

Living Faithfully into a New Climate

Additional Activities

A resource in support of church education and engagement on the road from the September 2014 United Nations Climate Summit to the December 2015 international climate change negotiations (COP21).

*With excerpts from **Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis (CPJ, 2013).***



*The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it,
the world, and those who live in it.*

Psalm 24: 1

Introduction

Creation Advocacy and Care. Through a sense of wonder with creation we are invited to seek insights into God's will for a just society, a fair economy, and a flourishing land. Creation care rests on biblical foundations uniting spirituality with scientific, ecological, and political insights into dynamic and energizing relationship.



Creation advocacy sets its sights on God's vision of an abundant and ecologically flourishing life for all creatures; it aligns itself with God's passionate work in the world, enacting the divine purpose through faithful worship, engaged community, and prophetic action.

The Climate Crisis. It is now widely accepted that the massive increase in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions are largely the result of human activity. And, as the concentration of GHGs continues to grow, climate change is causing the rising of sea levels, species extinction, and glacial melting. Agrarian and fisheries-based livelihoods are threatened by extreme and volatile weather, resulting in conflict over natural resources, food insecurity, hunger and poverty.

The [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) has clearly stated that in order to limit global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels — the threshold for “dangerous climate change” — most known fossil fuel reserves must stay underground.

The Road from New York to Paris. In response to this global crisis, United Nations Secretary General Ban Ki-moon has invited Heads of State along with business, finance, and civil society leaders to a Climate Summit on September 23, 2014, in New York. The [UN Climate Summit](#) is part of a global effort to mobilize action and ambition on climate change. It comes just one year before countries aim to conclude a global climate agreement at the 21st meeting of the Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.

A Role for Faith Communities. Union Theological Seminary in New York will hold the [Religions for the Earth Conference](#), September 19-21. Alongside the UN Climate Summit, the World Council of Churches and Religions for Peace will organize an [Interfaith Summit on Climate Change](#), September 21-22, also in New York, in order to highlight the specific contributions that faith traditions bring to the international climate debate. And environmentalists active in the 350.org movement are planning the biggest March New York has ever seen.

A Call to Engagement and Action. To have an impact on the climate agenda, action needs to happen at all levels. As key leaders meet in New York, their efforts will be supported by grassroots activities around the world. Canadian Christians are urged to get involved.

“Living Faithfully into a New Climate” is a package of materials assembled by Citizens for Public Justice, a member of the Canadian Council of Churches (CCC) Commission on Justice and Peace, that aims to assist Canadian faith communities to highlight the importance of the September 2014 events, and also to enable increased engagement in creation advocacy and care as we move towards the December 2015 COP21 meeting in Paris. It is our hope that these resources can be used in the worship activities of all of the 25 member Christian denominations of the CCC.

“Living Faithfully into a New Climate” includes a wide variety of resources that can be used as part of Sunday worship or to support additional learning opportunities in communities of faith. All are centred around responding to God’s call to care for creation.

- A Bible Study on Creation Advocacy and Care
- Sermon Notes for September 21, 2014
- Hymns for Creation
- Prayers of Intercession
- Activities for Youth and Young Adults
- Additional Activities (this document)
- A Living Faithfully into a New Climate Infographic (available at cpj.ca/climate)

All of these materials are as PDFs at cpj.ca/climate. Text-only versions of these resources (except the infographic) are also available.



Overview of Additional Activities

These interactive activities are recommended for use to complement the *Living into a New Climate Bible Study* and *Activities for Youth and Young Adults*. Drawing on materials originally published in *Living Ecological Justice: A Biblical Response to the Environmental Crisis* (CPJ, 2013), the activities contained in this study invite us to begin with wonder and to explore how we can more deliberately living into the Christian call to creation advocacy and care.

This package contains the following activities:

1. Think Like a Mountain (video)
2. Where On Earth Are You?
3. Community Clean-Up
4. From Crisis to Hope
5. Map Your Meal
6. The Ecosystem of Christ (video)



Think Like a Mountain

Time: This activity can be easily completed in 15-30 minutes, but lends itself beautifully to a longer period of quiet contemplation (2 hours or an entire afternoon). Decide where this activity will fit in your larger discussion and set your timeframe accordingly.

