

Earth Day Guide 2017

FACILITATOR GUIDE



Know the Creator through Creation

Introduction

Catholic Climate Covenant thanks you for joining with thousands of others to host this educational Earth Day program. Since 2006, Catholic Climate Covenant has inspired and equipped people and institutions to care for creation and care for the poor. In collaboration with our 17 national partners, the Covenant is delighted to provide this template for a one-hour program focused on creation care, climate change, and Catholic Social Teaching.

Earth Day

April 22, 2017 marks the 47th anniversary of Earth Day, a secular celebration that many faith communities have incorporated into their annual calendars. This year, we join with the Earth Day Network to celebrate Earth Day *and* to embrace our call as Catholics to increase awareness of care for creation and climate change issues. This Earth Day program should be seen as the beginning of an educational campaign to increase creation care and climate literacy within our parishes, schools, and religious communities.

- » Note: This year we also invite you to celebrate [Mercy to Earth Weekend!](#) April 23rd is Mercy Sunday and it is a perfect moment to reflect on Pope Francis' "mercy to earth" message.



Catholic Climate Covenantsm
Care for Creation. Care for the Poor.

Know the Creator Through Creation

In this program, we will call upon the name of the Creator and invite our God to reveal the love of the triune God present in all of creation. God's grace comes to us through the waters of baptism, and we have been inflamed by the fire of the Holy Spirit to share God's love in the context of all creation. Opening our spirits to the interconnectedness of the wonders of our world will draw us ever closer to the author of the universe and challenge us to care ever more deeply for the earth, our common home.

The Program Guide includes an opening and closing prayer, scripture readings and a reading from *Laudato Si'*, discussion and reflection questions, both advocacy and hands-on activities, and a [short video](#).

This one-hour program is not an in-depth climate literacy program. We hope it will spark interest for further study, reflection, and action. Resources for further study and action are available in

Appendix A.

This program will:

- Guide the group as they learn about climate change and Catholic Social Teaching about climate change issues, and increase "climate literacy in our parishes, schools, and religious communities.
- Impart an understanding of Pope Francis' encyclical, [Laudato Si', Care for Our Common Home](#).
- Help us understand what is happening to creation because of our actions.
- Let us see that we can get to know the Creator through the splendor of creation.
- Impart understanding that through our work to protect and care for creation we proclaim God's glory.
- Empower Catholics to care for creation through actions, advocacy, and/or establishing a Creation Care Team.

NOTE: For more resources to increase climate literacy please see Appendix A. Feel free to share these resources with your group!

We are also excited to provide you with a shorter, 30-minute Pre-K and K program, and a 45-minute elementary/middle school program. All of these programs are designed to increase climate literacy and knowledge of Catholic teachings on

care for creation.

Your Role as a Facilitator

PLEASE NOTE: While the Covenant is producing these materials around a particular date (Earth Day, April 22), you should feel free to celebrate Earth Day at any time that is convenient to your parish, school, or religious community.

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. Feel free to skip certain parts if you need to shorten the program.

As a facilitator, it is your job to keep the conversation going among all the participants and to keep the program on schedule.

What Do You Need?

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

You have a choice. You can either:

1) Print out the Program and give a copy to each participant

or

2) Use the [downloadable PowerPoint](#) to guide participants through the program. If you decide to use the downloadable PowerPoint, you will need the following:

- a computer,
- a projector,
- and speakers.

NOTE: You must download and save the PowerPoint on your computer for the video to work. You can also watch the the video [here](#).

You will also need to have copies available for participants of:

1) [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

and depending on your chosen activity:

2) [CCT Handout](#)

3) ["Setting Up a Meeting with Your Legislator"](#)

NOTE: For the planting trees activity, see below for what you will need.

Activities

Below are three suggested activities for your group. Choose activities you think are most suited to your group. We encourage you to pick one of the advocacy activities and either start a Creation Care Team and/or the plant trees activity. The Program Guide includes an opening and closing prayer, scripture readings and a reading from *Laudato Si'*, discussion and reflection questions, both advocacy and hands-on activities, and a short video.

Advocacy Activity A: Email Advocacy

You will have the opportunity to send a message to your representative encouraging him/her to join the Climate Solutions Caucus, or to thank him/her if he/she already has.

You will need one or more computers with internet capability or have people go to this case-sensitive link on their smart phones:

<http://bit.ly/2mUaGnR>

On a computer, 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.

Advocacy Activity B: 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) in their district offices. 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.)

