



 BAPTIST WORLD AID

LET THE EARTH BE GLAD

Responding To
Creation In Crisis



Introduction

We are stewards of the earth God has created. What does that mean for us as disciples, for the church as God's people, and for all of humanity as we wrestle with unprecedented environmental crises?

Through God, all things came into being (John 1:1-3). God created the universe, the earth, and everything in it. Afterwards, he declared all he had made to be good (Genesis 1). Creation itself reveals God's power and nature to all people (Romans 1:20). Even if humans did not worship God, the very trees and rocks would worship Him (Luke 19:40).

God placed humanity into his creation, and gave us the task of caring for it (Genesis 2:15). God continues to care about his creation—not a single sparrow falls from the air without God's knowledge and care (Matt 10:29).

Yet today, creation is groaning. Human activities such as deforestation, overconsumption and pollution affect the earth in ways we are only beginning to understand. 31,000 species are threatened with extinction,¹ with Australia among the top seven countries for biodiversity loss.² Against this backdrop, environmental crises are increasing as a changing climate affects weather systems, ecosystems and human lives.

In the last 20 years, 4.2 billion people were affected by disasters which claimed 1.23 million lives and cost almost three trillion dollars.³ In this same period, the number of major floods was more than double that of the previous 20 years, and the rate of extreme temperature events has tripled. Droughts, storms and landslides also increased significantly.⁴ We know inaction will mean these trends will continue worsening over time, leading to more intense disasters, more vulnerability and more inequality.

It isn't meant to be this way. When God sent his son to earth, it was not just to restore humanity alone. Through Jesus, God reconciled all of creation, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through Jesus' blood, shed on the cross (Col 1:19-20).

How can Christians today play a part in the restoration of God's creation? Can we address threats to creation, help people facing risks due to environmental crises, and ensure those affected by changes still have the chance to thrive?

This resource pack provides your church or youth group a great opportunity to explore these essential questions together.

1 [United Nations Statistics Division](#)

2 [Australia among the world's worst on biodiversity conservation, 2017](#)

3 [United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)

4 [Human Cost of Disasters. An overview of the last 20 years](#)



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How You Can Use This Pack

We hope this pack is valuable for your church or youth group—that it enriches your faith, deepens your understanding, and equips you as a steward of God’s creation.

We’ve provided resources under three areas:

- **Learn** – dive into God’s word and what it looks like to care for his creation through discussion guides, quick explainers and reflection questions;
- **Experience** – fun, interactive games and activities that help youth explore environmental issues using all their senses;
- **Act** – concrete ways you can put what you’ve learned into action and advocate for environmental issues.

This pack is flexible, and you can use the different elements in a way that suits your church or youth group. For example, you could run a special night at youth group and choose activities from each of the three areas, or you could incorporate elements from the pack around your current program.

We’ve also provided some extra resources at the back, if you’d like to find out more about any of the issues raised in this pack.

Let The Earth Be Glad is developed by Baptist World Aid Australia as part of Catalyst, the national advocacy and discipleship network for Baptists. Learn more and sign up for Catalyst at www.baptistworldaid.org.au/catalyst.

‘Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad;

let the sea resound, and all that is in it.

Let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them;

let all the trees of the forest sing for joy.

Let all creation rejoice before the Lord’

PSALM 96:11-13



SECTION 1

LEARN



Explainers

HERE ARE SOME OF THE COMMON TERMS YOU MIGHT COME ACROSS AS YOU EXPLORE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES.

Australian Christians and Creation

A Christian consensus generally exists around the environment. The 2016 National Church Life Survey found 93 per cent of churchgoers and 96 per cent of leaders agreed that care for the earth should be part of the mission of the church, and 69 per cent agreed that nature is sacred⁵.

