



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

EARTH DAY 2020

FACILITATOR GUIDE

**Earth Day at 50/*Laudato Si'* at 5:
An Urgent Appeal for Action**



Introduction

Thank You!

Your work as an event host/facilitator is critically important. You are raising awareness of the urgent need to care for Earth, our vulnerable brother and sisters, and help people take real action. You are making a difference! On behalf of creation and vulnerable peoples throughout the world, we thank you!

This program guide contains everything you need to host an event. This program may be used by a parish, school, youth group, university, religious community, or other group that is interested in exploring how we as Catholics can respond to the call for urgent action on climate.

In this hour-long program, your community will have an opportunity to pray, learn, discuss, and take concrete actions, as individuals and as a group, on behalf of God's creation.

Commemoration of two anniversaries

EARTH DAY

April 22, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary of Earth Day. Catholic Climate Covenant's 2020 Earth Day program focuses on the urgent need for climate action. It is designed to help the U.S. Catholic community commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day, a secular celebration that many faith communities have incorporated into their annual calendars for awareness and action. Catholic Climate Covenant is joining with the [Earth Day Network](#) in its commemoration of Earth Day and lifting up the urgent need for "Climate Action."

LAUDATO SI' ANNIVERSARY

This year also marks the fifth anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical letter, *Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home*. The anniversary will be marked between *Laudato Si'* week (May 16-May 24) and June 18th (the date of the encyclical's publication). In *Laudato Si'*, Pope Francis calls on the world to "dialogue about how we are shaping the future of our planet". This Earth Day program is a critical part of that dialogue.

Though designed to commemorate these two anniversaries, please feel free to use the program at a time that is convenient for your parish, school, or religious community.

Connect with Catholic Climate Project

The program is also designed as an event or activity of the [Covenant's 2020 Catholic Climate Project](#), a campaign to encourage as many actions as possible between Earth Day through the "Season of Creation" celebrated September 1 to October 4.

The Catholic Climate Project is both a celebration of Pope Francis' encyclical and an urgent call for action. As you know, most scientists, policy-makers, and religious leaders agree that climate change is an existential threat to God's creation. And they say that the next 10 years are crucial for tackling climate change. **Young people are speaking out and taking action. THIS is the moment for all to join with them in their call for action.**

As you plan your event, we encourage you to reach out to youth and young adults in your community early in your process to ensure their gifts and voices are lifted up. If you are planning this in a parish setting, reach out to your parish school, your youth ministry or a Catholic High School.. On the issue of climate change, inter-generational efforts are crucial. For more ideas of how to work inter-generationally on climate, check out the [Catholic Climate Project](#).

List Your Event: To let the world know that the U.S. Catholic community is taking action on climate, you are strongly encouraged to list your Earth Day events on the [Catholic Climate Project site](#) and [Earth Day Network's site](#).

If you have questions about this program, please contact info@catholicclimateproject.org.



Your Responsibilities

As the event facilitator, you have a few responsibilities that will make sure the event runs smoothly, but feel free to share responsibilities with others in your community! This is YOUR program. If you would like to adapt it to the needs of your group, your community, or for other reasons, please do so.

As a facilitator, it is your job to:

- **Set a date and time:** Though designed to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Earth day (April 22nd) and/or the 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si'*, feel free to schedule the program at a time that is convenient for your parish, school, or religious community. The program is designed to last one hour.
- **Find a location:** Ask your pastor, parish council, or school principal whether you may use the church building as your event location. If that space is not available, you might try your local library, recreation center, or civic center. Make sure the location has Internet access and enough chairs for everyone.
- **Invite people:** Make sure your parish or organization knows about the event. Ask your parish administrator or office staff to advertise it on the organization's website and through print resources such as a newsletter or bulletin.
- **Keep the event on schedule:** Suggested times are included in each section. Set an alarm on your phone or watch to ensure that the group's time is respected.
- **Prepare for the group activity:** You will need to have a printed copy of the St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge (if using), enough printed programs, a computer, projector and speakers (for the video), and materials for the action/pledge activity.
- **Choose volunteers to read** the various readings.
- **Ensure you have all the materials needed** (see below).

