

WE ARE ____

CLIMATE

WE HAVE CAUSED A CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND IT'S PUSHING PEOPLE BACK INTO POVERTY.



INTRO

| PAGE | SECTION | ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT NEEDED | TIME |
|--------------|---|---|---------------|
| 3 | Intro | N/A | 1 min |
| 4 | Video: Climate change 101 | Laptop connected to the internet, a screen, speakers | 4 mins |
| 5 | Bible study: We are creation | Bibles, two whiteboards or sheets of A3 paper, paper and pens | 15 mins |
| 7 | Case study: The impact of the climate emergency | Laptop connected to the internet, a screen, speakers | 4 mins |
| 8 | Activity: Climate quiz | Paper and pens | 15 mins |
| 11 | Video: Youth climate strikes | Laptop connected to the internet, a screen, speakers | 6 mins |
| 12 | Activity: Sign our open letter | Action cards*, pens | 5 mins |
| 13 | Activity: Take action against the climate emergency | Together Group quiz accessed through: Facebook https://m.me/WeAreTearfund Print version https://weare.tearfund.org/groups/ | 10 mins |
| Total | | | 1 hour |

You can use this session with a large group, or with a smaller group in a social setting. In some places we've given two options depending on the group size and age of the participants, so you can adapt it to work for your group. Look out for these symbols:



Best suited to smaller gatherings, including friends enjoying a meal together or a smaller group of students.



Best suited to a larger group such as a youth group, Christian Union, or schools work.

*ORDER FREE RESOURCES AHEAD OF TIME

Contact the We Are Tearfund team to order some action cards. You can email us on youth@tearfund.org or message us on Instagram [@WeAreTearfund](https://www.instagram.com/WeAreTearfund). (If you can give us a couple of weeks notice that would be really helpful.)

'Our house is on fire.' The urgent words of climate activist, Greta Thunberg. **We are in a climate emergency – global temperatures are rising and it's having a devastating impact on people living in poverty. As extreme temperatures rise and destructive weather patterns become more unpredictable, God is calling us to take a stand and join his plan for restoration. But we have to act now.**

Did you know that every year the Conference of the Parties (COP), which is made up of 197 countries, meets to discuss how they can work together to respond to the global challenge of climate change? In 2015, world leaders gathered together at COP21 and all participating countries committed to reduce climate change. But they are failing to do so.

Since that meeting, climate scientists say we must take action immediately to limit the rise of global temperatures to 1.5°C. If we do not act, there will be more natural disasters and extreme weather conditions that push millions of people into poverty, destroying livelihoods, homes and people's lives.

We have reached a tipping point, and if we do not act now, the effects of climate change will be irreversible. But we know that it doesn't have to be this way. God's creation is too important to not look after. During this session we will meet Sylvia in Malawi who's suffering from the impacts of the climate crisis; we'll be inspired by young people around the world who are demanding change; and we'll learn how we can join in with them to love both people and planet.

VIDEO: CLIMATE CHANGE 101

Before we campaign for climate justice, we have to understand the issue. Check out this video from Bill Nye the Science Guy to find out more.



[Watch the video now...](#)

<https://youtu.be/EtW2rrLHs08>

Discuss:

- Did any information in the video surprise you?
- Now that you know more about the climate crisis, how does it make you feel?

Now that we know the extent of our climate emergency, we can see the damage we're doing to God's creation. Do our actions line up with caring for creation as God calls us to?

In the first passage we're about to read we see the creation story unfolding as God makes mankind. God later puts Adam and Eve in charge of looking after all of creation. In the second passage Adam and Eve have just disobeyed God and eaten from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden.

- **Read Genesis 2:4-9 and 3:14-19.**



Split into two groups and get each group to focus on one of the passages above. Hand out some Bibles, paper and pens, and write up the questions below on a whiteboard or sheet of A3 paper for everyone to see. Encourage everyone to read through their passage, then discuss in their groups and note down where they find answers to the questions in the text. Once they've finished, get each group to read their passage aloud and share their answers to the questions to the other group.



Split into several smaller groups and get half of the groups to focus on the first passage and the other half to focus on the second. Hand out some Bibles, paper and pens, and write up the questions below on a whiteboard or sheet of A3 paper for everyone to see. Encourage everyone to read through their passage, then discuss in their groups and note down where they find answers to the questions in the text. Once they've finished, get volunteers to read both passages aloud and then allow each group to share their answers to the questions.