What about the climate? A majority of Christians think it is changing. NCLS Research's 2021 Australian Community Survey found 78 per cent of Christians thought climate change was happening, with 52 per cent thinking it was largely caused by humans.⁶ Eleven per cent did not think climate change was happening at all, and another Eleven per cent didn't have a view. These percentages are not uniform across age groups. Sixty-seven per cent of 18–34-year-olds attributed climate change to human causes, compared with 46 per cent among over 65s.

Another recent survey of Christians aged 18 to 40 by Tearfund Australia⁷ found 86 per cent think climate change is happening, with 55 per cent of those surveyed thought it was caused by humans. Seven per cent did not think that climate change was happening at all. Three quarters of respondents reported having taken some action to tackle climate change.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity describes the total variety of life on earth: a list of all created things over which God placed humans as stewards. Extinction risk has worsened by about 10 per cent over the last three decades, driven mainly by habitat loss, deforestation, invasive species, unsustainable agriculture and overharvesting⁸. The United Nations estimates that 31,000 species are threatened with extinction, with Australia among the top seven countries for biodiversity loss.⁹ Biodiversity can be protected through improved public and business practices and sound environmental management by governments. In Australia, a 2020 review of the national Environmental Protection and Biosecurity Act produced 38 recommendations, which are yet to be implemented.

93%

OF CHURCHGOERS AGREE THAT CARE FOR THE EARTH SHOULD BE PART OF THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH.

31,000 SPECIES

THREATENED WITH EXTINCTION

⁵ [National Church Life Survey](#)

⁶ [National Church Life Survey](#)

⁷ [They Shall Inherit The Earth - Tearfund Australia](#)

⁸ [United Nations Statistics Division](#)

⁹ [Australia among the world's worst on biodiversity conservation, 2017](#)



Climate Change

The earth's climate is changing as the amount of 'greenhouse gases' in the atmosphere such as carbon dioxide or methane increases. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change found human activity has already caused warming of around one degree Celsius above pre-industrial levels. The panel says keeping warming below 1.5 degrees is necessary to avoid the worst predicted impacts of climate change.

In Paris in 2015, governments around the world committed to limit climate change to two degrees, but only went as far as committing to 'pursue efforts' to reach the more ambitious 1.5 degree goal. Action by governments lags behind their headline commitments, with climate analytics group, Climate Action Tracker, reporting that 'even with all the new Glasgow pledges for 2030, we will emit roughly twice as much in 2030 as required for 1.5 degrees.'¹⁰

Adaptation

People across the world face different levels of risk due to environmental crises. While location and local environmental factors are important, risks can be decreased. Adaptation means anticipating environmental crises before they happen and making changes to reduce disaster risk. Disaster warning systems, disaster-resilient infrastructure, drought-resistant agriculture and social programs to help vulnerable people such as those with disabilities can reduce disaster risk. Rich countries like Australia can do more to help developing countries to engage in adaptation and mitigation.

Mitigation

Mitigation involves reducing or eliminating greenhouse gas pollution in order to stabilise temperatures and allow ecosystems to naturally adapt to their changing climate. Individuals can mitigate their emissions through new technology, lifestyle changes, reduced consumption and environmental restoration. Yet individual action alone is not sufficient to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. All countries, businesses, and communities can take steps to avoid or reduce their greenhouse gas pollution.

Environmental crisis in the Pacific

Australia describes itself as a member of the Pacific Family. Countries in our region face significant environmental challenges. In 2018, Tropical Cyclone Gita affected 80 per cent of Tonga's population, resulting in damages equivalent to 38 per cent of GDP (Gross Domestic Product), and destroying Tonga's parliament building. Low lying countries like Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands are particularly at risk from storms, rising sea-levels, and coastal flooding. Half the infrastructure in the Pacific lies within 500 metres of the coast.¹¹ Threats of ecosystem loss due to disasters and coral bleaching threaten biodiversity, tourism, and the fishing industry. The Pacific Islands Forum has agreed that climate change and resilience are a regional priority, and that climate

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IN THE PACIFIC
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¹⁰ [World heading for 2.4C of warming after latest climate pledges – analysts, 2021](#)

¹¹ IPCC 2022, as cited by [Climate Council](#)



change is the single greatest threat facing the Pacific.