What You Will Need:

- Copies of the participant program
- If you are doing the pledge activity, you will need pens/pencils, at least one cut-out dove per participant, and one large printed picture of Earth. The cut-out dove template is found [here](#) and a large image of Earth that you can print is found [here](#).
- Adhesive tape to place doves and Earth on wall or another appropriate surface.
- Internet service: The event includes a short video which can be [downloaded](#) prior to the event. It can also be watched directly on [YouTube](#) if you have Internet access at the event location.
- Computer and projector: You'll need a computer and a projector to show the video. Generally, computer speakers alone are not loud enough so you should bring a portable speaker to amplify the sound that accompanies the video.
- To sign the St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge, you can either use the [online form](#) or this [printable form](#). Participants can also use their smartphones to access the online form through the QR code in their programs.

EARTH DAY 2020

Program Guide WITH FACILITATOR NOTES AND SCRIPT

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

WELCOME

[Choose the greeting appropriate to your program date. Earth Day is April 22nd and many will celebrate on the 22nd or on a date close to it, while others celebrate it on a date that fits their community's schedule. The 5th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* will be celebrated between Global *Laudato Si'* Week (May 16-24) and June 18th (the anniversary of the publication of the encyclical). Feel free to combine your celebration of both anniversaries or to have an educational program for one and a "service" type project for the other.]

Script: Welcome to the 2020 Earth Day Program. Today we will be commemorating the 50th anniversary of Earth Day (and/or) the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis' encyclical Laudato Si': On Care for Our Common Home. Please join me in prayer.

OPENING PRAYER (1 MINUTE)

(In Unison)

O Creator,

Our world is large, and yet your Creation is so fragile.
We glimpse the needs of our common home, of our sisters and brothers,
and those needs are great.

We want to turn away, but you call us back.
We want simple solutions,
but you want us to help solve the complex problems.

Through your Church, you call us to listen, to learn, to reflect and to act.

Give us a deep sense of our place in this web of Creation.
Give us the wisdom of mind and generosity of heart to seek your will in the world today.
Inspire us to respond to the call to live in solidarity with all of your Creation,
so that the Earth, and all children of God might live in dignity and peace.

Amen

(Written by Education for Justice staff. Copyright © Reprinted with permission.)

READINGS (10 MINUTES)


(Ask for volunteers to read each of the following readings.)

Reading #1

"Be doers of the word and not hearers only, deluding yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his own face in a mirror. He sees himself, then goes off and promptly forgets what he looked like. But the one who peers into the perfect law of freedom and perseveres, and is not a hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, such a one shall be blessed in what he does." (James 1: 22-25)

Reading #2

"The Earth's climate is changing. Temperatures are rising, snow and rainfall patterns are shifting, and more extreme climate events – like heavy rainstorms and record high temperatures – are already happening. Many of these observed changes are linked to the rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse



gases in our atmosphere, caused by human activities.” (Climate Change Indicators in the United States, US EPA, <https://www.epa.gov/climate-indicators>)

Reading #3

“Climate models project robust differences in regional climate characteristics between present-day and global warming of 1.5°C, and between 1.5°C and 2°C. These differences include increases in: mean temperature in most land and ocean regions, hot extremes in most inhabited regions, heavy precipitation in several regions, and the probability of drought and precipitation deficits in some regions...Limiting the risks from global warming of 1.5°C in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication implies system transitions.” (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) *Special Report Oct. 2018*)

Reading #4

“The urgent challenge to protect our common home includes a concern to bring the whole human family together to seek a sustainable and integral development...Humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home. Young people demand change. They wonder how anyone can claim to be building a better future without thinking of the environmental crisis and the sufferings of the excluded.” (*Laudato Si’* 13)

“I urgently appeal, then, 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.” (*Laudato Si’* 14)

Reading #5

“An education in ecological responsibility is urgent: responsibility for oneself, for others, and for the earth.” (*World Day of Peace Message in 1990*, Pope Saint John Paul II)

VIDEO (12 MINUTES)

Discussion (20 MINUTES)

Give participants 2-3 minutes for silent reflection and 15-18 minutes for group discussion. Each group should have about 5-7 people.

1) Silent Reflection

(Script: Silently reflect on the readings and video for the next 2-3 minutes)

- What impacted you most from the video?
- Both the Environmental Protection Agency and the United Nations predict dire climate impacts. What more can I be doing to lessen the impacts?
- Were you surprised that both Pope St. John Paul II and Pope Francis speak of the urgency of responsibility for the Earth?
- If you met one of the young Catholics in the video, imagine your conversation. How would you respond to their calls for action?

