

Laudato Si'

&

Climate Action

in High School

A Seven Part
Guide



Brought to you by the
Ignatian Solidary Network and
Catholic Climate Covenant



Catholic Climate Covenant
Together for our Common Home

Dear Friends,

Welcome to our high school guide for [Laudato Si'](#) and Climate Action! The goal of this guide is to help you and your class or environmental club lead your school toward environmental sustainability and climate action no matter where you are on the journey.

The guide is focused on the seven goals of the Vatican's [Laudato Si' Action Platform](#):

- Response to the Cry of the Earth
- Response to the Cry of the Poor
- Ecological Economics
- Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles
- Ecological Education
- Ecological Spirituality
- Community Resilience and Empowerment

For each goal, we provide reflection questions, prayer, suggested prayer of the faithful to be used at your school Mass, and communal actions (easy, medium, hard).

For questions or insight on how to implement the suggested actions, contact Brenna Davis of the [Ignatian Solidarity Network](#) or Kayla Jacobs of [Catholic Climate Covenant](#).

In Peace,

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Response to the Cry of the Earth

We are called to protect our common home for the well-being of all, as we equitably address the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecological sustainability.

Reflection questions:

1. How are we already responding to the Cry of the Earth at our school? What additional ideas do we have to promote a response to the Cry of the Earth at our school?
2. How can our school promote the adoption of renewable energy or better promote energy conservation?
3. Do we have space on our campus to support biodiversity conservation through a pollinator garden or planting native plants? Where?
4. How can we promote clean waterways by preventing litter and plastics from entering our water systems or by replacing pesticides and fertilizers with natural alternatives on our campus?
5. How can we reduce waste at our school?

Short Prayer:

God of all, may we hear the cry of the Earth and respond to the call to protect our common home. Help us to commit ourselves to this journey by reimagining how we can equitably address the climate crisis, particularly through energy conservation, biodiversity, and promoting clean waterways in our community.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

May we as a community commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of hearing the cry of the Earth and to taking action to protect our common home.

Suggested Communal Actions:

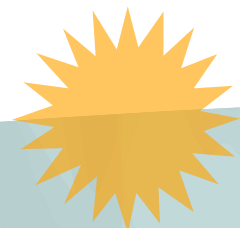
- **EASY:**
 - Plan a [Litter Pilgrimage](#) for your community.
- **MEDIUM:**
 - Gather a group from your school and make a plan to plant pollinators and native plants (see [potential grant funding](#)) on site this spring, or make a plan to do an energy audit of your campus buildings ([DIY Energy Star guide](#) or [Faith & the Common Good DIY Guide](#)).
 - Conduct a [Waste Audit](#) in your cafeteria
- **HARD:**
 - Investigate installing solar energy and/or going net zero at your school. [Catholic Energies](#) helps Catholic organizations with planning, funding, and management in the transition to solar energy and net zero.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

“Soil, water,
mountains:
everything is,
as it were, a
caress of God.”

Laudato Si', 84

We are planning to:



Response to the Cry of the Poor

This goal is a call to promote ecological justice, aware that we are called to defend human life from conception to natural death, and all forms of life on Earth. When we consider this goal, we must ponder who are the people most vulnerable to the impacts of pollution and climate change. We also consider the plants, animals, and ecosystems that are threatened by these issues. How can we create a world where life can flourish abundantly?

Reflection questions:

1. As we reflect on where we live, what communities and people are most directly affected by pollution and climate change?
2. What are local environmental issues unique to our community that impact the health of our neighbors and our local ecosystem?
3. How do we feel called to defend human life from conception to natural death and all forms of life on Earth?
4. How are we already responding to the “cry of the poor”? What additional ideas do we have to promote a response to the “cry of the poor” in our community?

Short Prayer:

God of solidarity, we pray that you help us to grow in our attention to the realities of the most vulnerable. We uplift the impacts of pollution on mothers and their unborn babies, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) communities that are statistically more likely to be located near environmental hazards, low-income communities that are often considered “the path of least resistance” for the placement of highways and factories, and the plants, animals, and ecosystems that cannot defend themselves against pollution and environmental degradation. May we build a capacity to take action as advocates in a way that defends the well-being of all people from conception to natural death, and of all forms of life on our planet.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

May we as a community grow in solidarity, committing ourselves to truly hearing and understanding the stories of the most vulnerable in our world, especially those most impacted by environmental injustice.