Environmental crisis in Africa

Africa has over 50 countries, with different regions facing environmental challenges. In East Africa, increasingly irregular rainfall makes severe drought more likely, resulting in water shortages and crop and cattle loss.¹² Elsewhere, tropical cyclones are an increasing threat. In 2019, Mozambique was hit with Category 5 Cyclone Idai, which killed over 1300 people and displaced 130,000.¹³

Environmental crises often lead to food insecurity and malnutrition. In extreme cases, a famine may be declared if one in five households face an extreme food shortage, more than 30 per cent of the population are malnourished, and two people per 10000 die each day. Over three quarters of a million people died during a 2011 famine in Somalia.¹⁴ Today, a famine across Ethiopia, Somalia and Kenya is expected to be the worst in decades, brought on by four seasons of drought as well as high wheat and fertiliser prices due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.¹⁵

Environmental crisis in South Asia

The 2 billion residents of South Asia face increasing temperatures, rising sea levels, more extreme weather events and greater food and water insecurity.

Low-lying areas such as islands of Sri Lanka and the Maldives and coasts of Bangladesh, Myanmar and India at risk of rising sea levels, coastal erosion and flooding. This is made more severe by storm surges, cyclones and irregular rainfall. In June 2022, a record-breaking flood on the Bangladesh-India border left 9.5 million people with little food and water as floodwaters covered neighbourhoods and submerged wells¹⁶. Yet even as extreme weather increases, the death toll in Bangladesh due to disasters has fallen due to investment in education and early warning systems¹⁷.

Mountainous areas are affected too. Nepal, India, Pakistan and Bhutan face glacier melts and increased risk of landslides and glacial lake outburst flood. Widespread flooding in Pakistan recently killed over 1000 people, driven by monsoons and glacial melt¹⁸.

The Australian Government and Creation Care

One of the most powerful ways to shift national policy is to engage with your local Member of Parliament. Members of parties can shape their own party's policies, while minor party members and independents can work with the Government to improve legislation and policy. All

12 [State of the Climate in Africa, 2019](#)

13 [IOM UN Migration](#)

14 [Running On Empty, The Age](#)

15 [Horn of Africa Facing Worst Hunger Crisis in Decades, 2022](#)

16 [Floods swamp more of Bangladesh and India, millions marooned, Reuters](#)

17 [Climate Change driven disaster risks in Bangladesh and its journey towards resilience, The British Academy](#)

18 [How Melting Glaciers Fueled Pakistan's fatal floods, Vox](#)



politicians can engage with the Minister on an issue. Check out the 'ACT' section for more information to connect with your MP.

Four Australian government Ministers are particularly key in addressing how the environment affects vulnerable people:

- **Tanya Plibersek, Minister for the Environment and Water**, is responsible for environment and biodiversity issues here in Australia. Minister Plibersek released the Australian State of The Environment report in 2022, is overseeing new environmental protection laws to be put to Parliament over the next two years, and has promised to protect 30 percent of Australia's land and waters by 2030 as part of a global "30 by 30" target.
- **Pat Conroy, Minister for International Development and the Pacific**, looks after Australia's aid budget, and the way we help developing countries prepare for and recover from environmental crises. Minister Conroy has committed to working with the Pacific Family to address the challenges of climate change, including supporting clean energy and climate-related infrastructure projects.
- **Chris Bowen, Minister for Climate and Energy** leads the Government's emissions and energy policy, aiming to reduce Australia's emissions to 43 percent of 2005 levels or better by 2030. This includes reforms to Australia's energy market, vehicle emissions standards, agricultural and business carbon credits, and working with large emitters to reduce carbon pollution.
- **Murray Watt, Minister for Emergency Management**, is responsible for Australia's preparation for emergencies such as bushfires, floods, and drought, as well as recovery after disasters occur. This includes working with state and territory Ministers on adaptation, resilience, and recovery strategies.



