

From Concern to Action

A guide for small group conversations

FAITHFUL CLIMATE CONVERSATIONS



**FOR THE LOVE
OF CREATION**

There are three conversation guide options. Choose the guide that is right for your group at: <https://forthe loveofcreation.ca>.

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Please use, copy and share as needed.

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Introduction

This guide is designed for use by hosts and facilitators who want to guide a small group through a conversation about climate change in a faith context. This conversation, “From Concern to Action”¹ is proposed for people who may have a basic understanding of climate change or are concerned about the effects of climate change but remain uncertain about the best ways to act in light of this reality. After briefly discussing the reality of climate change, participants are prompted to reflect on what they have learned. Then, drawing inspiration from climate justice movements around the world, participants are asked to consider what actions they can take to mitigate the effects of climate change.

This is an opportunity for you as a leader - a host or facilitator - to make change right in your own community. This structured discussion offers you a simple way to help others attend to climate grief, increase their understanding of the urgent situation we are in and move towards confident action. You don't need to be a climate change expert to lead; everything you need is right here in this guide. This is a concrete way for you to help address climate change. You can make a difference. Whether you lead one Faithful Climate Conversation or many, all of us in For the Love of Creation are grateful for your leadership and look forward to hearing from you on the feedback form.

Group Size

We recommend using this guide with groups of 6-8 participants. The strength of this exercise is in personal participation. Larger groups will decrease the opportunities to participate. If you want to include 12 or more participants, consider breaking into smaller groups,

each with their own facilitator, for each of the discussion questions.

Invitations

For the Love of Creation hopes that this conversation guide, “From Concern to Action”, will draw many more people into committed and faithful action towards climate justice. Please be mindful when making invitations to be open and welcoming of those who may not have the same understanding of climate change as you do. We encourage you to think about those people in your circles who are not yet active on these issues and offer them a friendly invitation to your event. Some sample invitations are available in **Appendix A**.

Logistics

Choose a comfortable, accessible setting for a meeting in person or online. This initial session is designed to be about 2 hours long. Pay attention to the time, so that the group can work through the whole arc of the conversation before your time is up. If refreshments are to be served add that social time onto the 2 hours.

Leadership

Conversations are best led by a leadership team. The **host**, even online, looks after all the logistics as well as making people feel welcome and comfortable, leaving the **facilitator** free to focus on leading the discussion.

Overview

A summary chart is available in **Appendix I**.

Questions

Contact flc.pac@gmail.com.

¹ Three conversation guide options are available depending on the starting point of the participants. See resources at <https://forthe loveofcreation.ca> to determine which option is best for your group and download alternatives.



The Conversation

Introduction (20 minutes)

GATHERING

As people arrive, welcome them individually, making people feel comfortable in the space as you wait for others to arrive.

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

When people are settled begin the group conversation with a simple word of welcome and offer a land acknowledgement appropriate for your area, researching local treaties, people groups, watersheds and landmarks as necessary. This is an opportunity to acknowledge displaced Black, People of Colour and immigrant communities as well as Indigenous peoples. If you are new to the practice of land acknowledgements, start here for a description:

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/territorial-acknowledgment>

INTRODUCE THE FACILITATORS

Briefly give your name, role and why you decided to join in leadership of this conversation.

INTENTIONS OF THE GATHERING

Share the intent to:

- 1) address climate grief through reflection and action
- 2) increase understanding of the climate emergency
- 3) help participants confidently take action personally and in their community

GUIDELINES FOR DISCUSSION

Offer some simple encouragements, such as,

“Emotional topics could come up. Pay attention to your feelings and how you express them. Be gentle with yourself and others; we want this space to be as safe as possible for all. We are all equal in learning and exploring here. Please be mindful of sharing the time equally as well. Finally, any personal stories don't leave the room unless permission is given.”

INTRODUCTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Ask that each person share their name and, if comfortable, one reason why they are interested in talking about

climate change. Asking for location or association could also be appropriate if it is brief.

OVERVIEW OF AGENDA

Hand out or share the Participant Agenda from **Appendix B**.

SCRIPTURE READING AND PRAYER

Take this opportunity to ground the conversation in faith.

