



Let Us Sow Hope

2024 Feast of St. Francis

FACILITATOR PROGRAM GUIDE

Feast of St. Francis

Introduction

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining thousands of other people of faith to host this 90-minute educational program designed to assist you, your family, parish, school, diocese, religious community, or other Catholic institution in becoming instruments of God's peace and committing to climate actions to avoid climate despair and sow climate hope.

** The program is adaptable. You may choose to add time or shorten by only doing parts of the program.*

Background

Since 2006, Catholic Climate Covenant has inspired and equipped Catholics to work together to care for our common home. Since 2012, in collaboration with our 20 national partners, the Covenant has provided the annual Feast of St. Francis (FOSF) program, a guide for a 90-minute interactive program focused on Catholic social teaching and creation care. You can find previous years' FOSF programs [here](#).

Why host 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 how to take action to protect our common home as a community of faith.

Pope Francis was so inspired by St. Francis of Assisi that he is the first Roman pontiff to take the saint's name. Since the beginning of his papacy, he has challenged us to make peace, justice, and care for creation a cornerstone of our Catholic witness.

This year also marks the 45th anniversary of St. Francis of Assisi being named the patron saint of those who promote ecology by St. John Paul II. 2024 is also the 800th anniversary of the Stigmata of St. Francis.

This program is designed to celebrate the 2024 Feast of St. Francis on October 4, which is also the last day of the Season of Creation. However, we encourage you to celebrate the Feast of St. Francis at any time that is convenient to your parish, school, religious community, or other group.

Customize this Program

This is **YOUR** program, and we hope you will feel free to **adapt** it 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 modify the program, please do so. This program works best if done as an in-person group event, but we provide you with directions to use it via an online system (such as Zoom or Google Meets). And of course, you are welcome to use it by yourself or with your family and friends.

Facilitator Notes

Decide if you will be having an in-person event or an online (i.e., Zoom) event. This Facilitator Guide is mainly written for an in-person event but also has information for leading an online event (or for individual/family use).

We provide you with:

- A. This Facilitator program guide with all the prayers, readings, script/instructions, and links to videos
- B. A **Participant Program Guide** (print for in-person event or share the link for online event)

Choose the Date/Time

The Feast of St. Francis is celebrated on October 4th — but feel free to use this program at any time during the **Season of Creation** (September 1st- October 4th) or at another time that is convenient to your community.

The program is 90 minutes long. However, you may wish to give yourself extra time to allow for more discussion or more time for the suggested activity.

Locate and Schedule a Room (Venue) for the Program

If having an in-person event, ensure that the room/space has enough seating for expected participants. The event room should be able to be arranged so that small groups can gather for discussion and for activity.

If having an online event, you will need to have access to an online application (such as Zoom) that allows you to have breakout rooms (for small group discussions if gathering more than five people.)

Invite and Inspire Others

Register your Feast of St. Francis event at the Godsplanet.us website (this is the website where **U.S. Catholics** can go to read stories, share stories, and connect with others engaging with the Laudato Si Action Platform). If your program is open to others in the community, you may use [this form](#) to submit your event to the **Events Calendar**. While there, you can check out the downloadable materials for your use and learn what others are doing as they engage with the **Laudato Si' Action Platform (LSAP)**!

After your event has passed, you can also share photos and stories from your gathering on the **News and Events** page where it says **Submit your creation care story here**.

Invitations/Promotion

Invite members of your parish, school, religious community, etc., to attend the Feast of St. Francis program. You may use [this text](#) in a newsletter/bulletin insert and/or [this flyer](#) for promotion.

Video

To view/share the video that is part of the program on the day of your event, there are two options:

- If you have internet access in the location of the program, you can view the video directly from [YouTube](#).
- If you do not have Wi-Fi access, you can download and save the video to your computer. Note that the downloaded video should not be edited! To download the video, [go here](#).

For displaying the video, you will need a computer, a 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 the speakers can be connected either to your computer or the projector, depending on your equipment.

For online event: Programs like Zoom allow you to share the videos directly from YouTube through screen sharing (be sure to allow sound sharing if sharing from YouTube), or you can download and share the video from your desktop. Here is some information about [sharing a video from your desktop on Zoom](#).

What Else Might You Need?