NOTE: For more information on Advocacy activity, see Appendix B

Creation Care Team Activity

We invite you to start a Creation Care Team in your parish, school, or religious community to continue working to understand and solve climate change.

Use this 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](#) and 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 CCT Sign-up sheet.

- Ask for two volunteers to take the next steps in getting the group together. This includes: a) choosing a meeting place and time, making sure that everyone on the sign-up sheet is invited and b) [registering your new CCT](#) with Catholic Climate Covenant.

Plant A Tree!

In keeping with Earth Day Network's goal to plant 7.8 billion trees by 2020 (50th anniversary of Earth Day) we invite your group to either plant a tree or donate funds so tree(s) are planted in your name. The plant a tree activity will most likely require more time than this one-hour program allows. You can either schedule a longer program, or plant the tree(s) at another time of the year. Please [email](#) us how many trees your group plants or donates funds for tree planting. We'd like to keep a record of how many trees Catholics are planting!

- You can plant a tree (or trees) on your church or school grounds, or in your community. For information about how to plant trees in your community contact your local parks department or check the information provided by [Arbor Day](#). The tree planting could be accompanied by a blessing from your pastor.
- If tree planting in your community is not possible you may wish to consider donating to our partner [Catholic Relief Services](#). Your donation will help mothers in Guatemala plant fruit trees to improve their soil, create more food for their families, and provide additional income. Simply indicate Climate Capable 1550 738 0224 in the Special Request line. You can also donate to [TIST](#) - the International Small Group and Tree Planting Program. We are excited to partner with them to "grow clean air."
- Give away a packet of seeds or a tree seedling with a copy of our St Francis Pledge card attached to parishioners or students to plant at home.



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info@CatholicClimateCovenant.org



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Earth Day Guide 2017

ADULT & HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAM



Know the Creator through Creation

FACILITATOR: *In this program, we will call upon the name our triune God who is the Creator to reveal God's love through all of creation. God's grace comes to us through the waters of baptism, through bread and wine, Christ's body and blood, and through the fire of the Holy Spirit that inflames us to see and share God's love seen throughout creation. Opening our spirits to the interconnectedness of the wonders of our world will draw us ever closer to the author of the universe and challenge us to care ever more deeply for the earth, our common home.*

This program will:

- *Guide the group to learn about climate change issues.*
- *Help us understand what is happening to creation because of our actions.*
- *Let us see that we can get to know the Creator through the splendor of God's creation.*
- *Impart understanding that through our work to protect and care for creation we proclaim God's glory.*
- *Empower Catholics to care for creation through actions, advocacy, and/or establishing a Creation Care Team.*

This one-hour program cannot be an in-depth climate literacy program. We hope it will spark interest for further study, reflection and action.



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Opening Prayer: Canticle of Brother Sun and Sister Moon of St. Francis of Assisi

FACILITATOR: *Please pray with me:*

Praised be you, my Lord, with all your creatures,
especially Sir Brother Sun,

who is the day and through whom you give us light.

And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor;

and bears a likeness of you, Most High.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars,

in heaven you formed them clear and precious and beautiful.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Wind,

and through the air, cloudy and serene,

and every kind of weather through whom you give sustenance to your creatures.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Sister Water,

who is very useful and humble and precious and chaste.

Praised be you, my Lord, through Brother Fire,

through whom you light the night,

and he is beautiful and playful and robust and strong.

Silent Reading (1 minute)

God created the heavens and the earth. The heavens and the earth sing God's praises. All creation, the sun, the moon, the stars, the wind, the seas, all creatures, great and small, declare the glory and majesty of God.

"God worked in Creation and gave us the responsibility to carry forward this task, not by destroying it, but by helping it grow, caring for it, being custodians, and helping it bear fruit".

- Pope Francis



Small group discussion (5 minutes)

Where do *you* see/encounter God, the creator?

- In the scriptures?
- During worship services? In silent meditation?
- When you spend time with family and friends?
- By looking up to the heavens and gazing at the stars or the sunset?
- In a herd of wild elephants?
- In the faces of children?
- In a hurricane or volcanic eruption?

Scripture and *Laudato Si'* Readings (5 minutes)

FACILITATOR: *Can I ask for three volunteers to read aloud one of these readings?*

READER #1: Job 12:7-10

Ask the animals, and they will teach you, or the birds of the air, and they will tell you; or speak to the earth, and it will teach you, or let the fish of the sea inform you. Which of these does not know that the hand of the Lord has done this? In his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind.

READER #2: Revelation 4:9-11

And whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne . . . they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, 'You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.'

