

How to talk with kids about the climate emergency

Activities to help children learn about and pray for the climate emergency.

The climate crisis is a global issue that affects us all, and as followers of Jesus it's important that we do what we can to protect God's creation. It can seem like an overwhelming topic to talk about with children, but encouraging them to pray about this issue from an early age will help them to know God as Creator, value his creation, and understand their role in protecting the world around them. It will also teach them that prayer is powerful and can make a difference.



EXPLAINING THE CLIMATE CRISIS

With younger children, you can start by explaining that God created the world and all living things in it – plants, animals and humans. God has asked us, as humans, to look after his creation (Genesis 1:28), but we don't always take care of it in the ways that we should.

For older children, you can explain how burning fossil fuels is causing pollution and dangerous rises in temperatures. Plants and animals are struggling to adapt.

It's not just animals and plants that are being

damaged by the climate crisis – it's also affecting humans, and people living in poverty are the ones struggling the most. For example, many people are no longer able to grow food because it no longer rains as much as it should; or, in other places, it rains too much, causing flooding.

It's important to keep hopeful in these conversations. Let children know that we have the power to change the situation, and that they themselves can make a real difference by praying about it and taking small steps to protect the environment.



PRAYER ACTIVITIES

Here are a few ideas for activities to do with children to help them learn about and pray about the climate emergency.

1. SCAVENGER HUNT

Plan a walk in nature, somewhere in your local area. This could be a walk in the woods, in a park, on the beach, or even just an exploration in your own garden. Before you go outside, create a list of things for the children to find or take photos of. These will serve as prompts for discussion and prayer during, or after, your walk.

You can also make this into a team game or competition to see who can find the most of each item on the list. This could include:

- **Find something unusual:** encourage the children to search for something in nature that they have never seen before. Talk about what it is, and ask the children what they like about it. Thank God together for the wonderful world he created.
- **Find leaves from three different types of trees:** explain how trees 'breathe in' the excess carbon dioxide which is harming our

planet and 'breathe out' oxygen which we need to survive. But around the world, more and more trees are being cut down. Pray that world leaders will make laws to stop so many trees being cut down and that more trees will be planted.

- **Find an item of plastic litter (make sure you wear gloves and safely dispose of it where possible):** explain how our waste is harming nature and the importance of reusing and recycling what we can, and disposing of our rubbish correctly. Pray that big businesses will stop producing so much single-use plastic, and ask God to help you think about how you can make small changes to reduce plastic waste.
- Get creative and add your own items to the list!

Ask the children what they enjoyed about getting out in nature, and what they'd like to keep learning and praying about.

2. PLANTING SEEDS

Help children to plant a seed in soil. This could be in a small pot that you keep inside the house, or if you have a garden you could plant flowers or vegetables. Explain that for the plant to grow, it needs the right amount of sunlight and water.

When planting the seeds, explain that, because of climate change, many places in the world are getting too much water from rainfall leading to

floods, or too little water leading to drought. This means that people can't grow the food they need to eat. Spend some time praying for those who don't have enough food.

As you and your child water the plants over the coming days and weeks, spend some time thanking God for his creation and praying for the climate crisis.

3. BE CREATIVE

After talking with your children about the beauty of creation, create something together with them. Get outside and draw what you see and talk about the beautiful things God made.

Craft Ideas:

- Create things out of recycled materials. Paint a can or bottle and then plant your seeds in them.
- Use recycled material to create collages. Look for old books or magazines.

4. USE YOUR VOICE

Talk to your children about how speaking up can make a difference. Write a letter to congress about why it is important to your family to help stop the climate emergency. You can use our template here.

Mail out your letter and maybe even include your artwork. Encourage children to join you in praying for these leaders and asking God to give them wisdom as they make these important decisions.

Thank you

Thank you for encouraging and empowering children to pray about the climate emergency. We hope that you and your family will enjoy these activities, and please spread the word and share these ideas with others who may find them useful.

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