Questions

- In what ways are we one with the rest of creation?
- In what ways are we separate from the rest of creation?
- In what ways do we and the rest of creation impact each other?

Continued...



Summary

In Genesis 2 we see that God created us to help look after everything in the world. But just because we have a special job to do, it doesn't divorce us from the rest of creation. In fact, we were actually made from the dust of the earth itself, and we are directly linked to all of creation as part of God's great ecosystem. If we do not take care of his creation, it cannot take care of us either. We have strayed from God's command to work the land and now selfishly damage it through our lifestyles.

In Genesis 3 it becomes clear that our own actions have a negative impact on the whole of creation. In a similar way, the damage we are doing to the climate is impacting every part of creation today. If we are going to look after the world as God commanded and love others as ourselves (Mark 12:31), we need to change the way we see our role as stewards. We are part of a global community that includes the environment, animals and humans. We must play our part to make sure we exist together in harmony.

CASE STUDY: THE IMPACT OF THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

We've read about God's original vision for creation, but what happens when we don't play our part in it? The climate emergency isn't just a list of statistics, it's impacting people's lives today. Meet Sylvia:



[Watch the video now...](#)

<https://vimeo.com/212783250>

People like Sylvia are already suffering from the impact of rising global temperatures. If we do not act now, the effects of climate change will be even more devastating, and many more people will be put in Sylvia's position. While many people in the UK may enjoy having a hotter summer, the consequences of the climate crisis are costing lives around the world. In 2019 Cyclone Idai became the largest hurricane on record to hit Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe. The former first lady of Mozambique, Garça Machel cried out that Beira city 'will go down in history as having been the first city to be completely devastated by climate change'.

But as Sylvia's story shows, by coming together we can overcome climate change. We don't have to settle for a world where climate injustice is the norm. Instead, we can find alternative ways to live and reduce the damage we're doing to the environment. As members of God's global community, we can all play our part to work with the rest of creation. And as young people living in the UK, which is one of the countries that contributes a lot of carbon emissions, we have an even bigger part to play.



ACTIVITY: CLIMATE QUIZ

PART 1:

We know that we can change our everyday lifestyles to reduce our personal contribution to climate change, but, do you know which activities contribute more or less than others?



Read out the list of activities below and work together to put them in order of how much they could reduce your personal contribution to climate change, starting with the smallest. If you're stuck, try grouping them into three groups: low impact, moderate impact and high impact.



Write each of the activities below on a separate piece of paper. Choose seven volunteers to hold a piece of paper each and stand in a line at the front of the room. The rest of the group must work together to rearrange the volunteers, putting the activities in order of lowest to highest impact for reducing your personal contribution to climate change. Once the group is happy with the order, you can reveal the correct answers.

- Go vegan for a year
- Upgrade the light bulbs in your house
- Recycle
- Go car free for a year
- Avoid one transatlantic return flight
- Hang dry your laundry (no tumble dryer)
- Wash your clothes in cold water

(correct answers, starting with the smallest contribution):

1. **LOW impact:** Upgrade the light bulbs in your house
2. **MODERATE impact:** Hang dry your laundry (no tumble dryer)
3. **MODERATE impact:** Recycle
4. **MODERATE impact:** Wash your clothes in cold water
5. **HIGH impact:** Go vegan for a year
6. **HIGH impact:** Avoid one transatlantic return flight
7. **HIGH impact:** Go car free for a year



ACTIVITY: CLIMATE QUIZ

PART 2:

Did you know that a quarter of global emissions comes from food production? But not all food contributes equally. How do your food choices impact the environment?



Hand out paper and pens to everyone. Read out the question below and each pair of foods, one at a time. The group must work together to guess which food has the greater carbon footprint. Reveal the correct answer and read out the statistics after each guess.



Ask the group to get into pairs, and give each pair a small piece of paper and a pen. Read out the question below and each pair of foods, one at a time so that everyone can write down which food they think has the greater carbon footprint. Read out all the answers and statistics at the end. The pair with the most correct answers wins.

Question: which food has the higher carbon footprint?

One apple per day OR two eggs per day

- **Answer:** Two eggs per day

Over the course of a year, this consumption of eggs would contribute 43kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 2kg with apples. That's equivalent to driving a regular petrol car 111 miles, compared to 7 miles!

