. ~*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants at the IV Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, February, 14, 2019*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 MINUTES)

Have group break up into small groups of no more than five people.

Script: *In your small groups, discuss the questions in your program. You will have 15 minutes for this section.*

## VIDEO (20 MINUTES)

Script: *We will now watch this short video which will focus on integral ecology, interconnectedness, and the stories of several indigenous communities.*

PLAY VIDEO <https://youtu.be/NcX6zjPY6Mg>

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 MINUTES)

Have group break up into small groups of no more than five people.

Script: *In small groups, discuss the questions in your program. You will have 15 minutes for this section.*



## ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

Please select at least one of these activities and have the materials ready prior to the beginning of the program. You know your community best and can best determine which activity fits your communities' passion and abilities.

Script: *Today we will have an opportunity to participate in the following activity(ies):*

### 1. Advocacy Action:

Script: *On June 1, 2017, President Trump announced that the United States would withdraw from the Paris Agreement. The Agreement's central aim is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. This aim is a major step by the world's nations to address the climate crisis and ensure a livable future for all peoples and our planet.*

*The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) responded to the President's withdrawal by saying:*

*"The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) along with Pope Francis and the entire Catholic Church, have consistently upheld the Paris agreement as an important international mechanism to promote environmental stewardship and encourage climate change mitigation. The President's decision not to honor the U.S. commitment to the Paris agreement is deeply troubling."*

*On June 5th, 2019, Sen. Jeanne Shaheen introduced the International Climate Accountability Act (S.1743), a bipartisan bill co-sponsored by 46 Senators, which prohibits the use of federal funding to advance the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and calls upon the President to develop and submit a plan for the United States to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Agreement. A similar bill in the House of Representatives - the Climate Action Now Act (H.R.9) - passed the House on May 2nd, 2019.*

*As faithful Catholics seeking national and global leadership to address the climate crisis, we ask that you thank your Senators who have sponsored S.1743, and call upon your Senators who have not, to do so.*

*Please go to this link: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/ShahenBillSupport>*

And/or

### 2. PLANT TREES:

You may schedule this on the same day of your educational program or on a different date.

You may:

- Host a tree planting in your parish/school land or at a local park.
- Distribute saplings to all participants so that they may plant the tree in the location of their choosing.
- Have a special collection and donate to TIST—the International Small Group and Tree Planting Program—and sponsor a tree planting.

Script: *We are going to plant a tree(s). Studies have determined that planting trees is one of the best things we can do to deal with climate change. We invite you to come outside where we will have a short tree planting ceremony.*

Or

*Today you will receive a free sapling to plant in your chosen location. Please go [here](#) to add your name to the list of Catholics planting trees.*

Or



Today we will take a special collection that will be sent to TIST—the International Small Group and Tree Planting Program to sponsor the planting of trees in Africa. To donate individually go here: <https://www.growcleanair.com/catholic-climate-covenant-and-tist>. Every \$1.00 donation plants one tree.

And/or

### 3) Start/register a Creation Care Team

Learn what a Creation Care Team is about here: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/cct](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/cct)

*Script: We will discuss the possibility of starting a Creation Care Team and/or registering a Creation Care Team with Catholic Climate Covenant.*

## CONCLUSION AND CLOSING PRAYER (5 minutes)

*Script: Congratulations! You have all done a very good job. Please remember that a great place to learn more about the Catholic church's teachings on creation and the poor is Catholic Climate Covenant's website (<http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org>). I'd like to thank everyone for coming and being such wonderful participants in the Feast of St. Francis program.*

## CLOSING PRAYER

*Script: We will now join in prayer as we close this Feast of St. Francis program.*

**Leader:** God is before us.

**People:** God is behind us.

**Leader:** God is above us.

**People:** God is below us.

**Leader:** Gods words shall come from our mouths.

**People:** For we are all God's essence, a sign of God's love.

**Leader:** All is finished in beauty.

**All:** All is finished in beauty.

- Rev. Tweedy Sombrero Navarrete, Dine (Used by permission)





PARTICIPANT PROGRAM

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You've shown us, in love, what your good world can be.*

*L: Too often, O God, we abuse your good earth.  
We fail to remember its beauty and worth.*

*All: We take from creation much more than we need,  
We threaten your world through indifference and greed.*

