

## Rise up: could you be a climate change activist this Lent and Easter?



These materials could be used for a one-off assembly focusing on the work of Christian Aid, or as a series in which the themes are developed throughout the week.

The introduction could be used in a whole-school assembly, and the stories from the Philippines used as the basis for a follow-up key stage or class assembly.

These materials can be adapted and used as a resource for either whole-school, key stage or class assembly/collective worship.

### Introduction or assembly to introduce the theme: **Community and living well together**

The poet John Donne, who lived over four hundred years ago, begins one of his poems with these words:

#### Show slide 2

*'No man is an island...'*

If he was writing today he might say 'no-one' or 'no person' is an island, but when he was writing it was common for the word 'man' to be used to describe all humankind. This line of his poem is well known and is often quoted. [A version of the complete poem can be found online.](#)

- I wonder what he meant by these words?
- I wonder what you understand by these words?
- I wonder if these words are true?

He goes on to say:

*'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main;'*

Perhaps these words can help us understand the importance of community and living well together. Let's unpack this further by listening to a tale of two islands.

#### Show slide 3

Imagine two islands...

Charlie lives on a big island where he enjoys all the abundant resources around him like trees, water, and coal. He has used coal, oil and gas as fuel and energy to run his heater, watch TV, use his computer, his car, and other appliances that make his life so comfortable. He has also cut down trees to use the wood for paper.

continued...

Some distance away from Charlie, Carla lives on a smaller island. She has fewer resources than Charlie and works hard to grow crops of food to feed her family and friends, and to sell to make a living.

As Charlie burns coal for fuel, uses gas and oil for energy and cuts down trees for paper, this affects the Earth's atmosphere around him. Carbon dioxide and other gases are released into the air. But these gases hold in heat causing the climate to get warmer, not just where Charlie lives but across the whole world.

#### Show slide 4

This acts like a greenhouse without fans. The world is heating up, and this means that glaciers and ice sheets in the Arctic and Antarctic start melting quickly. Water from the melting ice falls into the oceans, causing the sea levels to rise.

For Charlie, the sea rising is an inconvenience, and he has to build some flood defences from his abundant resources – but for Carla the consequences are different.

The sea rises near Carla's island so much that she is losing her land, on which she grows crops, and therefore she gets poorer and poorer. Eventually the sea level rises so much that her home, her land, her fields are completely flooded. She can't grow any crops and her house is washed away. She has no money to build flood defences to protect her home and her livelihood.

**Without making a comment, show pupils a Newton's Cradle and set it in motion so that they can see how the motion of one ball has an effect on the others in the row. You could show this using a YouTube clip.**

Everything that happens here affects something over there.

#### Show slide 5

The opening line of John Donne's poem reminds us that none of us lives in isolation (no person is an island). We share our everyday lives with other people, and our actions and choices often have an impact on them and the world around us. We are part of a community: at school, in our home, in our town, in our country, in our world.

Our two islands are only imaginary places, but the tale tells us something real about our world today. I wonder if you recognise the problem that our story describes?

**Take some time for paired discussion and then share thoughts.**

Our Earth has its own control system. The oceans, the land, the air, the plants and animals, and the Sun's energy all affect each other to make everything work in harmony. Nothing changes in one place without changing something in another place. The overall effect gives us our global climate.

One of the biggest challenges that our world faces is the challenge of climate change: climate change causes our weather across the world to become more extreme or erratic.

This often makes life harder for people in poor countries, yet it's rich countries that have done the most to cause climate change, through actions like using too many cars and relying on fossil fuels. The actions of a few have a huge impact on the many.

**I wonder what we could do to change this?**

**Discuss, then share ideas and solutions.**

#### Show slide 6

I wonder what John Donne's poem teaches us about being a good global neighbour?

continued...

## Reflection and prayer

In the Bible there are many stories about prophets – people who rose up and spoke out about things that were wrong, and who spoke about how people could show God’s love in action. The prophets spoke about God’s love for all humankind and for the world. Christians today still read the words of the prophets to help them understand how they should live their lives, and the importance of speaking up for justice and good actions. The prophet Micah said:

*Hear what the Lord says: Rise, plead your case before the mountains, and let the hills hear your voice.* Micah 6:1

### Show slide 7

*The Lord has told you what is good. He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people. Love being kind to others. And live humbly, trusting your God.* Micah 6:8

If appropriate to your school context, listen to the song ‘*God of Justice*’ (by Tim Hughes), a modern Christian hymn which uses the words from Micah 6.