- Start with a general comment appropriate to your group, such as, *“We want to be mindful of the generous gifts of our Creator and to consider the calling of our faith as we interact with the rest of creation. Our Scriptures tell us of the sacredness of creation.”*
- Offer a brief Scripture reading of your choice here.
- Continue with a statement affirming the faith context of this conversation, such as *“We are gathered here as people of faith. Let us be open and mindful of that calling in our conversation.”*
- Introduce the prayer as appropriate to the group, perhaps saying, *“We bring our hearts before the Creator with all of our concerns and our questions knowing that it is God who holds each of us and all of creation.”*

A few sample prayers and scripture choices are offered in **Appendix C**. In a multi-faith group, acknowledge this context and name the tradition you have chosen to speak out of, claiming the common ground among many faiths around the call to care for creation and each other.

What is Climate Change? (30 minutes)

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CLIMATE CHANGE? (5 MINUTES)

Please show the following video by National Geographic which introduces the topic of climate change and how it impacts the earth.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4H1N_yXBIA

The information in **Appendix D - Climate Change Fact Sheet** is offered for your background and understanding. It may be referred to for a basic explanation as questions come up.



WHERE DO EMISSIONS COME FROM? (5 MINUTES)

There are many sources of greenhouse gas emissions. The largest is from the oil and gas industry while the second largest is transportation. Industry and manufacturing, agriculture and waste also produce greenhouse gases. You may wish to briefly present some of the data or graphs available in **Appendix E**.

WHAT IMPACT DOES CLIMATE CHANGE HAVE ON THE WORLD? (20 MINUTES)

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a report in 2018 that outlines the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels. Such a rise in global temperatures would have devastating effects on our planet. Please share the following infographic from the World Wildlife Foundation which outlines some of these effects: https://wwfau.awsassets.panda.org/downloads/1_5c_infographic_final_high_res_final.jpg

In order to illustrate the effects of climate change share a relevant news story that demonstrates the connections between climate change and ecological degradation. You may wish to search for your own example, or you may choose from the examples found in **Appendix F**. Choose which parts of the stories you will read and time yourself reading them out loud to be sure you can stay within the timeframe.

After taking some time to review the global impacts of climate change, consider its impacts in your area (i.e. flooding, extreme weather, drought, heat waves, etc.). You may wish to research your own articles or data to use here, or you can visit the following website which offers reports on the effects of climate change for 17 Canadian cities:

<https://climateatlas.ca/>

Reactions to Climate Science (20 minutes)

PERSONAL REFLECTION

Give participants 5-7 minutes to write a response to the information that was just presented. Consider the following questions as prompts if needed:

- *What new information did you learn in the last 30 minutes?*
- *What concerns or fears do you have about climate change?*
- *How have you experienced the effects of climate change?*
- *What hopes or goals do you have related to the environment?*

GROUP SHARING

After participants have written their reflections, take 10-15 minutes to allow those who would like to share their thoughts to do so.

Responding to Climate Change (40 minutes)

WHAT CAN WE DO IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE? (5 MINUTES)

There are many ways to reduce emissions, slowing the rate of global warming. In order to effectively address the impacts of climate change, we need a variety of actors and all levels of government to act. The following video by National Geographic outlines some of the ways that people around the globe are combating climate change:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ok8rMT2KCy0>

As an alternative to the video you may wish to share climate success stories that you are aware of, or you may choose to present one or two of the stories given in **Appendix G**.

QUADRANT EXERCISE (35 MINUTES)

Have all participants complete the “Quadrant Exercise” given in **Appendix H**.² If meeting in person ensure that everyone has a handout and pen/pencil. If meeting virtually, consider emailing this document to participants ahead of time and asking them to print it off or have it available to fill out digitally.

² Quadrant Exercise Source: ClimateFast, Kitchen Table Climate Conversations. climatefast.ca. Used with permission.



Ask participants to think about actions that would reduce emissions, increase environmental sustainability or in other ways promote climate justice.³ List these activities in point form in the appropriate section of the handout (actions taken by individuals, by industries/businesses, by communities or by government). Encourage participants to be specific. If there is an action that would take cooperation between multiple actors, place it in the box with the actor who would have the largest influence.

If participants are having difficulty coming up with ideas you may wish to refer to the ideas in the stories mentioned earlier or use one of the following documents which offer examples of ways to reduce your personal carbon footprint:

<https://cpj.ca/7-ways-youth-can-reduce-their-ecological-footprint/>

<https://www.kairoscanada.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/REDUCING-YOUR-CARBON-FOOTPRINT.pdf>

<https://cpj.ca/9-ways-to-reduce-your-ghg-footprint/>

After giving 5-7 minutes to complete the exercise ask participants to share some of their ideas. Create a large-group sheet of overlapping ideas. This can be done on a whiteboard, large sheet of paper or (if meeting virtually) in the group chat with one person responsible for recording the ideas in a separate document for future reference.

