



Sacred Air: Climate & Energy

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Summary

Sacred Air: Climate and Energy, the second program in JustFaith Ministries' Eco-justice Series, explores the impact of the climate crisis on God's creation and God's people. In order to discern ways to restore the health of our planet and those who live on it, small groups learn about causes and effects of the climate crisis. Topics include greenhouse gases, air pollution, fossil fuels, renewable energy, the Paris Agreement, and environmental racism. Through prayer and spiritual practices, participants notice the breath of God that flows through them, granting them the life and energy to address this difficult topic with passion and resilience. Participants can expect to leave Sacred Air: Climate and Energy better equipped to address the climate crisis, both by mobilizing their communities and by making personal choices that honor God's creation.

Each program in the eco-justice series includes eight two-hour sessions, plus an immersion experience and an optional get-to-know-you session. All programs include prayer, dialogue, active listening, weekly spiritual practices, and relationship-building. You can stop after one eight-session program, or you can offer all three programs. You do not need to take the eco-justice programs in order.

Goals for Sacred Air: Climate and Energy

- Understand the basic principles of the climate crisis: what is it and what is causing it? How does the climate crisis affect us now, and what impact will it have on our future?
- Learn about the climate crisis's disproportionate effects on poor communities and communities of color, as well as discern how we might seek justice together through solidarity, advocacy, and organizing.
- Practice noticing God's presence with us through the Holy Spirit, that participants might be sustained spiritually and emotionally as they work for change.
- Develop a plan for addressing the climate crisis through advocacy, grassroots and parish-based organizing, and daily decision-making.

Immersions and Guest Speakers

Each of the three programs in the eco-justice series contains an opportunity for an immersion experience into the issues your group has been reading about and discussing. The immersions connect participants with community organizations working on eco-justice issues, preferably in their own local area. This real-world experience guides groups in discerning how they can put their learning into action. Facilitators set up the immersion experience with the



organization and use the program materials to guide the group in prayerful reflection around their experience. This will ideally take place between Sessions 6 and 7 of each of the three programs. The immersion experience can be conducted over videoconferencing or in-person. In Sacred Air: Climate and Energy, ideas for immersion experiences include attending a community organizing meeting around climate issues; meeting with your local, state, or national representatives to discuss climate-related legislation; visiting your local electricity generator (e.g. a nuclear power plant or a coal-fired plant), seeing the neighborhood where it is located, and meeting with neighborhood residents to dialogue about their health and experiences with the plant; attending a webinar put on by a climate organizing group; or visiting a windfarm to learn about the costs and benefits of one form of renewable energy.

Each program also provides space for you to invite a guest speaker to Session 5. Guest speakers provide real-world wisdom and help participants plug into the work of eco-justice in their communities. For example, a guest speaker might be a leader at an environmental action group such as Creation Justice Ministries, Catholic Climate Covenant, or Interfaith Power and Light; a representative who could help your church or organization conduct an energy audit; one of your state or local legislators (if they are part of your state's climate caucus or are known for their environmental knowledge); or a representative from your local energy supplier who is in charge of the green energy program.

Virtual Tools

Our programs are available for both in-person and virtual use. If you are meeting in-person, check with health guidelines to ensure that it is safe to do so. JustFaith Ministries provides training and support for using Zoom.

Facilitator Support

The JustFaith Ministries staff is available to support you throughout your JustFaith journey. Whether you have a question about navigating a difficult conversation within your group, or if you aren't sure how to access an online video, simply give us a call and we will walk you through it. In addition, our website offers facilitator training tools, videos, and live events: <https://justfaith.org/resources/facilitator-training>

We encourage co-facilitation when possible. The role of “facilitator” is to ensure that all group members' voices are heard, the guidelines for holy dialogue are followed, and the sessions are organized. You don't need to be a clergy person, be an expert on the material, or have experience leading conversations in order to facilitate a JustFaith Ministries program.

Books for Sacred Air: Climate and Energy

- *The Story of More* by Hope Jahren
- *Earth Prayers* by Elizabeth Roberts and Elias Amidon
- *Laudato Si* by Pope Francis



Overview of Sessions in Sacred Air: Climate and Energy

Session 1 Sacred Air, Sacred Breath – This session lays a theological foundation for the program, as participants notice and celebrate God’s Spirit flowing through ourselves, through others, and through Scripture.

Session 2: Climate Change: Is It Even Real?– Introduces participants to basic science around climate change. This session equips participants to debunk popular myths about the climate crisis, so that they might help educate their communities.

Session 3: Fossil Fuels and Renewable Energy – This session explores what fossil fuels are and the impact they have on our communities. Participants learn ways to reduce energy consumption and advocate for renewable energy.

Session 4: Greenhouse Gases and Carbon Footprint – This session narrates the ways in which greenhouse gases lead to climate change and air pollution. Participants explore the particular effect that air pollution has on marginalized communities, as well as discern how Scripture calls us to respond.

Session 5: Lament and Hope (Guest Speaker) – After hearing from a guest speaker, participants reflect on the biblical tradition of lament and hope, engaging in an interactive exercise to spiritually process what they have been learning and feeling.

Session 6: Environmental Justice– This session explains what environmental justice is, why it is important, and how participants can join the movement. Participants divide into small groups to dive deep into specific focus areas around three key environmental justice concerns.

Immersion experience in or with the local community

Session 7: Climate Communication – In an era of fear and polarization, how do we have conversations around the climate crisis that are both prophetic and productive? Participants explore tools and strategies for effective communication around this important issue.

Session 8: Climate Action – The group creates a plan of action that includes steps they will take to address the climate crisis as individuals and as a group.