FOR THE IN-PERSON ACTIVITY, YOU WILL NEED TO HAVE:

- Tables or clipboards (enough for your expected participants)
- Index cards (5 X 8 would be ideal). One card per attendee will be sufficient.
- Paper (for notetaking)
- Pencils/pens (one per participant)
- Coloring pencils and crayons (enough for each participant to have a selection of colors)
- Large poster paper (you might need several sheets if expecting a large group)
- Transparent tape

Be sure to have enough supplies for the expected number of attendees.

(Note: After the activity is over and you and the participants have added the completed index cards to the poster paper, consider displaying the cards on a bulletin board or other publicly visible area where others can be inspired by the community's ideas.)

FOR AN ONLINE EVENT:

Let participants know that they will need paper/index cards and pen/pencils, coloring pencils, crayons, etc., either prior to the event or at the beginning of the program.

YOU WILL ALSO WANT TO GATHER:

The Participant Program Guide: (which does not include all the facilitator notes or script). Make enough copies for all your in-person participants.

If hosting an online event, you can screen share the Participant Guide, and if you have the emails of participants, you can choose to send them the link (bit.ly/fosf24PGuide) or a copy (as an attachment) as well.

For Readings: You will need four volunteers to be readers.

Let's Begin! (The Program)

NOTE: Facilitator instructions are in **orange** and the script is *purple and italicized*.

Feast of St. Francis Program

2024 FACILITATOR PROGRAM GUIDE

Script: *The ice caps are melting, the seas are rising, forests are burning, crops are decimated, and people are suffering. How could we possibly feel hopeful? However, feeling hopeful about the future is not only possible but is also an essential part of our faith journey. Let us be instruments of God's peace, and where there is despair, let us sow hope — by taking action. As Fr. Richard Rohr reminds us, "We do not think ourselves into a new way of living, but we live ourselves into a new way of thinking." In this program we will explore how we can live ourselves into a new way of thinking about the climate crisis and our call to be an instrument of God's peace and be sowers of climate hope.*

Opening Prayer (2 MINUTES)

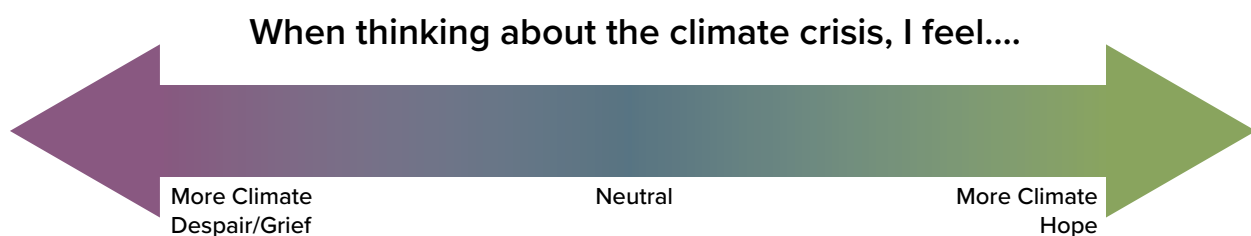
Peace Prayer of Saint Francis of Assisi (In Unison)

Script: *Please join me in prayer.*

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
 where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 where there is injury, pardon;
 where there is doubt, faith;
 where there is despair, hope;
 where there is darkness, light;
 where there is sadness, joy.
 O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek
 to be consoled as to console,
 to be understood as to understand,
 to be loved as to love.
 For it is in giving that we receive,
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
 and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
 Amen

Individual reflection

Script: *Look at the arrow below. Where on this line scale (measuring the extent of climate grief/despair and climate hope) would you locate yourself/your feelings at the moment? (All feelings are valid!) Mark where you are (at this moment) on the diagram below.*



Readings (10 MINUTES)

(Have volunteers ready to read each passage out loud)

Reading #1

I have realized that our responses have not been adequate, while the world in which we live is collapsing and may be nearing the breaking point. In addition to this possibility, it is indubitable that the impact of climate change will increasingly prejudice the lives and families of many persons. We will feel its effects in the areas of healthcare, sources of employment, access to resources, housing, forced migrations, etc. ... Despite all attempts to deny, conceal, gloss over or relativize the issue, the signs of climate change are here and increasingly evident... To say that there is nothing to hope for would be suicidal, for it would mean exposing all humanity, especially the poorest, to the worst impacts of climate change. ~*Laudate Deum*, Pope Francis

Reading #2

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often, we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope... "Since we are justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have obtained access to this grace in which we stand; and we boast in our hope of sharing in the glory of God... Hope does not disappoint, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us" (Rom 5:1-2.5). ~*Spes Non Confudit*, Bull of Indiction of the Ordinary Jubilee 2025, Pope Francis

Reading #3

I, too, am convinced that hope is humble, little, yet essential. Think for a moment. How can we live without hope? What would our days be like? Hope is the salt of our daily lives.