Ask participants which actions from the quadrant exercise they are willing to commit to (either personally or as a group).

Create a list of action steps or a plan for moving forward. Please note that this may include meeting again as a

group, or in smaller groups to create more detailed plans to accomplish your goals.

Closing (10 minutes)

NEXT STEPS

Discuss with the group: *What are our next steps? How can we best follow-up with one another or hold each other accountable for our personal goals? Would this group like to spend more time with these conversation starters or try another guided Faithful Climate Conversation, such as, **Build a Better Future** or another kind of conversation or activity together?*

WIDER CONVERSATION

Let people know that you will share generalities about this discussion in a feedback form and are invited to share on social media if the group is interested in connecting with other faith groups who are at the same stage of discussion. Confirm that people's names and personal identifiers will never be used on the form or social media. Use **#FaithfulClimateConversations** to link to the conversation thread.

CONTACT INFO

Ask permission to collect and share contact information of group members if appropriate.

PRAYER

Consider a prayer form *beforehand* but if comfortable, improvise in situ.

GRATITUDE AND FAREWELL

Thank participants for attending and engaging in this important conversation.

Follow Up

CONTACT

Contact the group the next day if possible or within the next week to thank them again for coming, share contact information as appropriate and offer any other links or resources that were discussed.

FEEDBACK FORM

Please fill in a brief questionnaire at <https://forms.gle/BAzEBSA7k7pXAsXe9> to help For the Love of Creation see where conversations are happening and what additional resources might be helpful.

³ Climate justice recognizes that climate change is more than just an environmental or scientific issue, it has significant social, economic and public health implications as well. Climate justice recognizes that climate change disproportionately impacts vulnerable communities.



Appendix A – Invitations

PERSONAL EMAIL

Dear _____,

[You may wish to open and close with a salutation appropriate to the season and current state of affairs.]

How are things going with you? I hope all is well.

I am hosting a small group conversation called “From Concern to Action.” It will be a chance to talk from a faith perspective about creation care, changing climate patterns and how we can respond with hope and justice.

We’ll meet at [my place/the library/online] on [date and time]. I think there will be about 6 or 8 of us – mostly people from [church/the mosque/the neighbourhood/another association]. [Add accessibility and social distancing details as applicable.]

Hope you can make it!

[Your name]

BULLETIN OR NEWSLETTER ANNOUNCEMENT:

Worried about climate change? Unsure what you can do about it? **From Concern to Action** is an opportunity for those who are worried about our changing climate to come together with others from our faith community to talk about what we can do to address our concerns.

It is brought to us by **For the Love of Creation**, a growing faith-based initiative for climate justice. This small group conversation will happen [Date, time, location.] The conversation will be hosted by [name] and facilitated by [name]. Sign up [here – link/email/bulletin board]. Spots are limited for this date. If there is more interest a second group or date will be added.



Appendix B – Participant Agenda

Introduction

- Gathering: Feelings and Experience Poll
- Acknowledgement, Introductions, Intentions & Guidelines

The intention of this Faithful Climate Conversation is:

- 1) *To address climate grief through reflection and action*
 - 2) *To increase understanding of the climate emergency*
 - 3) *To help participants confidently take action personally and in their community*
- Scripture and Prayer

What is Climate Change?

- What do we mean by climate change?
- Where do emissions come from?
- What impact does climate change have on the world?

Reactions to Climate Science

- Written Reflections
(Write your own thoughts. These questions may help.)
 - *What new information did you learn in the last 30 minutes?*
 - *What concerns or fears do you have about climate change?*
 - *How have you experienced the effects of climate change?*
 - *What hopes or goals do you have related to the environment?*
- Sharing

Responding to Climate Change

- What can we do in the face of climate change?
- Quadrant Exercise

Closing

- Next steps
What would it look like to keep this conversation going?
- Wider conversation and exchanging contact info:
#FaithfulClimateConversations
- Prayer



Appendix C – Scripture and Prayer

Scriptures

O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.