Discussion Topics

THESE DISCUSSION TOPICS CAN BE HELPFUL FOR SMALL GROUPS, BREAKOUT DISCUSSIONS DURING A SERVICE, OR AS REFLECTION QUESTIONS AFTER A YOUTH GROUP ENERGISER ACTIVITY.

What does it mean to be stewards of creation?

BACKGROUND

Creation is God's gift to humans everywhere. We have the privilege of caring for God's earth from the time of Adam and Eve until today.

REFLECTION PASSAGE

Genesis 2:15, 19-20

'Then the LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it. And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and He brought them to the man to see what he would name each one. And whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. The man gave names to all the livestock, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Who looks after creation: humans or God?
- What does God expect from his people in our relationship with creation?
- Did God give humans the ability to harm or restore creation, or is it out of our hands?

Responding to threats to God's creation

BACKGROUND

We are to care for creation, yet creation faces serious threats linked to human behaviour. In 1985, the British Antarctic Survey confirmed that human use of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) created a hole in the earth's ozone layer. This ozone hole threatened to increase cancers and disrupt ecosystems vital to human life. Through the 1990s and 2000s, humans were able to halt the use of CFCs. Today, the ozone hole is slowly shrinking as creation recovers.

'Then the LORD God took the man and placed him in the Garden of Eden to cultivate and keep it.'

GENESIS 2:15



REFLECTION PASSAGE

Leviticus 25:1-7

'The Lord spoke to Moses on Mount Sinai, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land that I give you, the land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord. For six years you shall sow your field, and for six years you shall prune your vineyard and gather in its fruits, but in the seventh year there shall be a Sabbath of solemn rest for the land, a Sabbath to the Lord. You shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap what grows of itself in your harvest, or gather the grapes of your undressed vine. It shall be a year of solemn rest for the land."

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why do you think the Lord told Moses that agricultural lands should be rested every seventh year?
- How else have humans altered the balance of God's creation in the past? Have we ever given affected areas 'a sabbath of solemn rest' to recover?
- Can you think of any threats to God's creation at the moment?
- CFCs were legal in the past and many industries relied on them. How can Christians engage on threats to creation when they have complex political and economic causes?

Dealing with division in the church

BACKGROUND

Churches are unique in Australian society. They bring people together from all backgrounds, to look past personal differences and share in loving community together. The diversity this brings is something to be celebrated, while acknowledging it can mean we have diverse views when it comes to social, environmental, and other current issues. What are Christians to do when we encounter difference?

How can Christians discuss and debate important issues without falling into divisive and damaging fights?

REFLECTION PASSAGE

John 15:34-35

'A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Is it good for churches to have diverse views and opinions? Are there exceptions to this?
- If church members disagree on something important, how can we maintain good relationships? What does a loving or unloving response to division look like?

**'It shall be
a year of
solemn rest
for the land.'**

LEVITICUS 25:7



What should we share? Science, scripture, or stories?

BACKGROUND

Science communicators increasingly realise that scientific evidence alone is not always enough for people to change their opinions.

Evangelical environmental scientist Katherin Hayhoe recommends beginning conversations with our faith, rather than browbeating people with science. 'By beginning with what we share and then connecting the dots ... it becomes clear how caring about this planet and every living thing on it is not somehow antithetical to who we are as Christians, but rather central to it'¹⁹.

Stories and emotions play a role too. As Christians we know that stories are powerful for changing minds and helping people understand a bigger picture – is it any wonder Jesus spoke in parables? Sharing our own stories and passion can be powerful, particularly when so many Australians have experiences with environmental crises. We can also look to stories of others – the courage of people responding to disaster, the determination of communities working to become resilient to looming threats, and the joyful stories of innovative solutions can all be more motivating than describing the depressing findings of a scientific study.

