

Small Group Discussion Guide

for Vatican /Stockholm Booklet “Our Common Home: A Guide to Caring for our Planet”

What is the booklet? A practical and easy to understand guide that has chosen major environmental issues and based its message using robust science and the *Laudato Si'* messages from Pope Francis. It is a joint initiative of the Holy See (Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development) and the Stockholm Environmental Institute.

Why produce this booklet? To empower people to act.

Who should act? The invitation is for everyone, both individually and collectively. For Catholics, care for creation is a moral imperative and one of the major social teachings of the Church.

Set up of each section:

- 1) Topic with quote
- 2) Overview of topic
- 3) What needs to change
- 4) Actions

Three sessions of 1 ½ hours each. Participants should have already read the pertinent sections before each session.

Session 1: Our Common Home, Our Climate, Our Living Planet

Session 2: Our Water, Our Air, Our Food

Session 3: Our Consumption, Our Shared Future, Review Our Commitment to Our Actions

For all three sessions: Begin with the reflection (LS 202) and prayer for our earth on last pages of booklet. Divide reflection by using one of the first three paragraphs each time. The final paragraph will be read at the close of each session with a closing prayer of your choosing or repeating the prayer for our earth.

SESSION 1 Facilitator is free to read aloud specific sentences in each section for further

discussion. Reflection (LS 202) paragraph 1 and prayer for our earth

Ask participants to introduce themselves and answer what the phrase “our common home” means to them personally. What have you personally seen that makes the world a common home for all?

Our Climate: What have you observed in our climate now that is different from when you were a child? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Our Living Planet: What is your favorite wildlife and why? Is there any information in this section that is new to you about the topic of biodiversity? What do we lose when biodiversity is lost? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Close with paragraph 4 of LS 202 and prayer

SESSION 2 Facilitator is free to read aloud specific sentences in each section for further

discussion. Reflection (LS 202) paragraph 2 and prayer for our earth

Greet everyone. Did you find yourself observing nature more closely this past week?

Our Water: Do you have a favorite body of water and why is it so? Do you agree that water is a universal human right? Did you find any of the statistics about water alarming? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Our Air: Have any of you been in situations where the air is polluted? Have any of you suffered or know of someone who suffered from respiratory illnesses? How does breathing clean air help the human body? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Our Food: How many of you have thought about intensive agriculture? What, in the readings, were new to you about current farming practices? Who benefits and who loses? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Close with paragraph 4 of LS 202 and prayer

SESSION 3 Facilitator is free to read aloud specific sentences in each section for further discussion.

Begin this session with a land acknowledgement to the indigenous nation(s) that historically lived in your area. In the Raleigh area, that would be the Tuscarora nation.

Reflection (LS 202) paragraph 3 and prayer for our earth

Greet everyone. Did you find yourself more mindful of water, air, and food this past week?

Our Consumption: We live in a consume-and-throwaway culture. How have you witnessed that? What role has advertising played in your decisions as a consumer? What does a circular approach to possessions mean to you? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Our Shared Future: Pope Francis' quote in this section speaks of an ecological approach that must incorporate justice into the equation. The Latin word "eco" means "home." In order to have a shared future, we must move from an "ego" view to an "eco" view, from ego-centric to eco-centric. How does a more just world accomplish this and how does justice help the environment? What are the benefits of women being educated? What do you think needs to change? What action can you do?

Review Our Commitments to Our Actions: Take some time, and have participants review their personal actions list. Ask them to pray that they will continue to do these actions and add more as they are able. They can offer each action as an article of faith to build a better world for those to come after them.

Thank them for stepping out in faith.

Close with paragraph 4 of LS 202 and prayer

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