Materials: “Think Like a Mountain” video guide, computer, projector, and screen. Notepads and pens. Paper, scissors, glue, marker or coloured pencils, and playdough.

Set-Up: You will begin and end in a common meeting space, but participants should be encouraged to spread out (in a large room, or potentially outside) during the reflective portion of this activity. Arrange notepads and craft materials across several tables so that everyone can see what is available and can access materials easily without needing to talk to one another.



Invite participants to sit quietly. Read the following meditation aloud (or use the **video guide**):

In the hustle of our daily lives, it can be hard to step back and look at the big picture – the really big picture. Even the regenerative actions of putting out the compost or riding your bike to work can become mindless movements. Sometimes, it can be useful to stop. To take time to think outside ourselves.

Set aside some quiet time – as little as five minutes, but much longer if you like – in a calm place. Now, think like a mountain (or a tree or a bird or a snake or a glacier). What does the world look like from your new perspective? How does it feel? What brings you joy? What causes you concern?

As you consider these questions, sculpt, draw, write, or meditate silently.

Once the video (or reading) is finished, inform participants how long they will have for this activity. You may wish to suggest that participants go outside (in which case it would be useful to have activity instructions printed on a small piece of paper that they can take with them). Encourage everyone to work in silence, or as quietly as possible.

Following a time of quiet reflection / activity, invite participants back together. Offer them the opportunity to share their sculptures or drawings or writing or thoughts, if they would like. (Please allow at least minutes per participant for sharing).

Where On Earth Are You?

Time: 20-30 minutes.

Materials: Questions below, either posted on a flipchart or photocopied for participants.

Set-Up: Arrange chairs in a circle; you may wish to have extra space for participants to spread out for small group discussions.

Options: This activity can be completed individually, in pairs, or as a group. You can ask everyone (individually or in pairs) to answer as many questions as they can, or you can number off around a circle and ask each individual (or pair) to answer one question. Adjust the introduction accordingly.

Introduction:



How well do you know the place where you live? Take a look at the questions provided. How many can you answer? Working first in pairs and then as a group, answer as many of these questions as you can.

1. Point north from where you are.
2. Describe the soil around your home.
3. Name five native edible plants in your area and identify when they are in season.
4. Name five species of animal that live in your area. Are they native?
5. Name five trees in your area. If you can't name names, describe them.
6. Name five resident and migratory birds in your area.
7. What primary geological event or process influenced the land form where you live?
8. In whose Aboriginal territory do you live? What were their primary subsistence techniques?
9. What is the land use history by humans in your area during the past century?
10. What spring wildflower is consistently among the first to bloom where you live?
11. How long is the growing season where you live?
12. From which direction do winter storms generally come in your region?
13. What kinds of rocks and minerals are found in your area?
14. What is the largest wild region in your area?
15. Where does your water come from?
16. Where does your garbage go?
17. What developed and potential energy resources are in your area?
18. What plans are there for large development in your area?

Once participants have had a few minutes to consider the questions, go around the circle and invite them to share their answers with the group. If any questions remain unanswered, encourage participants to conduct the necessary research and share their answers with one another.

Adapted from Bill Devall and George Sessions, "Where You At?" in *Deep Ecology*. Gibbs Smith Publisher, 1985. Reprinted with permission of the publisher.

Community Clean-Up

Time: 2-6 hours, plus 30 minutes to debrief.

Materials: Garbage bags and plastic gloves (or) gardening gloves and tools (or) reusable shopping bags.

Set-Up: Identify the type of community clean-up you would like to do (ideas included under options). Set a specific time to meet at the church or the clean-up site.

Options: Shoreline or park garbage pick-up, weeding a church or community garden, or distributing reusable shopping bags throughout the neighbourhood.



Introduction:

A great deal needs to be done to alter the course of environmental destruction. Government policies, industrial practices, and individual lifestyles all require changes. Still, we need to begin where we are.

Today we are participating in a community clean-up (explain the planned activity). As you engage in this activity, start conversations with the people you encounter. Tell them why you are there and what other actions you have planned.

When the event is over, debrief with a round robin reflection on the day. Share these questions to get people thinking about their experience:

- How did you feel physically as you worked?
- How did you feel spiritually?
- What did people say? What did you say to them?
- What other events or activities might you or your group undertake?