*L: May we be good stewards of all that you give,  
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*All: May we be a church that renews and restores  
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Indigenous peoples are a living appeal for hope. They remind us that human beings have a shared responsibility in the care of the "common home." And if certain decisions taken thus far have ruined it, it is never too late to learn the lesson and adopt a new lifestyle. It is about adopting a way to move forward which, leaving behind superficial approaches and harmful or exploitative habits, overcomes atrocious individualism, convulsive consumerism and cold selfishness. The earth suffers and the native peoples are familiar with the dialogue with the earth; they know what it means to listen to the earth, to see the earth, to touch the earth. They know the art of living well, in harmony with the earth. ~*Address of His Holiness Pope Francis to Participants at the IV Meeting of the Indigenous Peoples' Forum, February, 14, 2019*

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 MINUTES)

*At the heart of Laudato Si' is the idea that everything is connected, and at the heart of the concept of inter-connection is St. Francis of Assisi. He saw everything and everyone, from humans to animals, from trees to rocks, from the sun and the moon to the lepers and most destitute as his brother or sister.*

- 1) What most impacted you from the above readings?
- 2) Where do you see/experience the interconnection with God, with humanity, and with creation? Can you think of specific examples? **Name these interconnections.**  
Are there examples in your life of where connections are broken? **Name the broken connections.**
- 3) Both Pope Francis and Fr. Leonardo Boff speak about listening to indigenous communities and their wisdom. Are you aware and/or connected with the first inhabitants of the land you live in? What message do they share about the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor? How can you and your faith community strengthen the connections with indigenous communities?

## VIDEO (20 MINUTES)

PLAY VIDEO



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (15 MINUTES)

- 1) What most impacted you from the video?
- 2) In the first segment of the video, we learn about “integral ecology” which is the understanding that everything is connected. Can you think of examples of problems in your local community where an “integral ecology” approach might help find solutions to persistent problems?
- 3) Earlier we discussed how everything is interconnected. How do you see your life interconnected with the lives of the indigenous people highlighted in the video? How would St. Francis of Assisi respond to the plight of these communities? How should we respond?

## ACTIVITIES (20 MINUTES)

Your facilitator has chosen the activity (or activities) you will participate in today. Please follow their instructions.

### 1. Advocacy:

To take the advocacy action in support of Sen. Jeanne Shaheen’s International Climate Accountability Act (S.1743), a bipartisan bill co-sponsored by 46 Senators, which prohibits the use of federal funding to advance the withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement and calls upon the President to develop and submit a plan for the United States to meet its nationally determined contribution under the Agreement go here: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/ShahenBillSupport>

### 2. Tree planting:

- Trees help lessen the impact of climate change. They absorb carbon dioxide from our atmosphere. In fact, an acre of mature trees absorbs annually the same amount of carbon dioxide produced by driving the average car 26,000 miles.
- Trees help us breathe clean air. Trees absorb pollutant gases (nitrogen oxides, ammonia, sulfur dioxide and ozone) and filter particulates out of the air by trapping them on their leaves and bark.
- Trees help communities. Trees help communities achieve long-term economic and environmental sustainability and provide food, energy and income. This is especially beneficial for poor and vulnerable communities.
- A new study (<https://science.sciencemag.org/content/365/6448/76>) found that adding 2.2 billion acres of tree cover would capture two-thirds of man-made carbon emissions. The Catholic community can have a dramatic impact if we all step-up and plant trees.

**NOTE:** If you wish to donate to have trees planted, go here: <https://www.growcleanair.com/catholic-climate-covenant-and-tist>

If you plant or donate a tree(s), let us know here: <https://catholicclimatecovenant.salsalabs.org/FOSF2019TreePlantingReportback>

We will compile the number of trees planted by the US Catholic community!

**3) For Creation Care Team information go here: [www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/cct](http://www.catholicclimatecovenant.org/cct)**



## CONCLUSION AND CLOSING PRAYER (5 MINUTES)

### Closing Prayer

**Leader:** God is before us.

**People:** God is behind us.

**Leader:** God is above us.

**People:** God is below us.

**Leader:** Gods words shall come from our mouths.

**People:** For we are all God's essence, a sign of God's love.

**Leader:** All is finished in beauty.

**All:** All is finished in beauty.

- Rev. Tweedy Sombrero Navarrete, Dine (Used by permission)

# THANK YOU FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE 2019 FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS PROGRAM.

For more information visit [catholicclimatecovenant.org](http://catholicclimatecovenant.org).