One avocado per week OR one chicken breast per week

- **Answer:** One chicken breast per week

Over the course of a year, this consumption of chicken would contribute 106kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 15kg with avocados. That's equivalent to heating an average UK home for 16 days, compared to 2 days!

One typical fast-food beef burger per week OR three bacon rashers per week

- **Answer:** One typical fast-food beef burger.

Over the course of a year, this consumption of beef would contribute 604kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 140kg with pork. That's equivalent to driving a regular petrol car 1,542 miles, compared to 359 miles!



ACTIVITY: CLIMATE QUIZ

One glass of dairy milk per week OR one glass of oat milk per week

- **Answer:** Dairy milk

Over the course of a year, this consumption of dairy milk would contribute 49kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 14kg with oat milk. That's equivalent to heating an average UK home for 7 days, compared to 1.7 days!

Enough cheese to cover two crackers per week OR one serving of tofu per week

- **Answer:** Cheese

Over the course of a year, this consumption of cheese would contribute 75kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 12 kg with tofu. That's equivalent to driving a regular petrol car 193 miles, compared to 32 miles!

One cup of tea per week OR one cup of coffee per week

- **Answer:** Coffee

Over the course of a year, this consumption of coffee would contribute 33kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 3kg with tea. That's equivalent to heating an average UK home for 5 days, compared to 0.5 days!

Two slices of bread per week OR one portion of oatmeal (uncooked) per week

- **Answer:** Oatmeal

Over the course of a year this consumption of oatmeal would contribute 8kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 4kg with bread. That's equivalent to driving a regular petrol car 21 miles, compared to 12 miles!

One bar of milk chocolate per week OR one banana per week

- **Answer:** Chocolate

Over the course of a year, this consumption of chocolate would contribute 80kg to your annual greenhouse gas emissions, compared to 5kg with bananas. That's equivalent to heating an average UK home for 12 days, compared to 0.9 days!

To find out more about how your actions can impact the climate, visit:
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-46459714>

VIDEO: YOUTH CLIMATE STRIKES

As we've now seen, each of us has the ability to start making a difference in the climate emergency. Our individual actions matter, but by working together we can have an even bigger impact. In 2019, the youth climate strikes became one of the biggest youth-led global movements ever seen. Young people are leading the charge against climate injustice. Find out why they're striking by watching the following video:



Watch the video now...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7hYf4dDOjfc>

Discuss:

- Have you attended any of the youth climate strikes? Why/why not?
- What stood out to you about what people were saying in the video?
- What do you want older generations to know about the climate emergency?



ACTIVITY: SIGN OUR OPEN LETTER

In 2020, COP will be taking place in Glasgow from 9-19 November. With 197 country representatives attending, we want them all to know how serious this climate emergency is. Sign our open letter asking them to take the necessary action to end climate injustice:

Dear COP26 President and national leaders

We are One.

One world. One creation. One humanity. Before you are an international leader, you belong to this global community. But there's a problem; right now we aren't acting like family. Millions of people live in extreme poverty because of the climate crisis – put simply the earth is getting too hot.

Today we are at a tipping point, a cliffhanger in time. We **CAN** stop this, but instead governments choose profit over people and planet, and ignore the human impact of our economic growth.

As Christians we're called to 'love our neighbours' and care for creation but with every degree global temperatures rise, hurricanes get stronger, droughts last longer and whole islands disappear into the sea. The cost is huge. In Bangladesh alone there are 50 million people trying to lift themselves out of extreme poverty, whilst their crops, livelihoods and communities are destroyed by storms, landslides and water contamination – all because of climate change.

That's why we're calling for you to make a difference right here at COP26 in Glasgow. **You have to recommit to limiting an increase in global temperatures to 1.5°C and create meaningful policies to achieve it.** This means a shift away from fossil fuels and cutting emissions down to zero as fast as possible. We stand in solidarity with our global neighbours, whose lives literally depend on us keeping to 1.5. Every day you delay and put profit first, more and more people are being pushed into extreme poverty. It's time for less talking and more action.

It's now or never, and we ask you to act with us – a young generation committed to standing with our global community.

ADD YOUR VOICE

Hand out an action card and a pen to each person and show them how to add their voice to the open letter.

Give them some time to read through the card and letter, fully fill out the form and then collect them all in.

TAKE ACTION AGAINST THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

As well as signing the open letter, there are so many things we can do to work towards climate justice.