Hope is nurtured by our daily decisions... So, my concrete suggestion is this: each day, try to share a word of hope with others. Try to sow seeds of hope in the lives of your friends and everyone around you. For hope is humble, it is a virtue that is built up day by day... We need to remember each day that we possess the first fruits of the Spirit, who works in us through the little things... ~*Message of His Holiness Pope Francis* for the 38th World Youth Day

Reading #4

We all have a right to grieve the loss of a future free from the climate crisis. It is a deep, hard loss. And it's particularly painful, because those of us who read these reports bear a great responsibility in passing an unsafe planet on to our children and future generations. But grief that stops at despair is an ending that I and many others, most notably those on the frontlines, are not prepared to accept. We also have the responsibility – and the opportunity – to shape the future differently. We must take stock of the science, triple down on our efforts and deploy the perspective of possibility.... It will take much more courageous collective action to turn the seemingly impossible into the new normal. But we are on the brink of positive societal tipping points. I believe that the children of children born this year will be the first fossil-fuel-free generation in modern history. Their generation, just a few years from now, will benefit from development and smart climate adaptation based on the certainty of abundant, homegrown and distributed clean energy. It doesn't mean they will live in a utopian future – we know too much climate change is already baked into the system – but enormous positive change is coming.

~Christiana Figueres, *I understand climate scientists' despair – but stubborn optimism may be our only hope.*

Script: *We will now watch a short video focused on climate hope.*

Video (13 MINUTES)

Let Us Sow Hope

Is There Hope in the Fight Against Climate Change? | One Young World at COP28

Watch on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/fosf24videoY> (or **download the video file** here).

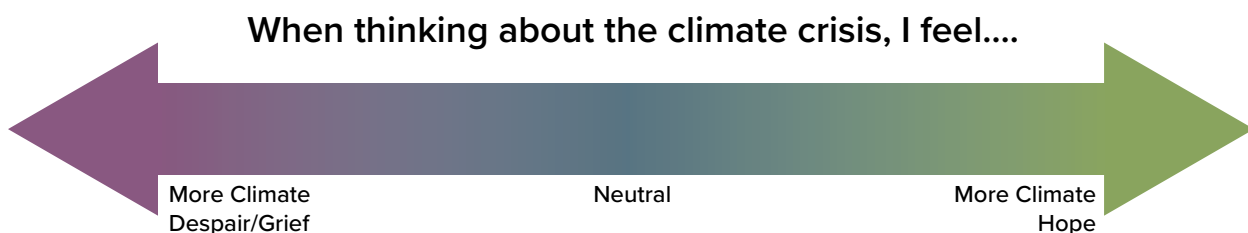
Small Group Discussion (25 MINUTES)

Script: *You will work in small groups of up to five people. You will have 25 minutes for discussion. You may wish to take notes of the main points and ideas during your discussion. There are some ideas for sowing climate hope in the addendum at the end of the program.*

- 1) What connections between sowing hope and taking climate action did you find in the readings and video? How can actively sowing climate hope shape a different future for humanity and our common home?
- 2) Share with each other examples of climate actions that embody the St. Francis Peace Prayer. Look at the Laudate Deum Pledge bookmark provided at the end of the program (addendum) for some ideas. Take note of the climate actions you, your family, and your community might wish to take to sow climate hope.

For even more ideas, consider taking the **Laudate Deum Pledge** (bit.ly/LDactionpledge) to receive an email with more ideas and resources. We are collecting names, and when we reach another 1,000 pledges, we will deliver those names to Pope Francis. See the addendum for a Laudate Deum Pledge bookmark with action ideas for sowing climate hope.

- 3) After going through this program, where on this line scale (measuring the extent of climate grief/despair and climate hope) would you locate yourself/your feelings at now? (All feelings are valid!) Mark where you are (at this moment) on the diagram below.



- 4) Share/discuss with your group:
 - a) Where did you place yourself on the line at the beginning of the program? Why did you place yourself there?
 - b) Did you place yourself at a different location on the line now? If you are in a different place in the climate grief/despair and climate hope line, what caused the change?

Let Us Sow Hope Activity (10 MINUTES)

Read the prompt and instructions below. Participants may stay at their tables or use the provided clipboards to work.