(Psalm 104: 24 NRSV, see also Ps 104: 1-30)

By awesome deeds you answer us with deliverance, O God of our salvation; you are the hope of all the ends of the earth and the farthest seas.

(Psalm 65: 5 NRSV, see also Ps 65: 5-13)

The earth is the Lord's and everything in it.

(1 Cor 10:26 NIV)

The Earth is my mother and I am her child!

(Atharva Veda 12.1.12)

So long as the earth is able to maintain mountains, forests and trees

Until then the human race and its progeny will be able to survive

(Durga Saptashati 54)

Truly, God will not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.

(The Holy Qur'an, Surah Ar-Ra'd 13:11)

Prayers

A PRAYER FOR OUR EARTH, LAUDATO SI, POPE FRANCIS

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures. You embrace with your tenderness all that exists. Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty. Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one. O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes. Bring healing to our lives, that we may protect the world and not prey on it, that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction. Touch the hearts of those

who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the earth. Teach us to discover the worth of each thing, to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognize that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light. We thank you for being with us each day. Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

A HINDU PRAYER

May peace radiate in the whole sky and in the vast ethereal space,

May peace reign all over this earth, in water, in all herbs, and the forests,

May peace flow over the whole universe,

May peace be in the Supreme Being,

May peace exist in all creation, and peace alone,

May peace flow into us.

Aum - peace, peace and peace!

(Yajur Veda Samhita 36:17)⁴

SEASON OF CREATION PRAYER 2020

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RANyrrjoHYzNzFL5N1fg5H8Y4RvglUbe/view>

A PRAYER FOR CREATION BY RABBI DAVID MEVORACH SEIDENBERG

<https://www.ritualwell.org/ritual/prayer-creation>

SIKH PRAYER ON CLIMATE CHANGE AT ECOSIKH INTERFAITH EVENT-2015

https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=36&v=cxNfF3MGZc&feature=emb_logo

ISLAMIC PRAYER BY AUSTRALIAN RELIGIOUS RESPONSE TO CLIMATE CHANGE

<https://www.arcc.org.au/reflect-prayers-islamic>

⁴ <https://greenfaith.org/ClimateEmergency>



Appendix D – Climate Change Fact Sheet

Certain gases – carbon dioxide, water vapour, methane, nitrous oxide and some others – are called **greenhouse gases**. They allow solar radiation to pass through them but absorb infrared radiation given off at the surface of the planet. This effect has been understood since the work of Fourier (1827) and Tyndall (1860). Since the industrial revolution, human civilization has been doing things which emit these gases in ever greater quantities. The result is an imbalance known to scientists as **radiative forcing** – the earth receives more energy from the sun than it sends back into space. The outcome is **global warming**, or **global heating** – i.e. the average temperature of the earth's surface increases. The first attempt to fully describe and quantify this effect was by Arrhenius (1895).

Global heating results in a number of effects known as **climate change**, which vary according to location – the retreat of glaciers worldwide, the decline of arctic sea ice, rising sea levels, longer dry spells and droughts, more intense rainfall and flooding, more frequent periods of extreme heat, more extreme hurricanes and cyclones, stronger storm surges, etc.

These effects cannot be explained away by changes in solar radiation (it isn't increasing), volcanic activity (it produces only very small quantities of greenhouse gases compared to human generated emissions), or natural cycles (they just shift energy around and can't explain all the extra energy in the system).

Continued global heating will result in:

- Long periods of drought in many parts of the world, creating risks to global and regional food security
- Frequent extreme and prolonged heat waves in many parts of the world, threatening lives but also making outdoor work, including food production, impossible
- Extreme weather events generally becoming more extreme
- Significant global sea rise, threatening small island states and coastal communities
- Increasingly rapid species extinction and threats to vital ecosystems.

Carbon dioxide is emitted mostly from the burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil and gas) but also from the chemistry of some

manufacturing processes. Methane is leaked from oil and gas installations, including fracking and is also belched by livestock. Heavily fertilised fields give off nitrous oxide. Water vapour levels in the atmosphere increase as temperature increases, thus amplifying the effects of the other gases. By reducing absorption of carbon dioxide, deforestation also contributes to climate change.

The world's average temperature is currently about 1°C higher than pre-industrial levels. The higher this temperature rise goes, the more extreme the effects. But because the main greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, stays in the atmosphere for about 100 years, every new emission increases the global heating effect – even if we manage to reduce our total emissions year by year.

