

# Climate Justice and the Bible



Climate Justice Placard from a Fridays For Future youth protest.

## **At Christian Aid we don't just talk about climate change, or even the climate crisis. We talk about climate justice.**

Climate justice emphasises that any action to stop climate change must recognise that the poorest people in the world have been the worst affected by climate change. They have also done the least to cause climate change. Vulnerable communities have been battling climate change and its impacts for decades. This climate crisis hurts us all. But people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day.

This Bible study will enable you to explore climate justice within a faith context. You could follow-up these conversation starters with other Christian Aid resources which support children and young people to speak out about climate change.

We have rooted the sessions in Genesis and, specifically, within the concept of being made in the image of God. As you explore these ideas with your children and young people, stay alert to our responsibility to care for God's creation: both planet and people. With each age group, it is important to consider what it means for how we relate to and show love to others if we are all made in the image of God.

As you explore this passage together, remember that the creation story in Genesis is a poem through which the Israelites understood the nature of their relationship with God. It is not a literal, historical account of creation but a story which explains why God created us, and our purpose as God's image bearers.

## **Be a changemaker**

A lot of 11-14s will be beginning to ask challenging questions and may be beginning to interrogate the beliefs, values and assumptions which they have inherited from family or attending church. This is a key part of their development towards adulthood and isn't something to be afraid of. Remember to host open and generous conversations where everyone has a chance to speak and listen.

This short video from the Bible Project explores Genesis 1-11. Watch it together with your group and spend some time chatting about what you saw.

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=GQI72THyO5I> or search "Bible Project Genesis 1-11" on YouTube).

Here are some important things which will provide context to your conversation:

- Many Christians believe that the creation story is a poem which Israelites told each other to understand their – and our – relationship with God. It is not literal account of how God created but why God created.

- People living in poverty have already been negatively affected by climate change.

- People living in poverty have done the least to cause climate change.

- This climate crisis hurts us all. But people living in poverty fight the worst of it every day.

- We, especially children and young people, shouldn't feel guilty about climate change. It's not our individual fault. But, with courage and determination, we can all be part of the solution. (This is really important to communicate).

## Made in God's image

Make sure that everyone has some paper, colouring pencils and pens. Ask everyone to draw a picture of themselves. Around the picture ask them to write down any characteristics and attributes of God that they see in themselves or in other people. After everyone has had a bit of time to draw and write, ask some volunteers to share what they have written down. If you have time, why not explore some of the questions below together?

- If every human being is made in the image of God, does that mean that we should care for one another?

- If human beings are made in the image of God and we don't care for them – what might that mean?

- If God made human beings to care for his world, does that mean that we should all tackle climate change together?

- What can we do to care for our neighbours?

- How can we care for our neighbours around the world who are struggling with climate change?

## Ending the Session Well

It is useful to draw the conversation to a close in a good way. The conversation is valuable itself, but can be more empowering if you create an opportunity to explore next steps that enable further learning, and putting things into action. One way of drawing the session to a close, is to share the

other opportunities available below and see if the children and young people you work with want to explore further together.

## Next Steps

There are many fun and engaging ways to get involved with climate justice!

'Windows on the World' is a great way to introduce primary school children to global issues. The learning resource focuses on how young people around the world are tackling climate change.

Watch a great documentary. Christian Aid has purchased a licence for 'Thank Your For The Rain' and we have created a guide for how you can watch it with the children and young people you work with. The documentary details the challenge of climate change faced by Kisilu, a Kenyan farmer and community activist. It's a powerful story that is full of hope and challenges.

If young people wrote 'Letters for the World', what would they say? This creative resource helps young people join with others across the UK to share messages of hope for the environment, and for people struggling with climate change.

If you and your young people are passionate about climate justice and want to support those living in vulnerable communities, we would love for you to Fundraise with us. Your young people will have loads of creative fundraising ideas, and you can find more inspiration at the link above!

Check out <http://caid.org.uk/youth-climate> for Christian Aid's latest youth climate justice resources.

## Contact us

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