Script: *In the midst of the climate crisis, how are you called to sow hope? Think of the climate actions you discussed in your small groups. Your responses can be either in graphic form (drawing) or written form (poem, prayer, letter, short essay, etc.) and should include a “sowing climate hope action” you commit to taking.*

In-person script: *Use the provided index cards and art supplies. You will need to work at a table or other hard surface (i.e. clipboard or floor). You will have 10 minutes to create your “art piece” or “written piece.”*

Online script: *Gather an index card or piece of paper and art supplies (coloring pencils, crayons, pens, pencils, etc.) and find a place where you can work comfortably.*

Sharing of Sowing Hope Actions (15 MINUTES)

Full group activity

If your group is very large, consider having participants share in small groups and then gather the cards at the end.

In person script: *This is a time of sharing your response to the prompt with the full group. Be sure to also share what sowing hope action(s) you are committing to take. After you share your response to the prompt, take the card and attach it to the large poster board your facilitator has provided.*

Online script: *Share your response to the prompt with the full group. Be sure to also share what sowing hope action(s) you are committing to take.*

After each participant describes their activity piece (shows the art/reads their card), have them attach it with the transparent tape to the poster paper. Try to arrange the cards next to each other to create an “art piece” with everyone’s contribution. Consider displaying the poster paper(s) in a public place for others to look at and gather ideas for sowing climate hope.

(Closing Prayer (5 MINUTES)

(L = facilitator/leader, ALL = full group)

Script: *Thank you for being part of this 2024 Feast of St. Francis Program. I hope the experience has provided you with concrete ideas of how to be an instrument of God’s peace by taking climate actions and sowing hope. We now close this program with a litany adapted from a prayer by Judith Russenberger, [The Green Tau Prayers](#)*

A Litany Based on Psalm 23

L: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

All: In your gift is daily bread, sustenance for each day.
From you comes wisdom and understanding –
the gift of peace.

L: The Lord desires green pasture and clear waters,
wooded hills that clap their hands,
streams that overflow with joy –
a world where all may rest in peace.

All: The Lord restores my soul,
forgives my sins and heals my pain.
He renews my confidence so I too
may renew broken relationships.

L: The Lord leads me in right paths.

ALL: He goes before us, leading by example
and marking the way –
on earth as in heaven.

L: Even though I walk through the darkest valley,
even though the news is of floods and drought,
fires and tempest, I am comforted
for the Lord is my steadfast companion.

ALL: I hear of evil – of warfare and greed,
of persecution and oppression;
of self-interest and self-delusion
– yet I fear not evil, for the Lord is our righteousness.

L: You prepare a table before me
where bread and wine will satisfy my wants.
In the face of adversity,
You anoint me with the Holy Spirit.

ALL: The goodness and mercy of the Lord
shall stay with me all the days of my life,
for the Lord is my shepherd
and I shall not want.
Loving God, Shepherd of your people:
When we walk along pilgrim ways,
You lead us and we thank you.
When we sing and pray for your guidance,
You are with us, and we thank you.
When we stand alongside our brothers and sisters,
You are with us, and we thank you.
When we call on those in authority to take action,
You inspire us and we thank you.
As the days unfold, keep within us the hope of change.
Soften the hearts of those in authority
in industry, in government and in the churches,
that all may respond to the cry of the earth
and the cry of the poor.
Amen

~ adapted from a prayer by Judith Russenberger, *The Green Tau Prayers* (Used with permission)



For more information: CatholicClimateCovenant.org and info@catholicclimatecovenant.org

CUT LINE

FOLD LINE



Take the Laudate Deum Pledge & Sow Climate Hope!



10 Things You Can Do to Sow Climate Hope

1. Calculate your carbon footprint and find ways to reduce it by at least 10% in the next year
2. Reduce food waste
3. Cook for a climate-stable planet by eating more vegetables and reducing meat consumption
4. Reduce fossil fuel use: switch to renewable energy, make your home energy efficient, green your transportation (walk/bike/carpool)
5. Reduce, reuse, repair and recycle
6. Use less water
7. Petition lawmakers to take bold and ambitious climate action
8. Speak up! Talk about climate change with friends and family and write to your local newspapers
9. Join or form an action group at church or school
10. Pray for our common home and all who defend it

Take the **Laudate Deum Action Pledge** (bit.ly/LDactionpledge) receive resources and information on these action ideas and others, as well as how you can “sow climate hope.”



CUT LINE

Laudate Deum Pledge Bookmark

FOLD LINE