Remember when you discovered your persona using [the quiz](#) in the first Together Group session? Knowing your unique skills can help you respond effectively to issues impacting people living in poverty. Let's join together, take a stand against climate injustice and help our global neighbours.

On the next few pages, you'll find suggested activities for your persona. If you were a combination of two or more personas, choose the one that most appeals to you.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE ADVOCATE

Time to get back in touch with nature!

Our lifestyles are often detached from nature – we live in urban areas; we pick up our food from the supermarket; our waste is collected at our front doors. We have fallen out of touch with the incredible, miraculous gift of creation. Our disconnect with creation can make us less careful about how we treat the planet.

But the Bible tells us that God's creation reflects his glory. So challenge yourself to find out more about the world we live in and how many resources God has given us through it.

Pick a vegetable that you can grow at home – inside, outside, in a window box, in a greenhouse, in an allotment, in an urban roof garden. Use whatever space you have! Learn when it's best to plant the seed and when it will be ready to harvest. Find out how to look after your vegetable as it grows. And enjoy some homegrown veggies when they are ready!

You could even use the vegetable peels and cores to make your own compost, and use it to plant your second round of seeds.

As you look after your vegetable plant, why not use this time to pray for our creation and to thank God for providing for us through his earth.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE ACTIVIST

The climate strikes that have been taking place in cities and towns all over the world have drawn a huge amount of attention to the climate crisis. They are a loud and clear message to world leaders that young people want change now!

Could you join the next climate strike in your town or city? To find out when the next global climate strike is taking place, check out <https://ukscn.org/events/>

If there aren't any global climate strikes happening when you would like to take part, you can always join Greta Thunberg every Friday and organise your own Fridays for Future strike!

If you are under 18 years old, it's really important to ask your parents or guardians for permission to join a strike. If they do give you permission, you can also ask them or a youth leader for help in organising this.

These strikes are a great way to stand together with other young people, to make an even bigger noise about the climate crisis. So ask your group of friends or youth group if they would join you as you strike for the climate. You will need to:

- choose a date
- decide a time to meet
- decide when to finish
- pick a location
- contact numbers for those joining you

You could create your own protest sign to bring with you to the strike. Use scrap cardboard/paper where possible. Think of how you can play with words or memes to create something catchy e.g. 'There is no planet B'. You could even include an image or drawing.

For more information about climate strikes, check out <https://ukscn.org>



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE MAKER

Celebrate the beauty of creation! Host an exhibition for your friends and family, with pieces that are all about celebrating creation.

You could include paintings, drawings, photographs, poems, spoken word, craft, sculptures, music, videos – use your creative skills in whichever way you like to show off the beauty of creation. You could produce all the art yourself or you could invite some creative friends to collaborate with you.

You will need to think about:

- a date and time for your exhibition
- a suitable venue
- invitations for your friends, family, church, youth group, school class – whoever you want to invite!
- how to display the pieces – do you need to collect some frames from charity shops, or pick up some hooks or tables?
- any equipment you might need for lighting or to play music/videos

We'd love to see your exhibitions! Send through some pictures from the night to [@wearetearfund](https://www.instagram.com/wearetearfund) on Instagram.



ACTIVITY: TAKE ACTION – THE MOBILISER

What have you learned about the climate crisis in this session? Have you discovered anything new about the relationship between your faith and caring for the planet?

As Christians, we aren't always very good at remembering that looking after God's creation is an important part of our faith.

We have an amazing opportunity in November to ask world leaders at COP26 in Glasgow to make decisions that will help us keep the rise in global temperature below 1.5°C. This is the time for the church to speak up!

How could you share what you have learned about looking after the planet, and collect more signatures for the open letter to the leaders of COP26?

Here are two ideas to get you started:

- Ask your youth leader if you could speak for ten minutes at your youth group to ask them to sign the open letter.
- Ask your CU leader at school or university if you could take ten minutes at your next meeting to ask the group to sign the open letter.

You can use the action cards that you signed earlier to collect more signatures. Email youth@tearfund.org to order some now.



YOUTUBE

Subscribe to We Are Tearfund and get fortnightly videos featuring fun ideas to help those living in poverty - like the new Swedish craze: "Plogging"!

Go now...



THE TOGETHER PODCAST

Join Chris, Emma, Dan and others for a monthly conversation exploring how to live out God's call to pursue justice.

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