2) Small Group Discussion

(Script: You will have about 15-18 minutes for group discussion. Look at the list (below) of possible climate actions you might consider taking as an individual and/or as a community. All these actions will help lower your carbon footprint. Feel free to add your own ideas.)

You have listened to the readings and watched the video.

- What can you (and/or your community) do to become **doers and not just “hearers”**?
- How could you (and/or your community) respond to the Holy Father’s urgent appeal for dialogue and action?

- What actions (see list of possible actions below) could you and/or your community undertake to lessen the projected impact on creation and our most vulnerable brothers and sisters? If you and your community have already taken action(s), what more can you do?

Possible Actions:

Look at this list of possible climate actions you might consider taking as an individual and/or as a community. These actions can help lower your carbon footprint or make yourself and others aware of climate vulnerabilities. Feel free to add your own ideas.

To get more information (and links to resources) for each of these actions go to https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/files/2020_Climate_Action_Pledges.pdf or use the QR code.

- Calculate my carbon footprint and commit to reduce it by at least 10% in 2020
- Refuse disposable plastic bottles, bags, straws, cutlery and cups! Say NO to single-use plastic.
- Walk, cycle, carpool, or use public transport
- Plant pollinator-friendly flowers and spread wildflower seeds.
- Switch to renewable energy
- Go meatless on Mondays and/or Fridays (at least)
- Reuse, recycle, lower my consumption of resources
- Use less water
- Speak to my elected officials about climate change
- Fly less and offset travel when possible
- Plant at least two trees in 2020
- Wash clothes in cold water and hang-dry clothes
- Install a programmable thermostat
- Replace appliances with Energy Star-rated ones
- Replace incandescent and compact fluorescent lights with LED lights
- Reduce my food waste
- Compost leaves and food waste
- Start conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Support youth-led climate movements
- Start/join a Creation Care Team in my parish or school
- Begin conversations about climate change with family and friends
- Pray for our common home and all Earth protectors
- Participate in public witness events that lift up care for creation.
- Other (name it)



ACTIVITY (10 MINUTES)

Invite participants to sign the St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge on this [printable version](#) (you will need to mail –or scan and email–it back to us) or by using their smartphones to access the website directly. The QR code makes it easy for them to do so.

a) **Script:** *We will take the St. Francis/Laudato Si' Pledge: Please go to <https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/program/st-francis-pledge> or use the QR code in your programs.*

(Alternatively, please have a copy of the printable St. Francis/*Laudato Si'* Pledge. You will have to mail–or scan and email–the form to us.)

b) Have the printed Earth available and give one (or more) of the cut-out doves to each participant.

- Affix (using tape or other appropriate material) the picture of the Earth on an easily accessible wall.
- Invite participants to think about the action listed above and discussed in their small groups.

Instruct them to:

Script:

- *Choose at least one action that you will pledge to take in 2020.*
- *Write the action(s) on the dove that I have given you. Sign your name.*
- *Please place the dove with your written/signed pledge around the Earth.*

As each person places their pledge around the Earth, each will say:

My 2020 climate action pledge is _____ (fill in the blank):

After each person's pledge is stated out loud and placed around the Earth, the full group responds:

ALL: Creator God, grant us the wisdom to better care for the earth.
Help us to act now for the good of future generations and all your creatures.
Help us to become instruments of a new creation,
Founded on the covenant of your love.

(Adapted from Cry of the Earth in Jesuitresource.org)

CONCLUSION AND CLOSING PRAYER (2 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 this Earth Day program.*

Closing Prayer


Script: As we end this program, we will take a moment to quiet our hearts and pray.

(In unison)

O God, your creative love brought forth our world,
Once a garden where humans could taste and see beauty and goodness.

But our eyes do not always see the sacredness of Creation.
We do not always remember that it is Gift
Given so that all humans may live and flourish.





Inattention can change the world.
Even mighty glaciers weep now.
Lifestyles create pollution that blot out the sun.
The very skies above us are threatened.
Seas rise and whole peoples lose their homes.

O God, we ask you to
Call us to renewal and to stewardship.
Call us to solidarity with the earth and all its creatures.
Give us new vision to see the fragile beauty that remains with us.
Give us new spiritual energy to become active in loving the world
through our daily lives,
Give us new voices to speak out for environmental solidarity.
Bless us with a love of your Creation
So that we may glimpse your Eden once again.

(Adapted from a prayer by Jane Deren, [Education for Justice](#). Copyright © Reprinted with permission)