READER #3: *Laudato Si'* 77

Creation is of the order of love. God's love is the fundamental moving force in all created things: "For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it" (Wisdom 11:24). Every creature is thus the object of the Father's tenderness, who gives it its place in the world. Even the fleeting life of the least of beings is the object of his love, and in its few seconds of existence, God enfolds it with his affection. Saint Basil the Great described the Creator as "goodness without measure", while Dante Alighieri spoke of "the love which moves the sun and the stars". Consequently, we can ascend from created things "to the greatness of God and to his loving mercy."

Silent Reflection (2 minutes)

How do the scripture readings and the reading of *Laudato Si'* help you to "know the Creator through creation"?

Video (11 minutes)



[Earth Day 2017 Video](#) | Catholic Climate Covenant and partners

Video Group Discussion (15 minutes)

FACILITATOR: *Let's take some time to consider these questions in order as a group*
(Have copies of [Frequently Asked Questions](#) available for participants)

1. Do you have a good understanding of global warming and climate change? If you feel as if you need some more information, see Frequently Asked Questions handout.
2. What struck you the most about Pope Francis' encyclical (letter)?
3. Do you see evidence in our own community of the harm that is being done to "our common home"?
4. In the video, you learned how climate change is impacting communities around the world. In the stories, where do you see God? Can we praise God and God's creation if we, through our actions (or lack of action), are causing its destruction?
5. How does climate change and environmental degradation affect the poor and most vulnerable?
6. How would you and your community undergo what the Pope calls an ecological conversion? Are there steps you can take to do so?

Activity (15 minutes)

Choose two: an advocacy action and either tree planting or CCT formation

1. Advocacy action:

This program contains content and directions for an advocacy activity. We invite you to join thousands of Catholics in advocating for care of creation and care of the poor.

We will engage in an advocacy activity together. Go to this [website](#) and take action.

or

Plan a visit to your senators and representative in their district offices. Facilitator: please handout [Setting Up a Meeting With Your Legislator](#).

2. Start a CCT....hand out [CCT Handout](#)

FACILITATOR: *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'."*

3. Plant a tree or [donate to plant a tree!](#)

Closing Prayer:

Praised Be, A prayer inspired by the papal encyclical Laudato Si'

FACILITATOR: *Together, let us end our time with a prayer inspired by Pope Francis and his encyclical, Laudato Si':*

Living God,

have mercy on us,

for the times we forget

that we belong to each other.

You call us to be still,

to hear the whisper of our Sister Wind, to feel the radiance of our Brother Sun,

and to be nourished by our Mother Earth. Renew us in your healing love.

Inspire us to water the earth,

and nurture one another,

so all may flourish.

Together, as one family,

may we always sing your praise.

Through Christ our Lord, Amen.

Optional Closing Hymn

["Here I am Lord"](#) or ["Oceans"](#)

Appendix A: Resources for further study

- [Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home](#) and [Laudato Si' study materials](#)
 - [GlobalChange.gov](#): Excellent resource for educators or formal and informal education about climate change
 - Earth Day: [Climate Literacy Campaign](#) and [Earth Day Toolkit](#)
 - U.S. EPA: [A Student's Guide to Climate Change](#)
 - [Videos](#) on Climate Change and Catholic Social Teaching
 - [Catechism of the Catholic Church - The Creator](#): Good resource to ground our understanding of the catechism and creation.
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Appendix B: Advocacy Activity Information

In his encyclical, *Laudato Si*, the Pope urgently appealed, "for a new dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet. We need a conversation which includes everyone, since the environmental challenge we are undergoing, and its human roots, concern and affect us all." (LS 14)

In this era of partisanship and lack of dialogue on the issues shaping our planet, there is a very hopeful Congressional action that needs our support.

In February of 2016, two south-Florida representatives, Rep. Carlos Curbelo (R-FL) and Rep. Ted Deutch (D-FL), founded the bipartisan Climate Solutions Caucus, with the goal of serving "as an organization to educate members on economically-viable options to reduce climate risk and protect our

nation's economy, security, infrastructure, agriculture, water supply and public safety."

The Caucus' membership is equally balanced between Republicans and Democrats and meets regularly to advance climate solutions and issues that affect our health, the economy, national security, the poor and vulnerable, and our future. Currently, 13 Republicans and 13 Democrats are in the caucus.

Please write (and perhaps later meet with) your representative and encourage him/her to join the Climate Solutions Caucus, or to thank him/her if he/she is already a member.

TAKE ACTION NOW!

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