- **I wonder, why might Christians include this song in their worship?**
- **How might it help them to speak up about justice and things that effect our world and global neighbours?**

As you listen, try to spot the words from the prophet Micah. The values he talks about are important to Christians, but they are also shared values which are important to many people.

As you listen quietly, think: how you could do what is right to help other people or show kindness today?

### Optional prayer:

Father God,  
Thank you for our beautiful world. Help us to look after the world well and to act in ways which bless all our friends and neighbours – both near and far.  
Amen.

## Assembly to focus on the work of Christian Aid

The time before Easter is called Lent. Traditionally it's a time when Christians reflect on their actions. They try to do things which help to show God's love in the world, and to think about the impact of their actions on others.

Lent is sometimes thought of as a journey – a journey in which Christians think about the life and teaching of Jesus, and what it means to follow him. During our assembly we're also going to go on a sort of journey to travel across the world and to reflect on how all people are connected.

### Show slide 8

- **I wonder, what do all these places have in common?** (They're all islands.)
- **I wonder, what is good about living on an island? What is difficult?**
- **I wonder, can you name some of the different islands in our world?**

During Lent we're going to learn about some islands on the other side of the world, and we're going to listen to the voices of children and young people in these island communities. They are going to help us learn about being good and generous global neighbours.

### Show slide 9

Let's travel across the world. Let's go past Europe, past India, until we arrive at the Philippines, a country made up of many islands. The Philippines is a place of great beauty, but it's also a place where the people face many challenges because of unpredictable weather caused by climate change.

### Show slide 10

We're going to meet two 'climate change activists' who want us to hear their story and to rise up with them, and others, to make the world a fairer place.

On the island of Tabugon many people rely on fishing (of fish and squid) to earn money to help look after their families. Without this income many families are unable to send their children to school, which means these children miss out on education – and the opportunity to realise their potential and achieve their dreams.

People in these fishing communities deal every day with the consequences of a changing climate: rising and unpredictable waters, intense heat, and storms that are each more powerful than the last.

Climate change is making it harder for them to fish and support their families.

### Let's meet Glory and Lanie

### Show slides 11 and 12

Glory and Lanie live with their parents, Eva and Lope, on the island of Tabugon, although they must travel and stay in a different place to go to school and college. In 2013 a terrible typhoon, called Super Typhoon Haiyan, hit their island.

As the water surged and the terrifying winds pounded the island, Glory and Lanie's parents prayed for safety; people in the village, with nowhere else to go, crowded into Lope and Eva's home. There was barely enough food for the family, never mind all the neighbours, but somehow everyone was fed and safe.

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After the terrifying storm, they saw that nearly everything around them was swept away – including precious coral reefs in the sea and mangrove trees which help to protect the environment.

**I wonder, how do you think Eva, Lope and their friends felt when they saw the impact of Typhoon Haiyan?**

How do you think you would feel, faced with such devastation? Maybe you would feel that this was a totally hopeless situation.

**I wonder how Lope and Eva responded?**

Well, with great courage they chose to rise up. They took action. They spoke up about how climate change is caused, how it affects their community, and what they can do about it. Working with Christian Aid's partner ICODE, the communities on the small islands are rising up to challenge climate change and the actions that cause it, by:

 **Show slides 13 and 14**

**Rising up to support clean energy.** Some communities now use solar lighting which is safe and doesn't cost much. Children use solar light so that they can study and do their homework and have a chance to develop their gifts and skills.

 **Show slides 15 and 16**

**Rising up to protect marine life.** ICODE have helped the community to build artificial reefs in the sea, which encourage fish and new marine life to gather in the waters around the islands. Communities are now able to catch plenty of fish without destroying the environment. People are only allowed to fish near the islands if they've been given special permission to do so. This is given if they agree to use fishing methods that protect the sea environment.

The community is trained to plant mangroves, which help to protect against

the effects of storms and helps protect the marine life.

Some people are learning to harvest seaweed as an alternative to fishing. Seaweed can be turned into tasty food and can be used in medicines.

 **Show slide 17**

**Rising up for climate justice.** ICODE helps the community to speak up for their rights, particularly on climate change and stopping illegal fishing activities near their islands.

In the Philippines, young and old rise up together against the threat of climate change.

 **Show slide 18**

Across the world Christian Aid and their partners are helping people to stand up against the challenges of climate change and encouraging the use of sustainable energy.

Glory and Lanie are still young but they describe themselves as climate activists – and they want us to be climate activists too! They've learned about climate change in school and about how small changes can make a difference.