Suggested Communal Actions:

- **E A S Y:** [Learn about](#) an environmental justice organization in your own community, and invite them to give a presentation about their work to your school community.
- **M E D I U M:**
 - Sign up for the [Interconnected: 21-Day Catholic Environmental Justice Challenge](#) to gain more knowledge about environmental justice issues in general.
 - Coordinate a service trip to volunteer with an Environmental Justice organization or help with a community air quality testing project.
- **H A R D:** Commit to learn from and partner with a local environmental justice group in your community. Create a structure to advocate for environmental justice issues following the lead of the people most directly impacted in the community where you live.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

Environmental Justice:

the just treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of income, race, color, national origin, Tribal affiliation, or disability, in decision-making that affect human health and the environment

Source: : [Learn About Environmental Justice | EPA](#)



We are planning to:

Ecological Economics

Acknowledges that the economy is a sub-system of human society, which itself is embedded within the biosphere—our common home. This goal invites us to consider how our community participates in our economic system and if we prioritize the dignity of workers and consider the environmental impacts of the products we buy and use.

Reflection questions:

1. Does our school mindfully purchase items that are produced in ways that provide a living wage to the people who make them and that are sustainable for our biosphere if we have the resources? Are there items we purchase that we don't necessarily need?
2. Do the ways that we invest and spend money demonstrate our concern for the environment, a commitment to workers, and to the people most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change that are already happening?
3. Do we support circular economies and try our best to practice ethical consumption?
4. How are we already encouraging ecological economics? What additional ideas do you have to promote ecological economics in our school community?

Short Prayer:

God of all, may we be moved to tap into the countless ways that human ingenuity, animated by your Spirit, has allowed us to collectively live more sustainably on the Earth, protecting the dignity of people and planet. We pray that we always prioritize the dignity and rights of workers as we make purchasing decisions at our school and that we consider how our financial investments impact the health of the planet. We pray for creativity as we remember that "we are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental."

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

May we as a community consider how we can be a part of an economy that better cares for the Earth and all workers and others made vulnerable by the relentless pursuit of financial gains.

Suggested Communal Actions:

- **E A S Y:**
 - Serve [fair trade coffee or chocolate](#) at your next club meeting or the next faculty event, and provide a sign or briefly share how fair trade products support the dignity of workers and the earth.
 - Host a clothing swap or uniform swap.
- **M E D I U M:**
 - Commit to making your next order for your school ethical (e.g. t-shirts, bags, water bottles, etc.). Learn more about the [Catholic Ethical Purchasing Alliance](#) and [Ethix Merch](#), and consider learning about ways to integrate ethical purchasing into your everyday practices.
 - Work with your curriculum director to incorporate ecological economics in your economics classes.
- **H A R D:** Form a team to create an ethical purchasing or ethical investing policy at your school and present it to the administration or school board.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

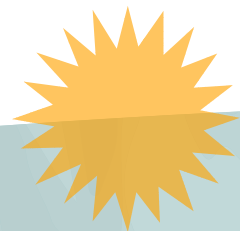
Circular Economy:

A circular economy keeps materials and products in circulation for as long possible. A process that reduces material use, redesigns materials and products to be less resource intensive, and recaptures “waste” as a resource to manufacture new materials and products.

Source: [What is a Circular Economy? | EPA](#)



We are planning to:



Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Grounded in the idea of sufficiency, and promoting sobriety in the use of resources and energy. We are invited to consider ways in which we can live simply individually and as a school community.

Reflection questions:

1. How could we reduce waste at community events by opting for reusable items, composting, and more clearly labeling recycling?
2. Are there opportunities to become more sustainable in our dietary habits by opting for more plant-based and/or locally sourced meals at some of our events or in the cafeteria?
3. Are there areas of our campus where we could limit or eliminate single-use items (e.g. plastic water bottles, styrofoam cups, etc.)?
4. Are there any specific areas of the campus where we can focus our efforts to improve sustainability (e.g., classrooms, sporting events, off-campus retreats, faculty/board meetings, and other gatherings)?
5. How are we already promoting the adoption of simple lifestyles? Do you have any other ideas to promote adopting simple lifestyles in our community?

