

# All-age worship activities

Use these all-age worship ideas to inspire your church to reflect on climate justice.

## Background

In the light of the school strike for climate movement, we invited a group of young people to help us create these all-age worship ideas on climate justice.

The young people we listened to wanted to challenge the church to hear their concerns, to listen to the voices of people on the frontline of the climate crisis, and to heed the advice of scientists who have given us 12 years to limit global warming to 1.5°.

However, the young people were also aware that their voices were not the only ones being excluded. For them, climate justice is a matter of justice for all. They recognised – and wanted to celebrate – the witness of older generations.

We also listened to their views on how the sessions should be run in a church or community. Instead of an all-age talk being

delivered by an adult, they were determined that young people should be involved in the planning and leading of the entire service, and have provided ideas for activities everyone can do together.

This resource includes an introductory session, and then three sessions which you can choose from. Each of the sessions is varied, and offers a range of activities you could organise in your church. Please feel free to use and adapt the ideas to suit your congregation.

Please note: the subject of the climate crisis can cause great anxiety, and people will be at different points on the journey. Some might be fired-up protestors, others might find it a difficult topic to even think about. Please be sensitive to this and allow people the space to express their feelings and concerns, and also shepherd the people who are uncomfortable with the subject.

## Introductory session

### Preparation

Have a young person stand at the front of the congregation holding a sign saying 'silenced' in front of their mouth. Do not explain why you are doing this.

### Talk

- **Reader one:** In the Book of Romans, Paul talks about the whole of creation groaning.
- (A young person reads aloud Romans 8:18-25.)
- **Reader one:** While Saint Paul wasn't talking about the climate crisis in this passage, his words remind us that we have a relationship with creation. We, too, can hear this groaning of creation today.
- (Show this [video of Greta Thunberg's speech to US Congress](#))

- (The young person removes their 'silenced' sign and then reads out the text below.) We need to listen to the groaning of God's creation – to the extinction of species, to the fury of increasing storms and typhoons, to the deepening droughts and rising floods. And we need to listen to the science of climate change.
- **Reader two:** We need to add our voices to those who are suffering the most, but have done the least to cause the problem. We need to call out for climate justice.
- **Reader one:** Today we are going to spend time in groups doing different activities to encourage and support us all to respond to the groaning of creation. Together we can make a difference, no matter what age we are.

## Session one

### Preparation

- Provide some runner bean seeds and a tray of compost at the front of the church.
- Show the photos of Onesmus in school and Michael Junior holding a tree sapling – (see the full photos at the end of this talk.)

### Talk

- Onesmus, 15, loves school. He hopes to be a teacher when he grows up. Every day after school, he walks for half an hour to collect water from the nearby earth dam for his family.
- 'Before the earth dam, we had to walk to a river far away,' he says. 'It took three hours to walk there. I didn't have enough time to do my homework. Now I am happier we have the earth dam.'
- Now, Onesmus can spend more time learning at school because he doesn't have to walk so far to collect water. He also uses water from the dam to grow tasty fruit at home, like avocados and pineapples. Onesmus takes great care to water his plants.
- Sadly, because of climate change, many plants in Kenya don't get enough rain water and can't grow. 'It hasn't rained properly for a long time,' he explains. 'When it rains, I will feel happy.'
- Thanks to Christian Aid, all children in Onesmus' village are planting trees. Onesmus is teaching his little nephew, Michael Junior, how to plant a tree sapling, and water it every day, so it can grow tall, strong and green.



Onesmus Muthiani attends school in Kenya.

- Imagine how the trees will grow, and help turn their village into a green, fertile, and happy place to live.
- Onesmus' teacher, Miss Priscilla Martin, is happy to see him watering his plants and doing well at school. 'The dam has made a big change,' she says. 'The children are able to concentrate, because they have water. Water is life.'

### Activities

- Sing *All Things Bright and Beautiful* together and, during the singing, invite anyone who would like to, to come forward and plant some bean seeds in the tray of compost.
- In the autumn, your church could apply to the Woodland Trust for some free community trees to plant in your church grounds if there is space.

## Session two

### Activities

Set up a variety of activities and workshops during the service that could allow for all-age sharing of skills and ideas.

- **Upcycling:** 'Make Do and Mend' is very trendy with young people. But many older folk have experience of repurposing and mending. Invite someone to share their skills such as darning or repairing furniture.
- **Creativity:** Go outside to create some environmental art (an internet search for Andy Goldsworthy may provide some inspiration).
- **Letter-writing:** Write a 'Letter for creation' to let leaders know how you feel about the climate crisis. You could send us a written letter, a poem, or even record a song, dance or rap! We'll be using the best letters to



Michael Junior holds a passion fruit sapling in his village in Kenya.

create an exhibition that will be shared with church leaders and politicians. Start working on your letter, either individually or as a group, and email it to [lettersforcreation@christian-aid.org](mailto:lettersforcreation@christian-aid.org) or post it to: Letters for Creation, Christian Aid Schools and Youth Team, PO Box 100, London SE1 7RT.

- **More letter-writing!** You could also write letters to your local MP or councillor. Try to make them about something specific to your community. Make it clear what you want your MP or councillor to do. You could use the New Deal for Climate Justice petition to help guide your letter writing. Visit [caid.org.uk/climate-justice-petition](http://caid.org.uk/climate-justice-petition)

- **Placard/banner-making:** Come up with the message you want to get across and spend time making the banners together. Use as much recycled material as possible. You could take a photo and send it to us as your 'Letter for creation' (see above).
- **Speech-writing:** Not everyone will feel confident to stand up and make a speech. Gather a group together and discuss what you would say if you were taking part in a climate protest.
- **Environmental audit:** Spend time doing an environmental audit as a congregation. You might find this questionnaire helpful in doing this: [operationnoah.org/resources/how-green-is-your-church-audit-questionnaire](https://operationnoah.org/resources/how-green-is-your-church-audit-questionnaire)

## Session three

### Preparation

Provide sticky notes, pens and two big pieces of paper.

### Activities

- [Watch Rose's film](#)
- Ask the group how it makes them feel to see vulnerable communities battling the climate crisis.
- Invite people to write one word on a sticky note describing how they feel about the climate emergency. Have them put their sticky notes on the first big piece of paper.
- Invite the group to craft these words into a prayer to God on the second big piece of paper. It could encourage elements of lament, giving thanks and asking God for help to respond to the climate emergency.
- Put the prayer on display for others to use as inspiration.
- Churches around the world are joining a global prayer chain to pray for the climate. Encourage your group to sign up at [caid.org.uk/prayerchain](https://caid.org.uk/prayerchain) or [caid.ie/prayerchain](https://caid.ie/prayerchain) if you're in Northern Ireland.

Together we **STOP** this climate crisis



