

**Study Guide**

***Global Climate Change:  
A Catholic Response***



***Catholic Rural Life***  
***www.catholicrurallife.org***  
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# ***Global Climate Change: A Catholic Response***

This Study Guide\* uses a reflection/action methodology called *Shared Christian Praxis*\*\* . The reflection/action process has five progressive movements, beginning with identifying where people are in their life experiences, then engaging them in critical reflection on their experiences and relating those experiences to the Story and Vision of our Catholic faith. This process concludes by outlining the dimensions for future actions – by an individual, a group or an entire community. The end result is meant not only to change attitudes, but to change behaviors on behalf of solidarity with the world and the care of God’s creation.

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## ***Forward: The Call to Action***

### **Movement One: Experiencing Life**

### **Movement Two: Reflecting Together**

### **Movement Three: Discovering the Faith Story**

### **Movement Four: Owning the Faith**

### **Movement Five: Responding in Faith**

## ***Feedback: Evaluation Form***

## ***Appendix***

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\* This Study Guide is adapted from *Justice: Access Guide to Youth Ministry*, Thomas Bright and John Roberto, ed. Don Bosco Multimedia, 1990 [out of print], with permission from [Center for Ministry Development](#).

\*\* Shared Christian Praxis is a methodology developed by Thomas Groome. Learn more about this reflective/active process in the Appendix.

## *Global Climate Change: A Catholic Response*

### *Forward: The Call to Action*

*“As people of faith, we are convinced that ‘the earth is the Lord’s and all it holds’.” (Ps 24:1)*

So begins the opening paragraph of the 2001 statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, *“Global Climate Change: A plea for dialogue, prudence and the common good.”*

The statement continues, “Our Creator has given us the gift of creation; the air we breathe, the water that sustains life, the fruits of the land that nourish us, and the entire web of life without which human life cannot flourish. All of this God created and found ‘very good.’ We believe our response to global climate change should be a sign of our respect for God’s creation.”

The Roman Catholic Church has followed the scientific investigation of global climate change and the assessments of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) since 1988. It was at this time that the IPCC was established by the World Meteorological Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme to seek a clear scientific view on the state of climate change and its potential environmental and socio-economic consequences.

We recall that Pope John Paul II said in his 1990 World Day of Peace message that the “ecological crisis is a moral issue.” And that all “brothers and sisters in the Catholic Church” have a “serious obligation to care for all creation.”

Pope Benedict XVI continued this moral sentiment during World Youth Day 2008 when he said that we are to “make the responsibilities visible so that we may respond to this great challenge: to rediscover the face of the Creator in Creation, to rediscover in the Creator's presence our responsibilities for his Creation, which he has entrusted to us, to form the ethical capacity for a lifestyle that we must adopt if we wish to tackle the problems of this situation [of climate change] and if we really want to reach positive solutions.”

Pope Benedict went on to say: “God’s creation is one and it is good. The concerns for non-violence, sustainable development, justice and peace, and care for our environment are of vital importance for humanity.”

The Catholic Church calls us to be responsible stewards of this planet, to put into action Catholic social teaching. This Study Guide is designed to help you do just that. We introduce you to a structured approach based on Shared Christian Praxis (see Appendix) that will help you determine what you can do to implement Catholic social teaching as it relates to global climate change.

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**Educational Objectives**

Upon completion of this **Study Guide**, you will be able to:

Discern what God is calling you to do to improve your relationships with God, other people, and God's creation in the context of global climate change.

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Upon completion of **Activity #1 in Movement One**, you will be able to:

Express how you believe global climate change is affecting your life and the impact on others.

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Upon completion of **Activity #2 in Movement Two**, you will be able to:

- Describe two or three root causes of global climate change.
  - Give examples of how climate change is expected to affect God's creation.
  - Show how this will affect people and their relationships with each other.
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Upon completion of **Activity #3a in Movement Three**, you will be able to:

Discern what God is saying through sacred scripture about our relationship with God's creation and with other people.

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Upon completion of **Activity #3b in Movement Three**, you will be able to:

Discern what God is saying through Catholic tradition about our relationship with God's creation and with other people.

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Upon completion of **Activity #4 in Movement Four**, you will be able to:

Discern what God is calling you to do to improve your relationships with God, other people, and all of creation.

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Upon completion of **Activity #5 in Movement Five**, you will be able to:

Choose a faith-based response to global climate change and move from reflection to action and deed.