

# Lesson Plans that Work

## Faith Practice and Climate Justice

### Lesson Plans for Young Adults: Lesson Seven

**Theme:** Our church is meant to cultivate resurrection hope together.

**Background:** This series may be over, but the climate crisis is not. Are there next steps you would like to explore to live your faith as baptized servants of Jesus Christ in the world shaped by climate emergency? How might your church be a witness to Christ, willing to walk by faith to tend and heal God's creation?

**Supplies Needed:** You will need a prayer table, a candle, a prayerbook, and Bibles for each participant. If you are gathering a young adult group for the first time, and meeting in person, get blank nametags for people to fill out with name and pronouns. If you are gathering in person, you will also need index cards/post it notes (use post-it notes if they will stick to the walls of your gathering space) and writing utensils for each person.

**Before:** Prepare your prayer table. Open the prayerbook to p. 101, "A Collect for Mission," and place it on the table open to this page. Set out the materials for the final activity. Prepare your closing prayer.

**Beginning:** Gather around the prayer table. Begin with any opening routine your group usually uses. Invite people to share highs and lows from the past week. Tell participants this is the last day of our curriculum, but it doesn't have to be the last day of our conversation. Some of them may be ready to move on from climate, and others may feel like you've just begun. Let them know that before the lesson ends there will be time to share their hopes and dreams for what might be possible in the church to practice faith and move toward climate justice.

**Opening Prayer:** Light the candle, and pray:

Lord Jesus Christ, you stretched out your arms of love on the hard wood of the cross that everyone might come within the reach of your saving embrace: So clothe us in your Spirit that we, reaching forth our hands in love, may bring those who do not know you to the knowledge and love of you; for the honor of your Name. **Amen.**

**Tell the story:** Share the background above. Then invite participants to open their Bibles to 1 Peter.

Invite someone to read aloud 1 Peter 1:3-4. Summarize what it teaches:

- The resurrection of Christ from the dead teaches Christians a new way of life.
- We inherit more than the mistakes and unintended consequences of our ancestors which are destroying the life of the earth.
- We inherit and are meant to demonstrate the grace of God, which can't be destroyed.

Invite someone to read aloud 1 Peter 1:13-16. Summarize what it teaches:

- Christians are called to reflect the holiness of God - to care for the whole of Creation.
- The normal patterns we have inherited that do not give life to Creation are not of Christ.
- To live faithfully, we have to prepare, act, learn, and be willing to change our ways.

Invite someone to read aloud I Peter 2:4-5. Summarize what it teaches:

- Each one of our lives is a building block for the reign of God, the well-being of Creation.
- Together we are meant to manifest a way of life that is healing and holy.
- Each person's living stone is unique, but we share a call to be living stones together.

**Reflection Questions:** When have you seen our church or another church show the love of God? Have you ever seen our church or another church show the love of God for anything except humans? How does our church show the love of God for the rest of God's Creation?

**In-Person Activity:** Pass out index cards/post-it notes and pens/pencils to each person. First, ask them to brainstorm their wishes for the wider church. What do they wish the church leaders would understand or change? Gather the index cards/Have people put the post-it notes on the wall and read them out loud. Then, ask them to brainstorm their wishes for themselves. What do they wish they understood themselves, or knew how to change? Gather the index cards/Have people put the post-it notes on the wall and read them aloud. Is there any one thing that stands out as a next step for your group? Might the group want to explore a specific project? Decide if you want to commit any other meetings to exploring these ideas further. Include people's wishes as prayer requests in the closing prayer.

**Online Activity:** Open a Google Document, and share the link to edit. Follow the same process as in the in-person activity, using the Google Document and shared editing to create one document with people's wishes for the wider church and for themselves.

**Gather/Ending:** Climate justice and faith practice aren't a one-and-done. Both will be before us for a lifetime. But as disciples of Jesus, we aren't alone in either. And we don't have to be in despair. God calls, equips, and empowers us as agents of healing and teaching. We can make a difference alone and together, by listening and learning, together and separately. Ask people to share a sentence or two about what stood out to each of them today.

**Prayer:** Begin by lifting up the wishes they offered in the closing activity. Give thanks to God for the learning you have done together over the last seven weeks. Pray for your watershed by name, for the people working in your community for climate justice, and for the people you want to talk with about climate justice and for those conversations. Finally, pray for each participant by name, asking God's Holy Spirit to empower them as agents of healing for God's Creation.

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**Written by The Rev. Nurya Love Parish, Plainsong Farm**

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