



FEAST OF ST. FRANCIS 2015

CARING FOR OUR COMMON HOME

PROGRAM GUIDE

Catholic Climate Covenant's 2015 Feast of St. Francis program, "Caring for Our Common Home," explores how to understand and apply Pope Francis's encyclical on ecology and climate change. The encyclical is titled *Laudato Si'*, or, in English, *Praised Be: On The Care of Our Common Home*.

This program guide contains everything you need to host an event. This guide refers to a parish, but can be equally well used by a youth group, university, religious community, or any group that is interested in exploring *Laudato Si'*. Thank you for taking this important step to care for creation and our vulnerable sisters and brothers.

GETTING STARTED

The first step to host a successful event is inviting participants.

We will send your participants Feast of St. Francis resources via email. **Your event is not ready to launch until all the participants have been invited by email.** As the event host, you received an email with the subject line "Next step for your Feast of St. Francis event." Please forward the link in that email to anyone who might want to attend.

Once your group has been invited, round up the following resources:

- ▶ *Event location.* Ask your pastor or parish council whether you can 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.
- ▶ *Internet service.* The event includes a YouTube video and online advocacy. You will need to have Internet access at the event location.
- ▶ *Computer.* You'll need a computer to show the video and participate in the advocacy. You might want to test the computer to make sure the speakers are loud enough. If your group contains more than 10 people, you might want to bring an extra laptop so the advocacy doesn't take too long.
- ▶ *Copies of the opening and closing prayers.* If you choose "Canticle of the Creatures" as your opening prayer and "A Prayer for the Earth" as your closing prayer, you may print copies for the group [here](#) and [here](#).
- ▶ *Activity supplies.* Your group will conduct an activity together. We have provided two activity options. The activity directions begin on page 5. Please choose one activity and make sure you have the necessary supplies at hand when your program begins.
- ▶ *Copies of the resource list.* Your event will include thoughtful consideration of how the group can move its work forward. Please print copies of the resource list [here](#) so that participants can review their options.
- ▶ *Copies of the group interest sheet.* Participants will have the opportunity to continue the commitment to better stewardship they have shown by attending your event. Please print a few copies of the interest sheet [here](#) to help them move forward, if they choose.

Your responsibilities

As the event host, you have a few responsibilities to make sure the event runs smoothly.

- ▶ *Invite people.* Make sure your parish or other organization knows about the event. You might ask your parish administrator to advertise it via newsletter or bulletin.
- ▶ *Keep the event moving smoothly.* Prepare materials ahead of time and help participants maintain a friendly tone with each other. You might want to print a copy of this program guide.
- ▶ *Keep the event on schedule.* Suggested times are included in each section. You might want to set an alarm on your phone or watch to ensure that the group's time is respected.

Your work as an event host is crucial and important. You are raising awareness of climate change and helping people take real action. You are making a difference. On behalf of creation and vulnerable people, **we thank you!**

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Welcome, 5 minutes

Welcome the group to the event. You may want to begin with a round of first-name introductions, and then move to a prayer. The [Canticle of the Creatures](#) (also known as Canticle of the Sun) is a well known prayer of St. Francis. If you'd like, ask your group to take turns reading lines from the prayer.

Video, 15 minutes

After your welcome, watch the video. In collaboration with America Media and CAFOD, we have produced a video that provides an overview of *Laudato Si'* and describes how climate change affects people. It is available [here](http://youtu.be/0nrPZJk8jWw) (<http://youtu.be/0nrPZJk8jWw>).

You might introduce the video by saying, "We're going to watch a video about Pope Francis's encyclical and climate change. This video explains what the encyclical is about and how climate change affects us. Afterward, we'll have a discussion and activity."

Discussion, 15 minutes

After watching the video, discuss it. If your group has more than 10 people in it, you might want to break into small groups.

These discussion questions will help participants find their personal connections to climate change, explore how it relates to our faith, and think about ways to make a difference.

- ▶ Why did you feel called to come here today? What aspects of the video we just watched especially resound with you?
- ▶ How do you think Pope Francis's call to care for creation fits into our faith? Why?
- ▶ What would we need to do to live more justly on the Earth?

Activity, 30 minutes

After your discussion, move to an activity. A hands-on activity will help your group better understand how climate change affects our daily lives and what we can do about it.

As the group leader, you should take time before the event begins to select one of the activities we have suggested. You will also need to gather the necessary supplies ahead of your meeting.

The activity directions start on page 5. Please choose one and conduct it following your video discussion.

Advocacy, 10 minutes

After your activity, invite the group to advocate for moral climate policies. As the group wraps up its activity, you might say, "The activity we've just done was a positive step in our own lives. We also need our political leaders to take positive steps. Their decisions will affect millions of people."

Right now, negotiations on climate are shaping up at the United Nations. In December, negotiators will meet to decide on a greenhouse gas framework for the years ahead.

In his encyclical, Pope Francis said that *International negotiations cannot make significant progress due to positions taken by countries which place their national interests above the global common good. Those who will have to suffer the consequences of what we are trying to hide will not forget this failure of conscience and responsibility.* (169) Let's help our negotiators remember their conscience and their responsibility. Right now, you may send a letter to the lead U.S. climate negotiator, Todd Stern, if you'd like."

On the computer at the front of the room, navigate to the website bit.ly/UN-protect-creation (please note that this is case-sensitive). If your group has more than 10 people in it, you might want to set up an extra laptop in advance, so that the advocacy doesn't take too much time.

Invite participants to come to the front of the room and sign the letter.

After each person signs, you will have to navigate to bit.ly/UN-protect-creation again, and click the "Not [previous user]?" button.