REFLECTION PASSAGE

Colossians 4:6

'Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is most likely to change your mind? Science, scripture or stories?
- How would you tell a story of creation care that could form a basis for positive conversation about environmental problems?
- What does it look like for a difficult conversation to be 'full of grace, seasoned with salt'?
- How did Jesus use stories in His ministry?

Constructive environmental conversations – language and framing matters

BACKGROUND

With so many differing points of view, it's helpful to find the common ground where possible—pointing out where we agree. On politicised topics, people may switch off or become defensive based on something as simple as the words we choose. If the term 'climate change' is a trigger for someone, another term like 'environmental protection' could be used instead. If they are skeptical of government or corporate action on climate change, they may still be open to a conversation

¹⁹ [I'm a climate scientist who believes in God. Hear me out., New York Times](#)

'Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.'

COLOSSIANS 4:6



about what church members can do to care for creation. If a climate change conversation about government policy is too big a leap, an environmental conversation about recycling, flood resilience or cleaning up rubbish can be a first step in the right direction.

REFLECTION PASSAGE

Matthew 5:21-24

'You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, "You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment." But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.'

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- Why does Jesus start with "you have heard it said..." before framing a higher standard of behaviour and love? What can we learn from this?
- Are there any words that may cause people to switch off instantly? How else could we talk about those ideas?
- What kind of creation care activities might have the broadest church support as a first step?
- What kind of creation care activities might need more groundwork first? What does that look like?



SECTION 2

EXPERIENCE



Games & Activities

TSUNAMI WARNING

Crowd energiser game

EQUIPMENT:

- Tsunami warning siren: Bell, siren MP3 or whistle (or just have a leader yell 'tsunami!')
- Sturdy items to climb on, e.g. chairs, pews, rugs, towels, blocks (or make the game safer by just using towels and rugs)
- Music playing device

This game is a cross between 'musical chairs' and 'the floor is lava'. Set up an area with items that players can climb on, so they are not touching the floor. These should be different heights, but not so tall that falling off will cause injury (use your judgement!).

Each round is a 'tsunami' with items representing higher ground. Players must move from item to item without touching the floor, or else they are out. Remove some items each round, starting with low-lying things like rugs. Eventually there will only be one item left to stand on. Normally a game like this would end with a winner. Not this game. Play one more round with zero items left to stand on, much like residents in low-lying countries affected by floods

SCRIPT:

'You are residents of a low-lying country in the Pacific. There have always been storms and tsunamis that cause flooding, but the problem seems to be getting worse. When you hear the music, walk around the game area—no stopping. When you hear a tsunami warning, you have ten seconds to get to safety. After ten seconds, the siren and music will stop. Anyone who touches the ground before the music starts is out.'

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- Have you seen any floods or tsunamis on the news lately? What happened? What did people do?
- What does this game make you think about?
- In this game, people were 'out'. What does 'out' look like in the real world?
- Aid organisations help with disaster preparedness. How useful was the siren? What else might communities need to be safe when disasters strike?
- In the game, everyone started from the same position and competed to take high ground. In the real world, who is more or less at risk of harm due to disasters? (consider rich vs. poor, country of birth, disability, etc)

**'Are not two sparrows sold for a penny?
Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your father's care.'**

MATTHEW 10:29-31



RACE AGAINST DISASTER

Crowd Energiser Game

This is a relay race symbolising some climate impacts in our world. Create four bases: the first with the hand sanitiser and ice cubes, second with the bucket of water and cup, third with the table of dry leaves, the fourth with the clothes. Split the group into teams to run the relay race across four bases, all at once or one team at a time.

EQUIPMENT:

One set per team

- Coat, hat and scarf
- Hand sanitiser
- Large bucket of ice
- Large bucket of water
- Plastic cup
- Table with large pile of dry leaves in the middle

SCRIPT:

'You are in a race against environmental disasters. Here are the four bases you must complete.

