Poverty affects us all. In the UK and Ireland, we may be lucky enough to live in two of the richest countries in the world, but the pollution that we spew out in the name of progress and profit is making life harder for people for whom life is already a struggle. And to top that, it is poorer countries, who have done the least to cause climate change, who are suffering the most from its effects.

Christian Aid has a vision: an end to poverty now, not just in the future. To help make this vision a reality, we need to limit the impact of climate change. And that needs you to play your part. Starting now.

Tell me more
Films such as *The Day After Tomorrow* warn us that climate change is leading to disaster on a catastrophic scale.

But behind the hype, the facts are just as chilling:

- in the 1990s, as you were concerned with the important business of growing up, around 600,000 people died from weather-related natural disasters – 95 per cent of them in developing countries
- around 150,000 people (that's how many people were at the V festival in 2008) die each year from illness linked to climate change
- already one in eight people around the world don’t have access to safe water.
- By 2020, the expected 1°C rise in the earth’s temperature will mean an extra 240 million people won’t have the water they need
- already one-sixth of the world’s population don’t have enough to eat.

The vast majority of scientists agree that climate change is man-made.

'If the situation continues here and no action is taken immediately, by the time I grow old... migration will be the only option. There will not be any drinking water. There will not be any food.'

Periyasami, 16, Tamil Nadu, India.
But we don’t have to sit passively waiting for it all to happen. Switching your TV off standby and walking instead of going by car might seem small acts. But multiply them by millions and we’ve made a big difference in reducing our carbon emissions. And it doesn’t stop there. In December 2009, the world’s leaders will meet in Copenhagen to bash out a new deal on climate change. Join Christian Aid’s campaign to make sure this includes:

- a commitment from the UK and Ireland to reduce their carbon emissions
- a commitment from rich countries to finance low-carbon, clean development in poorer countries
- a commitment from rich countries to help developing countries adapt to the impacts of climate change.

It might just change the future of the planet. And like any world-shaking activity, it begins when people start talking...

**Kick off**
Check out [www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions) for icebreaker ideas.

**Talk it out**
These questions can be used if you need to prompt conversation or steer the discussion if it veers wildly off course. For more tips, go to [www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions](http://www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions)

1. What is climate change?
2. Is climate change really happening? Are we really the cause of it?
3. For poor countries to work their way out of poverty they need to develop, in the same way that developed countries have done. Which means pollution, right?
4. Do developed countries have a responsibility to help poorer countries develop in a low-carbon way? Why? How? And how far should we go?
5. Organisations such as Christian Aid are asking governments to cut their carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. But surely windmills, solar panels and recycled cornflake boxes can only go so far?
6. The Bible says that natural disasters will increase before the world ends. So climate change isn’t just inevitable, it’s biblical, isn’t it? Who are we to try to reverse the fulfilment of biblical prophecies?
7. What are the best ways to raise awareness of the issues of climate change with young people in the UK and Ireland?

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In Genesis 1:28, God tells Adam to ‘have dominion’ over the earth: to look after it as a gardener manages an allotment. And the Psalmist reminds us that ‘The earth is the Lord’s and everything in it’ (Psalm 24). In other words, the world is not ours to damage, however inadvertently. But climate change is also about justice. We, the rich, have done the most to cause the problem yet it’s the poor who are suffering the worst effects. Need to remind yourself of God’s views on justice? Look up Amos 5:21-24.
8. What church-based climate change projects do you know about? What more should Christians be doing?

9. What kind of world might we live in 50 years from now if nothing is done about climate change?

10. Could you promise, right now, to make changes to your life and take action to deal with climate change? What might it mean for you? What might stop you?

Reflect
The ‘Climate change: a load of hot air?’ visual reflection on the Sofa Sessions DVD and online at www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions can follow on from discussion.

Less talk, more action
While climate change remains unchecked, poverty will only get worse. That’s why we, the rich nations who have done the most to cause the problem, need to lead the way in putting things right. As a UK/Irish citizen, that includes you. Check out the ‘Climate change’ section of www.christianaid.org.uk/sofasessions for ways to use your time, money, prayers and energy to make a difference.

India is one of the countries worst affected by global warming. But it has a secret weapon – thousands of young people across the country are raising awareness of climate change. Rajashekar, 15, is one of them. ‘This is one way we can save India from the changing climate for future generations,’ he says.

The campaign, backed by Christian Aid, asks students to think of ways to reduce the impact of climate change and then encourage others to get involved. For Rajashekar, it is already making a difference. ‘We take the message back to our families [and] the villages where we live,’ he explains. Rajashekar and his peers have so far carried out an anti-polythene (plastic bag) campaign, planted trees and held public rallies on climate change.