Next Steps, 15 minutes

Congratulate your group on a job well done!

Ask your group whether they'd like to continue working to understand and solve climate change. Print enough copies of the resource sheet (available [here](#)) for the group.

- ▶ "Do we want to get together as a group? If so, what resources should we use?"
- ▶ "If getting together as a group isn't viable, what action can we take at home?"

If your group chooses to continue getting together, pass the group interest sheet available [here](#).

Ask for two volunteers to take the next steps in getting the group together. This includes:

- ▶ signing up for any resources,
- ▶ choosing a meeting place and time, and
- ▶ making sure that everyone on the sign-up sheet is invited.
- ▶ Make sure that the volunteer coordinators receive the sign-up sheet.

Conclusion, 5 minutes

Thank everyone for coming. Consider a closing prayer. CAFOD has excerpted [A Prayer for Our Earth](#), a prayer from Pope Francis found in *Laudato Si'*.

Activity Guides

Your Feast of St. Francis event will include a 30-minute activity. We have provided two choices. Please select one and prepare the materials in advance of your event.

Activity 1: A Day in the Life

In this activity, participants will spend some time thinking about how lifestyles in the developed world lead to climate change emissions that affect people in the developing world.

You might find that this activity elicits strong emotions, such as surprise or discomfort. If these emotions do arise, your responsibility as the event leader is to encourage the group itself to respond to and work through them. For example, you might say, "How does everyone feel about John's statement" or, "What do you all think about Mary's point?"

Processing their reactions as a team will help your participants grow closer and arrive at more robust conclusions.

Materials needed:

- ▶ Print-out of the cards available [here](#) and [here](#). If you're able, please cut each sheet in half before the event.
- ▶ Several pieces of blank paper and pens
- ▶ Two copies of the scenario card

1. *Divide the room.* Divide the participants into two groups.
 - ▶ Group 1, which represents people in developing countries, should have five or six times more people in it than Group 2, which represents people in the United States.
2. *Give the groups their life cards, blank paper, and pens.* Before the meeting begins, print life cards for people in the U.S. [here](#), and life cards for people in developing countries [here](#) (please cut in half).
 - ▶ These cards help participants take a closer look at how climate change intersects the lives of people in the U.S. and in the developing world.
 - ▶ Each group is also given a scenario to respond to.
3. *Let the groups read and respond.* Take 10 minutes to read and respond to the cards. As a group, they should first jot down and discuss anything about the cards that surprises them. They should then create an answer to the scenario.
4. *Share.* Take 20 minutes to answer the following questions.
 - ▶ How did your group respond to the questions on the scenario card?
 - ▶ In his encyclical, Pope Francis said that we face both an ecological crisis and a spiritual crisis. What do you think he meant?
 - ▶ Pope Francis also wrote that "all of us are linked by unseen bonds and together form a kind of universal family" and that "humanity still has the ability to work together in building our common home" (89, 13).

How can thinking of humanity as one family with a common home—and taking action to protect the home we share—strengthen our spiritual life?

Activity 2: Taking Action to Address Climate Change

In this activity, participants will create a plan to reduce the use of disposable dishware at the parish (or other organization). This activity would be well suited for groups that have been established for some time, and that have already built relationships with the pastor and lay leaders to enact sustainability measures.

Materials needed:

- ▶ Copies of the dishware fact sheet that is available [here](#); print enough for everyone.
- ▶ Several pieces of blank paper and pens.
- ▶ One copy of a monthly calendar, like the version available [here](#). Print only the pages for the remainder of the year.
- ▶ Several copies of the dishware volunteer sheet that is available [here](#).
- ▶ Contact information for the parish council, parish administrator, hospitality committee, and any other relevant people.

1. *Review the dishware fact sheet.* Split the room into two groups. Give copies of the dishware fact sheet to both groups. Hand out blank paper and pens, so that the groups can take notes during their discussions. Give the groups 5 minutes to discuss the following questions.
 - ▶ Group one discussion question: Would switching to reusable dishware help our church (or other organization) live more justly on the Earth? Why or why not?
 - ▶ Group two discussion question: What interests you about a potential switch to reusable dishware? What concerns you?
2. *Discuss your reaction to the idea of using disposable dishware.* Take 10 minutes to share answers as a large group and assess whether you would like to proceed with a switch to reusable dishware. If so, proceed to the next steps. If not, table this idea and move on to the advocacy portion of the program.
3. *Identify two project coordinators.* Identify two people in the group who can be responsible for moving this project forward. Make sure they have each other's contact information.
4. *Pass the dishware volunteer sheet.* Your project will have a greater chance of success if everyone is involved. Ask participants whether they will commit to contributing a few plates, glasses, mugs, or items of flatware to the church's cupboards.
 - ▶ These items need not be new. Mismatched items from local second-hand stores will serve the purpose well.
 - ▶ Ask the group to identify a date by which they will bring the items, and write that date at the top of the sheet. Identify a person and place to will collect the items—the project volunteers are great candidates. Make sure that information is at the top of the page, too.
 - ▶ Finally, give the sheet to one of the project coordinators.

5. *Recruit dishwashers.* Identify people in the group who will be willing to wash the dishes every Sunday for the rest of the year. On the blank calendar, write the names of the people who will be responsible at every Mass. If these people need to make changes later, they can let the project coordinators know. Make sure the project coordinators get the calendar.
6. *Implement your plan.* Following your event, the project coordinators should approach the hospitality committee, parish council, pastor, or other leaders with your group's plan. It's important that this approach be kind and collaborative. Remember: you're asking permission to help your parish better steward God's creation. If this opportunity isn't a good fit for the church, perhaps another one will be.