

# TIME FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

## All-age talk

You will need

- two child volunteers (your first volunteer should be around nine years old)
- seven boxes of increasing sizes that will fit into each other (eg, an earring box, a ring box, a jewellery box, a tissue box, a shoe box, a medium-size cardboard box, a large cardboard box)
- a fake letter from Eskom energy company.

## Presentation

- Introduce the congregation to Monique from South Africa. Since Monique can't be here today you've asked [name of first volunteer] to stand in for her.
- Explain that Monique is nine years old. In many ways, she is just like any other nine-year-old. Her favourite subject at school is maths, she likes playing with her friends and her favourite dinner is bobotie (meat pie with apple, raisins and spices). But, in other ways, the life that Monique lives is very different to ours.
- Monique is poor. Life is hard for her and her family. They have no running water in their house [hand your volunteer your smallest box to hold] and no electricity to give any light. Most of the time Monique's family are able to buy paraffin so that Monique has a small lamp to do her homework, but the lamp doesn't give off much light and Monique's eyes often hurt from straining [hand the next smallest box to your volunteer].
- Monique's mum cooks on an open fire, which makes the house smoky. Recently, Monique's cough has been getting worse [give your volunteer the next size box].
- Like a lot of places in the world, the weather in South Africa is changing. Droughts (when there's not enough water) happen more often and when the rain does come it comes down hard and the shack that Monique and her family live in often floods [hand your volunteer the next box]. One of the biggest reasons for the weather changing is climate change, which humans are creating through producing too much carbon dioxide. What's really unfair is that most climate change is caused by rich people, not poor people such as Monique.
- One of Monique's jobs each day is to collect the family's water from the communal pipe. It's tiring work and the water is heavy. [Hand your volunteer another box – by now they should be struggling to hold them all.]
- But there's good news! A company called Eskom has just borrowed some money from the World Bank to build a big power station in South Africa that will make more electricity. In fact, I have a letter from them here [pretend to read the letter and feign disappointment]. Oh, unfortunately, Eskom has a lot of money to pay back to the World Bank so it's going to have to charge a lot for its electricity. Sorry, Monique, your family won't be able to afford to pay for it [hand your volunteer another box]. Oh, and one more thing – the power station will use coal to create its electricity so it's going to put more carbon dioxide into the air – around 25 million tonnes more actually. Carbon dioxide causes climate change so I'm afraid the weather isn't going to get any better; in fact, it's probably going to get worse [give your volunteer the final large box].
- Ask the congregation to shout out words to describe how they feel about [name of your volunteer] holding all those boxes. Are there too many? Is it unfair to expect him/her to hold them all? Ask your volunteer to put down the boxes. Make the connection that, for Monique and thousands like her, it's not fair that they face so many challenges. Not only are they already poor, and struggling without electricity, but they're suffering the most from climate change that mainly rich countries such as ours have created.

- Ask for another volunteer to come and help.
- Line up the boxes from the smallest to the largest. As you speak, ask the second volunteer to put the smallest box inside the box next to it and so on and so on until all the boxes are inside each other.
- Explain that, just as climate change has grown from our actions, we can also take action to stop it growing anymore. Galatians 6:2 tells us that God means us to carry each other's burdens. He doesn't want people to be laden down with problems and worries. One way we can help lessen people's burdens in poor countries is by speaking to powerful people on their behalf. We can ask politicians and organisations to help bring energy to people in poor countries, without damaging the environment, for example by investing their money in developing energy from the sun, wind and sea. And we can ask leaders in rich countries to help poor countries adapt to the effects of climate change – to prepare for more floods and droughts.
- [By now there should just be one big box with all the smaller boxes inside it. Hand this to your first volunteer]. If we all play our part, children such as Monique may one day have electricity to make their lives better, without contributing to climate change, which is making their lives worse. And life might become manageable again.
- If you have them, let people know that there are climate change postcards at the back of church that adults can sign today (order the latest postcards by calling 0870 078 7788 or email [orders@christian-aid.org](mailto:orders@christian-aid.org)). Alternatively, people can visit the Act Now! section of the Christian Aid website. Later the children will make their own unique contribution to the climate change campaign (see ideas below).

## Ideas for children's groups

- Make the room as dark as you can. Set tasks for children to do using only torchlight (eg draw a picture, put a simple jigsaw together, write your name). How easy was it to do the tasks in the dark? Make the link that, for children like Monique, many of their activities have to be done in the dark every day.
- Talk with the group about things in their homes that use electricity (fridge, freezer, oven, lights, hot water, television, computer, games console, stereo). What are the things that we couldn't do without? What things do we enjoy but could survive without? Encourage children to draw a picture showing something that uses electricity for which they are grateful. Help children to write on their picture 'I am grateful for... Please provide clean electricity for everyone'. Send these pictures in to Christian Aid, Churches and Young People Team, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT. We'll add the pictures to our campaign demanding clean electricity for developing countries.
- Form children into two or more teams. Each team will need a number of small boxes (or objects) for team members to hold. Each team chooses one child to be their 'collector'. This person then runs around collecting boxes from the rest of the team who are spread throughout the room. The winner is the first person to collect all their boxes and (without dropping any) carry them past a finishing line.
- Lead from this game into Galatians 6:2 – 'Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.' Talk through what this verse means. What 'burdens' do we have? Let children talk about the things they find difficult. What 'burdens' do children like Monique have? How can we help each other? Help children learn the verse by covering up different words each time they read it.
- Ask children to join in with this prayer by shouting out the things that use electricity that they are thankful for. **Thank you God for... It's not fair that we have all these things and other children don't even have lights or fridges or ovens. You have designed us to help each other, so please help us do all we can to make sure children like Monique have electricity that doesn't damage the planet. Amen.**