From Crisis to Hope

Time: 30-45 minutes.

Materials: Newspapers and magazines. Construction paper or bristol board. Scissors, glue, markers.

Set-Up: Arrange materials across several tables so that participants have plenty of room to work.



Introduction:

Working in small groups, scan local and national newspapers for words, headlines, and/or pictures that relate to the state and fate of the environment. Pay particular attention to those items that relate to environmental issues in your community – and don't forget to consider the inside sections of the paper (business, tourism, sports).

Cut out the items that you find and make two collages on construction paper or bristol board. The first will illustrate the climate crisis. The second will demonstrate love for creation.

Once participants have completed their collages, invite them to share them with one another.

Map Your Meal

Time: 1 hour.

Materials: One small bag of groceries per participant – the ingredients of a typical family meal – brought from home (alternatively, you may wish to investigate the church fridge and/or pantry). A large world map. Push pins or small stickers, string, and scissors (or markers if you're ok writing on the map). Paper and pens. A couple of internet-connected laptops or smartphones.

Set-Up: Post the map on the wall (ideally on a cork bulletin board). Set pins/stickers, string, and scissors (or markers) on a couple of small tables either side of the map. Have a table ready for the food. Before you begin, invite participants to place their food on the table.



Introduction:

Today we're going to map our meals. We're going to think about where our food comes from and how it gets from the soil to our plates – and the environmental impacts of the meals we eat.

Using the map as a reference and the package labels and produce stickers for information, inventory the food in front of you. Using the pins/stickers and string (or markers) provided, join the place your food was grown to where we are.

Once participants have completed the mapping, ask them to reflect on these questions:

Where does your food come from? Do you grow it yourself? Is it local? How does it travel from the soil to your plate?

Allow a few minutes from group discussion, ask them to consider the following:

What are the environmental impacts of getting your food from field to table? Consider how it was produced (conventionally or organically), processed, packaged, and transported.

Discuss.

The Ecosystem of Christ

Time: At least 15 minutes. 30-45 minutes is ideal – this allows participants adequate time to choose their “character,” discuss their interactions with others, and develop their role play.

Materials: You may wish to have some nature / animal photos or magazine clippings available as inspiration.

Set-Up: Arrange chairs in a large circle. Make sure there is plenty of room for participants to move around in small groups.



Invite participants to sit quietly. Read the following meditation and instructions aloud (or use the video guide):

The church is the one body of Jesus Christ. And we are told that we are to value all members of the body – especially those seen as lesser or weaker (1 Corinthians 12). It’s common think of this teaching and ask: am I an eye? An ear? But what if we applied it to an aspect of creation such as an ecosystem (the arctic or the rainforest) or a process (water cycle or photosynthesis)?

Working in small groups, identify the role you wish to play (e.g. permafrost, a cactus, precipitation). How do you interact with others in your group? Those in the larger group? Others? Report back to the larger group. As you do so, you may wish to role play some of the interactions you discussed.

Once the video (or reading) is finished, divide participants into small groups (3-5 people each) and inform them how long they will have for this activity. Reiterate the instructions and indicate whether you would like them to include a role play in their report back. If you do, you may also wish to put two or three groups together during the report back and see how the larger interactions play out.

Follow the report back / role play, please allow a few minutes (1 minute per participant) to debrief the activity (lessons learned, emerging questions, etc.).

CITIZENS FOR PUBLIC JUSTICE

a national organization inspired by faith to act for justice

We at CPJ hope you have found these resources useful, educational, and inspiring towards your pursuit of climate justice.

CPJ has been a faithful voice for public justice in Canada for more than 50 years, bringing together justice-oriented Christians, churches, religious orders, and organizations. Still, there is much work to do – and we could use your support! CPJ depends on donations from committed citizens like you who value our unique Christian perspective on justice issues. Please go to cpj.ca/support and join your voice with ours!

For additional resources or to support our work, visit:

www.cpj.ca

Citizens for Public Justice

501-309 Cooper Street

Ottawa, ON K2P 0G5

1-800-667-8046 | cpj@cpj.ca

Twitter: @publicjustice

Facebook: www.facebook.com/CitizensforPublicJustice

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