Short Prayer:

As we attempt to live more simply, *Laudato Si'* reminds us to follow the "little way of love" of St. Therese of Lisieux and that "An integral ecology is also made up of simple daily gestures which break with the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness. In the end, a world of exacerbated consumption is at the same time a world which mistreats life in all its forms." God of our day-to-day, we ask, in the midst of all of the joy, sorrow, chaos, and fatigue of our lives, that you gift us with the courage to choose to live lightly on the Earth as we go about our daily lives.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

May we all, in the modesty of our day-to-day lives, be gifted with the motivation to choose to live sustainably and in a way that cares for our common home.

Suggested Communal Actions:

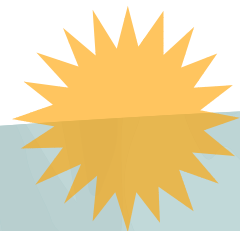
- **EASY:** Find one reusable alternative for a disposable product often used at school.
- **MEDIUM:**
 - Commit to composting for an upcoming community event. There are often local composters you can contract if you don't already have a system in place.
 - Advocate for one meatless day a week in your cafeteria.
- **HARD:**
 - Complete an energy audit. (Sample plans from [Colorado State University](#) and [Interfaith Power and Light](#))
 - Propose for your school administration to install cleaner or more efficient lighting, reduce heating and air conditioning through [programmable thermostats](#), and install low-flow taps in your school.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

“... there are no lasting changes without cultural changes, without a maturing of lifestyles and convictions within societies, and there are no cultural changes without personal changes.”

Laudate Deum, 70

We are planning to:



Ecological Education

This goal is about re-thinking and re-designing curricular and institutional reform in the spirit of integral ecology to foster ecological awareness and transformative action. Actions could include ensuring equitable access to education for all and promoting human rights, fostering Laudato Si' themes within the community, integrating ecology across the curriculum, encouraging ecological leadership (students, teachers), and ecological restoration activities.

Reflection questions:

1. Have you received education about climate change or the climate crisis at your school? Is this integrated in different subject areas/across the curriculum? Where could it be added or improved?
2. How can we better provide educational opportunities about environmental issues for teachers, students, and other members of our community?
3. Who might we invite to collaborate with us as we plan programming that invites community members to explore our local ecosystem?
4. How are we already promoting ecological education? What additional ideas do you have to promote ecological education in our community?

Short Prayer:

God of creativity, breathe within us the gift of innovation and open mindedness, that we may rethink the ways in which we share the work of ecological justice in our homes, classrooms, parishes, workplaces, and communities.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

May our community be infused by the Spirit with the gift of creativity, working together to imagine new possibilities and ways to better care for our planet and all who dwell upon it.

Suggested Communal Actions:

- **E A S Y:** Screen [The Letter](#), a film about how people are living out *Laudato Si'* across the world, host informational events, or plan a [Season of Creation](#) or Earth Day event.
- **M E D I U M:** Share the [Wholemakers](#) curriculum with your teachers to be incorporated into classes or your Green Team meetings.
- **H A R D:**
 - Conduct a curriculum audit to include climate crisis information in all of your classes or create a Climate Crisis class ([example](#)).
 - Advocate for all teachers to receive professional development on integrating climate change into the curriculum.
 - California has made a law requiring all public schools to teach climate change across the curriculum. [Learn](#) about this law and begin advocating for a similar change in your state.

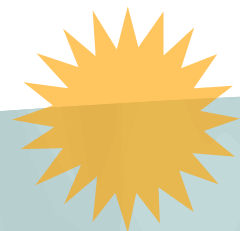
Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

“Basic awareness would enable the development of new convictions, attitudes and forms of life. A great cultural, spiritual and educational challenge stands before us, and it will demand that we set out on the long path of renewal.”