Home base—extreme cold. Put on a large jacket, hat and scarf.

First base—hail. Sanitise your hands, pick up ten ice cubes and carry them to the next station.

Second base—flood. Dump your ice cubes into the water bucket, then pick up a cup of water from the bucket and dump it over your head.

Third base—drought. To symbolise the hot desert wind, blow a dry leaf off the table

Home base—extreme heat: Take off the jacket, hat and scarf and give them to the next participant.

The first team to finish will be our official environmental champions. Will your team adapt quickly, or will you go the way of the polar bear? Ready, set, GO!

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- Have you experienced any extreme weather events, such as drought, bushfire, heatwave, flood or extreme hail?
- Which of these events (extreme heat, extreme cold, hail, flood, drought) feels the scariest for you?
- This was a race. Is this a helpful way to think about the environmental issues we're facing?



- Is it a fair race? Do some people have a 'head start' over others (consider how factors such as poverty, geographic location and preparedness help different communities withstand extreme weather events).

GET CREATIVE FOR CREATION

Challenge your young people to do something creative for creation, then share the results.

Have your young people use their creative talents to explore Bible's call for us to care for creation. Whether through art, film or photography, young people have a story to tell about our relationship with God and with the earth.

Leaders can get creative too – this is a flexible activity. You could run an art stand as a main event or side activity on a youth night, set up an art corner during worship as a way to connect with God, set a photo challenge to capture your favourite corner of creation as 'homework' over a week, or challenge young people to make a one-shot video on their phones in one day about caring for creation. Your activity could also run across a retreat weekend, challenging young people to take the best picture or video of creation by the final night, like the NSW Baptist Youth Ministries camp [Short Film Festival](#).

Once you're done, post to social media with the hashtag #CreationCareAus, and see other people's creations. We know that sharing personal stories and experiences can be powerful and art can help start a conversation. Putting art up around the church, creating a gallery wall, or having young people explain their art during a church service could help create greater understanding about creation care in the church.

EQUIPMENT:

- Art and craft equipment
- Canvas, paper or cardboard
- Devices for filming or photography

SCRIPT:

As Christians, we are called to care for creation. On your own or in a group, create something either showing the beauty of creation, or showing how we can care for creation. As you create, think about what will build up and inspire others to connect with and care for creation.

You can choose to take photos of creation, create artwork, or make a short film about a creation topic of your choice.

Want to make an even bigger impact? Send your artworks to your local MP, along with the petition from the front of this pack, and ask them to care for creation.

**'The heavens
declare the
glory of God;
the skies
proclaim the
work of his
hands.'**

MATTHEW 10:29-31



DEBRIEF QUESTIONS:

- Go round the circle and have people explain their creative piece. What in their understanding of Christianity made them want to create this?
- Did any groups have disagreements? How did you resolve them?
- Does this art inspire us to make changes or take action? If so, what?
- Does this art have a message for our church to hear?

EARTH STATIONS

Crowd in-depth activity (90 minutes)

Earth Stations helps a youth group explore the theology of creation care, the place of the church, and the experience of environmental problems in both rich countries like Australia and poorer settings like Bangladesh, Kenya and the Pacific. At the end, the post-it notes and ideas could be left up as a display or shared with the broader church.

TO PREPARE:

Set up four stations around the church (ideally in separate rooms or separate areas of a large auditorium) under the focus areas Bible, Global Neighbours (focussing on Bangladesh, Kenya and the Pacific), Australia and the Church. Assign a leader to each station.

Split your group into four and have each smaller group spend 15 minutes at each station before moving on. With a five-minute introduction and 15-minute debrief at the end, this activity should take around 90 minutes.

INTRODUCTION

Explain each station and the context for this activity. You could share why your youth group is engaging in this area, and flag that there will be an opportunity to take action through the advocacy activities at the end.

