

Made in the image of God: caring for creation



Ariana, 5, walking home from school in Nicaragua. Ariana's family used to grow coffee, but like many farmers in their community they have had to learn to grow different things because climate change is affecting what they can grow.

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. It is important to consider what being made in the image of God affects how we relate to and show love to others.

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

It can be really useful to explore some foundational aspects of faith and spirituality with young people aged 8-11. In the creation story we are told that God made the world and thought it was good. We are also told that God made humans in God's own image. This is really important starting point to think and discuss with the children and young people you work with. Consider how being made in God's image affects we treat our neighbours across the road and around the world.

Together watch "God's Story God's People", a short animation about the creation story. You'll find it via: [youtube.com/watch?v=ZZPfcWV81pE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZZPfcWV81pE) Or search "Gods Story God Made People" on Youtube.

Once you have watched the video together, enjoy the activity and questions below. Here are some important things which

will provide context to your conversation with the children and young people.

- 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.

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.

As much as you are able, let the children lead the learning with their thoughts and conversation. The questions below might help get back on topic or get the conversation started.

- 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 positive way. You might want to suggest ways in which the children can explore how to put what they have learned into action.

Next steps

There are many fun and engaging ways to get involved with climate justice! You will find lots of climate-related resources for young people on our website.

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.

If young people wrote Letters for the World, what would they say? Encourage your children and young people to join with others across the UK sharing 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.

You'll find all our climate justice youth resources at: caid.org.uk/youth-climate

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