Laudato Si', 202



We are planning to:



Ecological Spirituality

Springs from a profound ecological conversion and helps us to “discover God in all things”, both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted, aware that the life of the spirit is not dissociated from worldly realities. We are invited to consider how we can promote and integrate ecological spirituality into our school community.

Reflection questions:

1. Do we promote creation-based liturgical celebrations or provide time for community members to pray outdoors or to reflect on creation intentionally?
2. How does our school connect with the current realities surrounding us —“both in the beauty of creation and in the sighs of the sick and the groans of the afflicted”?
3. Where have you celebrated the gift of creation? How can ecological spirituality sustain our hope in these times?
4. How do we already practice ecological spirituality? What additional ideas do you have to promote ecological spirituality in our community?

Short Prayer:

God of awe and wonder, may our hearts be open to finding you in all things, both in beauty and in suffering, so that our lives and actions may affirm the dignity and value of all creation.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

As we work to better care for our common home, may our hearts be open to find God in all things, both in beauty and in suffering, so that our lives and actions may affirm the dignity and value of all creation.

Suggested Communal Actions:

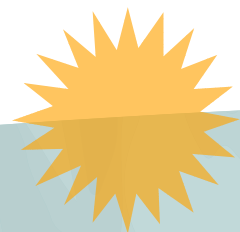
- **EASY:**
 - Include ecological prayers of the faithful during school Mass or include short Laudato Si' reflections in the morning announcements
 - Invite your community to pray the [Ignatian Eco-Examen](#) and offer a shared reflection opportunity.
 - Host or participate in a prayerful [awe walk](#).
- **MEDIUM:** Coordinate a [Mass for Creation](#).
- **HARD:** Organize an eco-spirituality-focused retreat for your school, such as a [Laudato Si' Retreat](#) or wilderness retreat.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

We are planning to:

“Jesus “was able to invite others to be attentive to the beauty that there is in the world because He Himself was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attraction full of fondness and wonder.”

Laudate Deum, 64



Community Resilience & Empowerment

Envision a synodal journey of community engagement and participatory action at various levels.

Reflection questions:

1. How is our school currently engaged in advocacy at the local and national level? How does this advocacy speak to the realities of our community/neighborhood?
2. Does our school currently have a Laudato Si' Action Plan in process to advocate for ecological change in our own community? If so, have students been consulted in the process? If not, could our group get the process started? Which teacher could help you with this?
3. Who can you invite into this plan? What gifts do community members have to share?
4. How do we already promote empowerment and advocacy? What additional ideas do you have to promote community resilience and empowerment in our faith community, and beyond to the wider community?

Short Prayer:

God of resurrection, we ask for the grace to collaborate with members of our community and everyone working towards ecological justice and restoration. We pray for the spirit of discernment as we consider how our unique talents and vocations can support our community in this endeavor. Through our discernment and engagement, we pray that we can empower others to see their gifts and to act for ecological justice.

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful:

God of justice, may we as a community commit ourselves to advocacy and action as we more firmly root ourselves in the care of our common home, both locally and globally.

Suggested Communal Actions:

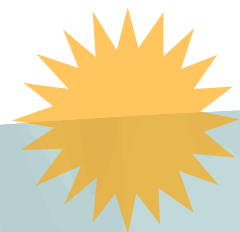
- **E A S Y:** Talk to or survey other students about why they care about climate change or what changes they would like to see on campus.
- **M E D I U M:** Research faith coalitions working on climate justice in your surrounding area, and explore how your community can join.
- **H A R D:** Advocate to teachers and school administrators to create a [Laudato Si' Action Plan](#). Build a team to help you work through this process, and reach out to Catholic Climate Covenant or the Ignatian Solidarity Network if you need support getting started. Visit [God's Planet](#) website for more resources for United States based LSAP.

Or **create your own:** These suggestions are just a few of many possible options.

“We must regain the conviction that we need one another, that we have a shared responsibility for others and the world, and that being good and decent are worth it.”

Laudato Si', 229

We are planning to:



Let us know what you did! We are excited to highlight your efforts on socials and celebrate your success! Fill out this form to share your accomplishments or to share ideas or questions:



@ignatiansolidarity



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