

And God Saw That It Was Good:
Is It Still?

A Study on the Environment

Leader's Guide



International Disciples Women's Ministries
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
2008



And God Saw That It Was Good: Is It Still?

A free online resource prepared by
International Disciples Women's Ministries
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)
2008

Edited by Ev Penzel (N. California)
IDWM Executive Committee

Distributed by Office of Disciples Women
A ministry of Disciples Home Missions
(888) 346-2631

Table of Contents

Session 1-Why Care?	Page 4
Session 2-Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, A place to begin	Page 6
Session 3-Natural Resources, Air, Water, Land	Page 7
Session 4-Global Warming	Page 9
Session 5-Food and the Environment	Page 10
Session 6-Conclusion and Review	Page 11

And God Saw That It Was Good: Is It Still? A Study on the Environment

Leader's Guide

This guide for Leaders of this study should be regarded just as suggestions for facilitating participation in this study on the environment. You may have other ideas on how to lead the discussion and interpretation of the material that will work better for you and that is encouraged.

This material is not intended to be an all inclusive study of the environment because there is so much information available and so much is being discovered every day that such a study would be too long and would never be finished. Each participant is encouraged to keep themselves informed of what is going on that is new and effective in dealing with the environmental crisis in our world and bring the information to the sessions dealing with the particular topic. Some examples are included in this guide for the sessions.

Before You Begin ...

The Booklet

- Download study from website www.discipleswomen.org. Click on Leadership materials.
- Make a copy for each participant, print on both sides of paper if possible

Materials for each session

- Study Booklet
- Bible
- Personal Journal
- Materials for Worship Center
- Chalice Hymnal

The format of each session

- Scripture
- Subject information
- Questions to Ponder/Discuss
- Action Ideas
- Worship
- References/Resources

At the first session

When the group has gathered you might want to have everyone introduce themselves and share what their expectations are in participating in this study.

Read together the introduction. It was written by the IDWM Working Group that created the outline for this study. It is included in this guide because we think it is important to consider all this while going through the study.

Introduction

We recognize that environmental issues are not easy issues to discuss. No doubt there will be differing opinions expressed in any group which uses this study. The economic impact of the environmental crisis affects people in different ways. Don't let this deter you from discussing the topic. These are critical issues which demand our attention, concern and action as women of faith. We hope you will be encouragers of one another as you study and learn about some of the aspects of the environmental crisis. There is much we can do to make a difference. Through prayer, study, discussion, and application, we can reclaim our role as stewards of God's creation. As Christian women and as the church of Jesus Christ, it is time to step forward and be advocates for our planet.

Session One – Why Care?

Scripture: Genesis 1:31 (written out in booklet)

It is not necessary at this time to read the other scriptures listed as they are mentioned in the material of this session.

Read the *Theology of Green* then discuss the questions listed under Questions to Ponder.

Read about the impact on population growth here in the United States under *The Situation Today*. You may want to discuss population growth for the rest of the world as well.

Worship/Reflection

Set up a worship center/table with pictures of creation. Place pictures of beautiful outdoor scenery to show what a wonderful world God has provided us.

Sing: This is My Father's World (Chalice Hymnal #59)



Poem: Painted by the Hand of God

You may want to read this as a litany with different voices reading each paragraph

Scripture: Psalm 104 (not written out in booklet)

This is a lengthy scripture so you may decide to have several people read parts of it.

Prayer: Read prayer or ask someone else to read it or read it in unison.

References/Resources

Point out where you might get additional information.

Session Two – Reduce, Reuse, Recycle: A Place to Begin

Many of us are already incorporating the three R's into our daily lives but we can probably do more so that we might rid ourselves of the label of being a “throw away” society.

Scripture: Isaiah 2:4 (written out in booklet)

Read together (taking turns) the material and discuss the action items for each of the 3 R's.

Group Activity: Facilitate the group activity included at the end of the 3R's.

Thoughts from Art Buchwald
Have someone read this.

Keep watching the newspapers and listening to the news for stories such as this one:

The San Francisco Chronicle included a story on December 30, 2007 of a man in Berkeley, California (Ari Derfel) who has kept all his trash for a year. He composted all his organic (food) materials and otherwise kept his trash in his closets, kitchen, and living room, everywhere. When he ate out, he would bring the wrappers or whatever else would be “thrown away” back home with him. When he traveled, he brought home all his trash. No, he did not save his TP but he did save the cardboard roll so he had some idea of how much he had used during the year. When the year was over, he had 96 cubic feet of trash. He compared that to a queen sized bed and box springs. Why did he do this? He was struck by the words “throw away.” He said that nothing is really ever thrown away, it is just thrown someone else's way. Mr. Derfel is getting a lot of press and interviews on radio and TV. Maybe you have already heard this story. (*It's no garbage strike – Man keeps a year's worth of trash SFgate.com*)

Worship/Reflection

Set up a worship center with items that can be reused or recycled

Scripture: John 6:12 (written out in booklet)

Ask everyone to share one thing they are going to do to reduce, reuse or recycle.

Prayer: Pray in unison.

References/Resources



Session Three – Natural Resources: Air, Water, Land

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. God provided us with what we think of as our natural resources. God provided the air, water and land. But these natural resources are not finite; we cannot renew them at the same rate that we destroy them and in some cases, we cannot renew them at all. We have all the air we're going to get, there is no more land and water is just recycled. Our focus in this session will be on these natural resources.