BIBLE

What does the Bible have to say about the environment? Print off bible verses (see printing materials) and place them around the room.

To do this activity as a big group: choose a few key Bible passages, have participants read them aloud, then discuss what God is saying and what it means for us. Get a scribe to write key points on post-it notes and stick them to each bible passage. This might suit younger, rowdier or very small youth groups.

To do this activity in small groups: Have participants go around the room as individuals or pairs, read each passage and write their reflections on a post-it note. Pairs can circuit around the room at their own pace. This might suit older groups.

AUSTRALIA IS
AMONG THE
TOP SEVEN
COUNTRIES
FOR
BIODIVERSITY
LOSS.



After the discussion, split into smaller groups to discuss the Bible's message for Christians when it comes to caring for creation.

OUR GLOBAL NEIGHBOURS (FOCUSING ON SOUTH ASIA, AFRICA, AND THE PACIFIC)

Two thirds of the world live in poorer countries. What does climate change mean for them? Have a leader give a short presentation explaining some facts and environmental threats in South Asia, Africa, and the Pacific (see "LEARN" section above), with space for a discussion after each.

Explain that Australian's government and charities support disaster risk reduction and adaptation measures in these regions. Brainstorm the kinds of programs which could make it safer for people in each region, depending on the environmental challenges they face.

AUSTRALIA AND THE ENVIRONMENT

This station looks at the environment in Australia. It links the problems we face to the people experiencing them, and the solutions we can participate in. Ideally, the challenge will end up with many more solutions/ actions than problems, and every problem will have some practical solutions. Use a pack of coloured post-it notes to do the following activity – leave post-its up between groups so the activity builds.

SCRIPT:

'A recent report found 90 per cent of Australian young people had experienced at least one natural hazard weather event in the last three years, and 73 per cent are concerned about experiencing disasters²⁰. This station explores are the threats we face in Australia and the people they may affect the most severely. It also looks at what can we do, and what can we call on government and business to do about these environmental problems and hazards.'

On a Red post-it note, write environmental challenges or hazards we face here in Australia. If you see an issue is already on the board, feel free to add another red post-it note to add more detail about the issue.

On a Yellow post-it note, identify who is affected by the issue (e.g. young people, people who live in flood zones, people with a disability, poorer people, non-native English speakers). Place this next to the red sticker with the relevant hazard.

On a Green post-it note, write something that Australian individuals can do to address a hazard (red) or help an affected group (yellow). Write something Australian citizens could do prevent or mitigate this issue.

On a Blue post-it note, write something that businesses or governments could do to address that challenge.

Note: explain how we can work towards solutions personally through our own actions and integrity (the actions on the yellow post-it notes)

²⁰ [Our World Our Say report 2020](#)

**90% OF
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YOUNG
PEOPLE**

**EXPERIENCED
AT LEAST ONE
NATURAL HAZARD
WEATHER EVENT
IN THE LAST
THREE YEARS.**



or by engaging in prophetic advocacy by calling on authorities to implement solutions (the blue post-it notes).

CHURCH

Set up three posters or split a whiteboard into three sections: our church, the Australian church, all Christians around the world.

The leader guides a discussion at each of the three stations about the following questions, with a scribe writing them on post-it notes or the whiteboard:

- How is each group affected by the environment?
- What should each group say about the environment?
- What can each group do about the environment themselves?
- How can each level of church create a positive influence in the rest of society?

FINAL DEBRIEF

Gather together for a final group reflection.

- What did we learn from station? Perhaps someone could give highlights from each station.



SECTION 3

ACT



What Can I, My Church, & Australian Christians Do To Care For Creation?

READY TO START ADVOCATING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT WITH YOUR CHURCH OR YOUTH GROUP? HERE ARE SOME PRACTICAL THINGS YOU COULD DO.