The Paris Agreement of 2015 committed the world's political leaders to keep the increase “well below 2°C” and aim to stay below 1.5°C. A major scientific report in 2018 by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) – which represents all the leading experts in the field - showed big differences between the effects at these two temperatures, particularly those affecting the most vulnerable in the world. For example, the authors estimate that 420 million fewer people would be frequently exposed to extreme heat waves at 1.5°C than at 2°C.

Scientists are able to estimate the rate of emissions reduction required to stay within these temperature limits. The 2018 IPCC report found that, to achieve the 1.5°C limit, carbon dioxide emissions need to be reduced by at least 45% globally by 2030, and brought down to net zero (i.e. reduce emissions as much as possible and completely offset any remaining emissions with actions to remove carbon from the atmosphere) by mid-century – and that other gas emissions need to be rapidly reduced.

The Paris Agreement commits wealthy industrialised countries to move faster than the global average in emissions reductions, because of our greater responsibility and greater capability. For Canada, a calculation of its “fair share” means reducing emissions by 60% by 2030 and supporting emissions reduction strategies in low income countries by USD 4 billion a year (estimated to be equivalent to a further 80% reduction in emissions).



Appendix E – Where do emissions come from?

This website includes helpful infographics and explanations of the source of Greenhouse Gas Emissions in Canada: <http://prairieclimatecentre.ca/2018/03/where-do-canadas-greenhouse-gas-emissions-come-from/>

This infographic outlines some of the sources of Greenhouse Gases: <https://cpj.ca/infographic-what-is-a-tonne-of-greenhouse-gas-emissions/>

This PDF contains charts which break down the carbon emission sources of each Canadian province: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1PkiLBh9cf37klnitFas1tTWxhFrc-jgx/view>

Appendix F – International Effects of Climate Change

Climate change made Siberian heatwave 600 times more likely – study <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/jul/15/climate-change-made-siberian-heatwave-600-times-more-likely-study>
(first four paragraphs portray the main idea)

'The water will come back': why Kenya's struggle against flooding is far from over <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/02/the-water-will-come-back-why-kenyas-struggle-against-flooding-is-far-from-over> (select portions of the story and time it)

About 3 billion animals harmed in Australian bushfires, WWF says <https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/australia-bushfires-1.5666994>



Appendix G – What Can We Do in the Face of Climate Change?

RENEWABLE ENERGY IN SCOTLAND

Scotland to reach 100% renewables in time to host 2020 climate summit <https://reneweconomy.com.au/scotland-to-reach-100-renewables-in-time-to-host-2020-climate-summit-60854/> (story)

SCOTISH RENEWABLES: STATISTICS

<https://www.scottishrenewables.com/our-industry/statistics> (great visuals, especially Chart 2 & Chart 4)

ELECTRIC CARS IN NORWAY

Norway and the A-ha moment that made electric cars the answer <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/apr/19/norway-and-the-a-ha-moment-that-made-electric-cars-the-answer> (story, chose how much of it you will share and time it)

<https://elbil.no/english/norwegian-ev-market/>
(a helpful chart to share)

MEANINGFUL LEGISLATION IN DENMARK

<https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20200706-the-law-that-could-make-climate-change-illegal>

METRO VANCOUVER BECOMES CARBON NEUTRAL

<https://bc.ctvnews.ca/metro-vancouver-has-achieved-corporate-carbon-neutrality-and-is-calling-on-businesses-to-do-the-same-1.5004258>



Appendix H – Quadrant Exercise⁵

Individual	Industry/Business
Community	Government

⁵ Quadrant Exercise Source: ClimateFast, Kitchen Table Climate Conversations. climatefast.ca. Used with permission.



Appendix I – Summary Chart

Time	Section	Content
20 mins	Introduction	Gathering: Feelings and Experience Poll Land Acknowledgement Introduce the Facilitators Intentions of the Gathering Guidelines for discussion Introduction of Participants Overview of the Agenda Scripture and Prayer
30 mins	What is Climate Change?	What do we mean by “climate change”? Where do emissions come from? What impact does climate change have on the world?
20 min	Reactions to Climate Science	Personal Reflection Group Sharing
40 mins	Responding to Climate Change	What can we do in the face of climate change? Quadrant Exercise Action Steps/Plan for Moving Forward
10 mins	Closing	Next steps Wider conversation Contact Info Prayer Gratitude and Farewell