There is a lot of information in this session and time may not permit you to go through it all in one session. If that is true, you may want to break it down and study Air, Water and Land in three separate sessions. However there is only one worship/reflection outline given and it includes a demonstration of water shortage.

Scripture: Joel 2:21-22 (written out in booklet)

Read together the information provided on Air, Water and Land. Discuss the action ideas provided after each section and add ideas from the group.

The Associated Press released a story on January 18, 2008 entitled “Big coal producer to pay \$20 million for polluting streams.” The country’s fourth largest coal producer, Massey Energy Co. will pay \$20 million over allegations it routinely polluted hundreds of streams and waterways in West Virginia and Kentucky. They will also have to invest millions of dollars for pollution control improvements.

Worship/Reflection

Set up a worship center that includes a globe or a map of the world. You might also place pictures of air polluting smoke stacks, of mountain removal or polluted streams. You can get these kinds of pictures from the internet (*Google, Images*).

Scripture: Isaiah 24:5-6 (written out in booklet)

Hymn: No Hymn is listed but one of these might be appropriate.

America the Beautiful (Chalice Hymnal # 720)

All Things Bright and Beautiful (Chalice Hymnal # 61) or

We Sing Your Mighty Power, O God (Chalice Hymnal # 64)

Demonstration: *So Little Water*

Instructions are in booklet

Prayer:

There is no prayer written in the material so you may ask someone to pray from their heart what this session has meant to them and what they want to say to God about it. Or you might also ask participants to give sentence prayers regarding our natural resources.

Session Four – Global Warming

“We humans are called to be servant-stewards of creation. Because we have neglected this call, the earth is suffering from accelerated climate change that is having harmful effects on many parts of creation.” (It’s God’s World (see resources))

Scripture: Genesis 8:22 and Psalm 104:27-29 (written out in booklet)

This may be the most controversial session in this study as global warming is often seen as political. Some people do not believe that humankind has any effect on global warming and that it is just a natural cycle of the earth’s climate clock. **BUT WHAT IF IT’S NOT!**



As a group read through the material discussing the data as you cover it.

Cover the action ideas and add the group’s ideas to the list.

Worship/Reflection

Set up worship center with pictures of melting ice in the Arctic or Antarctic, if possible use before and after pictures. Place a cloth (to represent blanket of greenhouse gases) over globe.

Responsive Reading

Questions to Ponder

Hymn: All Creatures of Our God and King (Chalice Hymnal #22)

Prayer: Pray in unison

References/Resources

Session Five – Food and the Environment

Food and its impact on the environment are starting to get a lot of attention from the press. In this session we will look at the current movements underway to address the issue of food's impact on the environment.

Scripture: Genesis 1:29-30 (Message translation) (written out in booklet)

Read about and discuss Organic Food, Local Foods and the Slow Food Movement

Discuss the Questions to Ponder

Read and discuss Livestock's Impact on the Environment

Discuss the Questions to Ponder

Read and discuss the action ideas and ask group to add their ideas to the list.

Worship/Reflection

Set up a worship center with foods that are organic and/or local. Try to make it slow food.

Scripture: Romans 14:20 (written out in booklet)

Hymn: Seeds, Scattered and Sown (Chalice Hymnal #395)

Serve a meal, snack or dessert that has been prepared with local and/or organic ingredients. If possible make it an organic, local, slow, natural, vegetarian eating experience.

Prayer: Pray in unison

References/Resources

Session Six – Conclusion and Review

As people of faith who have become aware of the abuse of God's creation, hopefully we feel called to join in the process of restoring and rebuilding, being aware that this means we will need to sacrifice some of the comforts and luxuries that our society values.

Scripture: Micah 6:8 (Message Translation) (written out in booklet)

Read and discuss Our Carbon Footprint. If you are at a location with access to the Internet encourage each participant to go on-line and take the survey that will calculate their personal carbon footprint. The site is www.climatecrisis.net/takeaction/carboncalculator/. (See first action idea)

Read Redeeming and Transforming Creation and relate it back to Session One in the Theology of Green – Interrelationship.

Read and discuss all action ideas

Develop a Personal Action Plan (use the journals given out in Session One (if they were)).

As a group list at least four things congregations can do, four things individuals can do, four things citizens of your country can do and four things we can do as global citizens.

Each person should then make their own personal commitment

Worship/Reflection

Set up worship center with items from each of the previous sessions.

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:16-21 (Message translation) (written out in booklet)

Hymn: For the Beauty of the Earth (Chalice Hymnal #56)

Taking turns read *The Top Ten Reasons Christian Should Care About the Earth and All Things In It*.

Prayer: The leader should pray the prayer or ask someone else to do so.

References/Resources

You are encouraged to take some time to discuss the overall study and if it met the expectations expressed in the first session. It would be appreciated and helpful to send the thoughts and feelings of the participants to the Office of Disciples Women using the following evaluation questions.

**And God Saw That It was Good: Is it Still?
Evaluation**

1. Did the study meet your expectations?
2. What was the most meaningful part of the study to you?
3. What was the least meaningful part of the study to you?
4. What other subjects would you like to have the opportunity to study?
5. How many people were in your study group?

Mail your summary of the comments to:
Office of Disciples Women
Attn: Environmental Study Evaluations
130 E. Washington St
Indianapolis IN 46204

Or e-mail them to: odw@dhm.disciples.org

Please include your name, contact information, and the date of your programs.