 **Show slide 19**

This is what they've learned and what they want to say to us:

**'In Estancia, where I go to school, there is a lot of garbage and a lack of respect for the environment. We are causing harm with the emission of gases which is bad for humans.'**

Glory and Lanie understand the importance of recycling. To help the environment, they've also planted a mango tree and some flowers.

**'We should protect nature as it's a source of livelihood for us. We don't need to abuse natural resources.'**

continued...

**'We see ourselves as climate change activists! I'd like to be an English teacher one day.'** Glory

**'My message to others is to stop throwing rubbish in the sea. Fishermen, don't use dynamite or small holed nets which can destroy the reefs.'** Lanie

At the end of Lent, Christians celebrate the festival of Easter remembering when Jesus died and rose again. When Jesus died his friends thought that their lives would never be the same and that everything was hopeless; when they saw Jesus risen from the dead, their lives were transformed and they changed from feeling hopeless to full of hope again.

You may wish to look further at the theme of transformation as a part of your Easter assemblies/collective worship. The Resurrection story includes the miraculous catch of fish, and shows the disciples as fishermen (John 21). Because John 21 is Eva's favourite piece of Scripture, it's an appropriate text to make the connection with the fishing communities in the Philippines.

## Reflection

Glory and Lanie remind us that we are all global neighbours; they want us to join them as climate change activists. What actions could we take at school and at home to look after the environment and to speak up for climate justice?

The communities in the Philippines have been transformed through the courage and action of people like Eva, Lope, Glory and Lanie. How can we help to transform our world?

### Optional prayer:

Father God, help us to take small actions day by day which help to protect our world, and show care for all our global neighbours.  
Amen.

## Ideas for exploring these themes further

### Prayer/Reflection station: The Ripple Effect

Set up a reflection corner using green and blue drapes and pictures of ripples in water. Have a bowl of water with small stones at the bottom.

Display some printed reflection questions:

**Which human actions contribute towards climate change?**

**What could you do to help reduce the impact of climate change?**

**Who is in your circle of influence?**

Have a set of cards containing suggestions of actions that pupils could take in order to reduce their carbon footprint either in school or at home. Pupils choose a card and reflect on how they could implement a simple change.

Display words of a prayer, song or inspirational quote for example:

‘Be faithful in small things because it is in them that your strength lies.’ – Mother Teresa

### Reflect on the theme of community and living well together

Christian Aid have several resources related to climate change and global neighbours to support this learning. Visit [caid.org.uk/schools](http://caid.org.uk/schools)

- Use Christian Aid’s Count Your Blessings resource to help pupils become climate change activists this Easter and to rise up alongside Glory and Lanie. Adapt the ideas as appropriate to your school context. [caid.org.uk/cyb-children](http://caid.org.uk/cyb-children)

- In church schools this could be explored in the context of Christian values: generosity, respect and reverence, compassion; justice, hope and responsibility. This could be through a series of collective worship for whole school and class, and supported by learning and reflection within the curriculum.

- Make a Reflection/Question board for the classroom. Over a period of time children add questions, reflections and pictures

about climate change and the themes you have discussed in assembly/collective worship.

- Create a display showing a large fishing net which paper fish can be attached to. Every time a pupil takes an action which protects the environment, and challenges the effects of climate change, ask them to write their action on a fish shape and add to the display.

- Our neighbours in the Philippines are planting trees and flowers. As a class, plant seeds in recycled plastic pots, and then sell them to fundraise for Christian Aid or plant them in your school grounds.

- Explore the resources from the Climate Change Coalition: [theclimatecoalition.org/](http://theclimatecoalition.org/)

- Explore the teaching and learning ideas in ‘Window on the World’: [caid.org.uk/window](http://caid.org.uk/window)

### **Song: Filemon the fisherman**

**This playful song, traditionally sung by fisherfolk, is a game. Each time you sing it, it's sung with emphasis on a different vowel – first 'A', then 'E', then 'I' etc.**

Listen to the full audio at [caid.org.uk/song](http://caid.org.uk/song).

Full lyrics:

Si Filemon, si Filemon  
Namunit sa kadagatan  
Naka-kuha, nakakuha  
Sang isda nga  
Tambasakan  
Ginbaligya-ginbaligya  
Sa merkadong  
Guba (Ang iya nga kita) (2x)  
Husto lang ipanuba

Translation:

Filemon the fisherman went out to sea to fish. He caught a big sea bass, and sold it in a run-down market. The money he got was just enough to buy a coconut wine.