Australia has a part to play in caring for the environment. We must protect creation here at home, preserving our unique biodiversity and preventing extinctions and habitat loss. We can also become an international leader, helping developing countries to prepare and respond to environmental crises through our aid budget. By creating a plan to support fossil fuel reliant communities throughout the process of reducing emissions, Australia can help people and the planet.

Action 1: Connect with your MP

Politicians are there to represent us. How can they do that if we don't speak up and tell them how we feel?

Hand writing a letter can be even more powerful, and it's easy to set up a stall at church or an event – how often do politicians hear from young Christians? Use the letter template in the printed materials to give your young people the opportunity to tell your local MP their own views in their own words. Collect letters and send them off to your local MP.

Want to do something empowering for your young people? Set a meeting with your MP and some of your young people so they can share their views directly and report back to the church. If your church created art or photography in the Get Creative For Creation activity, you could share this with your MP too, and ask them to take a photo of their favourite corner of creation in the area. Baptist World Aid can help with resources and training to set a meeting, prepare your young people, and make a great impression on your MP. Email hello@baptistworldaid.org.au or call 1300 789 991 for support setting up a meeting.

Action 2: Share for Creation on social media

This pack has explored positive ways for Christians to have a conversation about creation care. Those positive messages can be powerful both in person and online.

Use the hashtag #CreationCareAus and post pictures or video to social media that show your care for creation. Your youth group could share the art, film or pictures they created in the 'Get Creative For Creation' activity.



Action 3: Make a change at church

Your young people are bound to have ideas about changes that can happen at the church – what if they could help implement some changes? Could you hold a clothes swap? Create a compost system or worm farm? Educate the church about solar panels and energy efficiency? Plant natives? Build and install bee hotels and nesting boxes? There are plenty of opportunities for young people to do something practical in the church, either as a once-off event or an ongoing project.

Action 4: Care for your local creation

Your church is part of your local community. What are the environmental challenges facing your area, and how can your church be a part of Jesus' restoration of creation in your own backyard? Could you run a clean-up in a local creek or beach? Talk to council about organising a weeding or planting day in a local park? Make a team to clean up after a local event? When we care for creation in our own community, we don't just help the environment. We help others to see that as Christians, we care about our planet, our local area, and the people we live alongside.

HOW CAN YOUR
CHURCH BE
PART OF JESUS'
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OF CREATION

**IN YOUR
OWN
BACKYARD?**



EXTRA

RESOURCES



About us

CATALYST

This is a Catalyst resource. Catalyst is a national discipleship and advocacy network for Baptists who want to engage their church in God's work of justice in the world. Join Catalyst today to receive more resources, hear about the latest opportunities for church based advocacy, learn about ways for young Christians to take their first steps on a justice journey, and connect in with inspiring Baptist advocates all across Australia.

For more information visit <https://baptistworldaid.org.au/faith-in-action/catalyst/> or email hello@baptistworldaid.org.au.

Catalyst is powered by Baptist World Aid and supported by Australian Baptist Ministries, state Baptist agencies and Baptist Care Australia through the Baptist Advocacy Roundtable. Catalyst advocate on global issues such as modern slavery, environmental crises, refugees and extreme poverty, as well as First Nations justice, housing, domestic violence, and aged care.

Resources

- [Sign up to Catalyst](#) to receive monthly church engagement and advocacy from Baptist World Aid's Advocacy team.
- [The Earth Is The Lord's](#) is a 10 day devotional exploring God's heart for creation and the relationship between people and our planet.
- Baptist World Aid's blog often features tips for creation care, like [How To Reduce Waste In 2022](#) and [A Beginner's Guide to Circular Fashion](#).
- The Baptist Union of Victoria have curated a set of [Creation Care resources](#) for Justice Week including devotionals, tips for creation care, and church resources.
- Looking for a particular resource, or want to speak about how to engage your young people? [Contact Baptist World Aid](#) with an enquiry for our Catalyst advocacy team and we'll see if we can help.



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