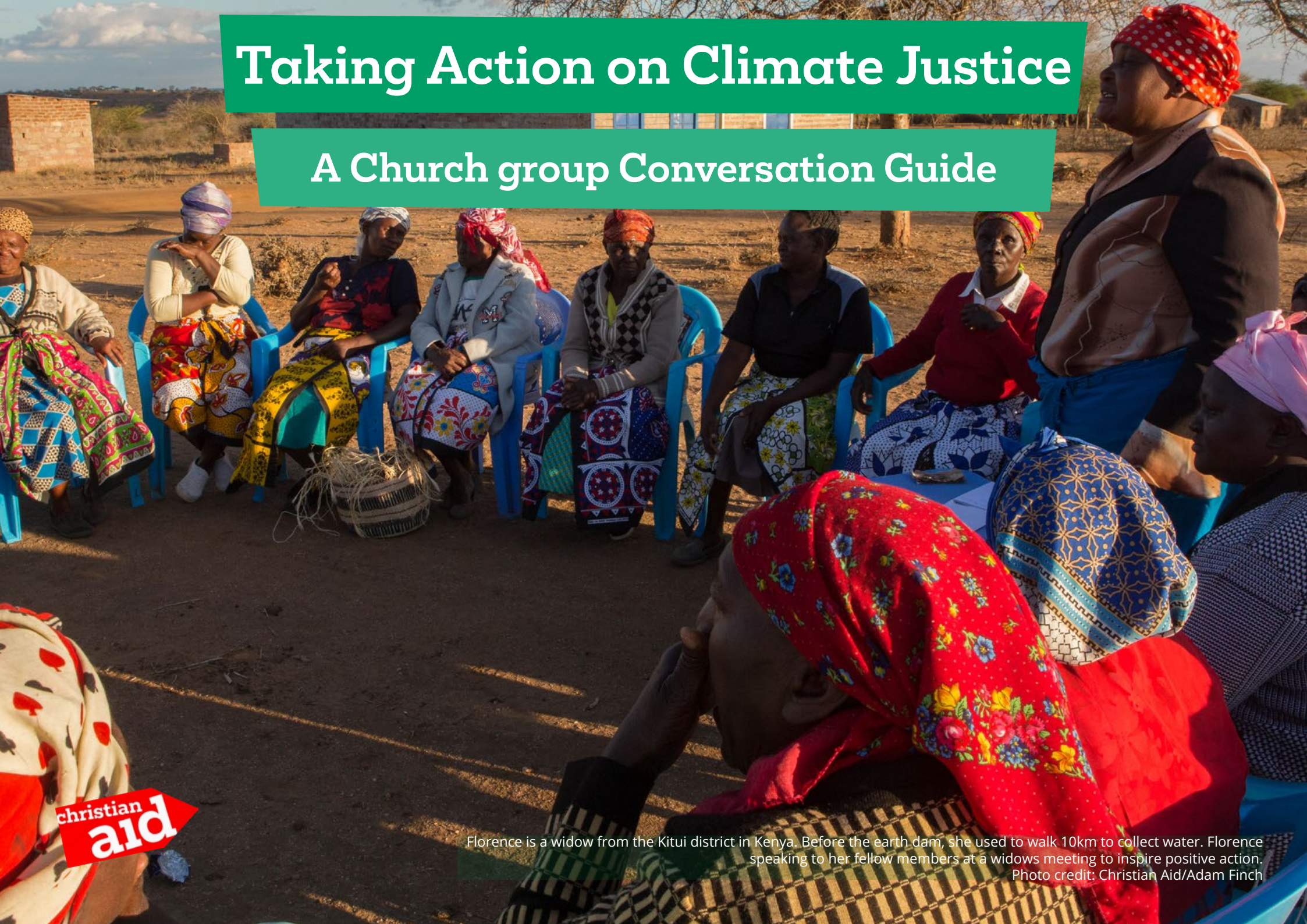


Taking Action on Climate Justice

A Church group Conversation Guide



christian
aid

Florence is a widow from the Kitui district in Kenya. Before the earth dam, she used to walk 10km to collect water. Florence speaking to her fellow members at a widows meeting to inspire positive action. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Adam Finch



Rose Kanatu Jonathan is 67 and lives with six grandchildren in Dili village, Kitui. It has not rained properly for over a year in this area. The family have to skip meals because of severe drought. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Adam Finch

Introduction

Climate change, although something which will affect us all, is a deeply racialised phenomenon. As highlighted in Christian Aid's landmark Black Lives Matter Everywhere report, Black and brown people in Africa, the Caribbean, India and other parts of the global south are facing the brunt of the impacts. Here in the UK, 50% of Black Christians don't think that the environmental movement is racially diverse enough, and are keen for their churches to stand up for justice.

As Christians, we're able to draw from scripture to develop a deeper understanding of climate justice and social justice issues. Our faith helps us to understand that climate justice and social justice are fundamentally linked to each other, and encourages us to take positive action within our own lives and communities.

We hope this conversation guide will support Church Leaders and Bible Study Groups to open up meaningful discussions within their communities, and for all Christians to become more confident to speak about, and take action on, issues related to social and environmental justice.

What are the main ideas at the heart of the conversation guide?

As you're using this guide, you'll notice there are some key ideas that sit at the heart of the discussion and reflection prompts. We've introduced these below, so you can become familiar with them before beginning a group conversation.



God is at the centre of all things; everything revolves around him. (Psalm 106:3)



Desire is not an intrinsically bad thing. The important question is about what is being desired and how that aligns with, or contradicts, God's word.



Greed (in all forms) disrupts God's purpose for his creations, and leads to social and environmental injustices.



Righteousness (Hebrew: tzadeqah) means living a life of good relationships, both with each other and with the environment. A righteous life ultimately leads to the creation of justice.



Justice (Hebrew: mishpat) is at the heart of the Gospel, and should be the end goal of all human endeavours. (Micah 6:8)



Action is required to tackle climate justice. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (James 2:26)

Florence Muthiani and her neighbours son after they have sorted out onions. Before the earth dam, Florence used to leave the house at 7am to get water and wouldn't be back until 3pm.
Photo credit: Christian Aid/Adam Finch

Using the conversation guide

This guide can be used in two ways (counter-clockwise and clockwise) to generate different conversations.

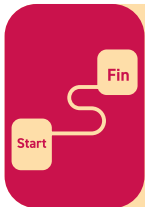
1

When used in a counter-clockwise direction (Desire Greed Justice) the tool enables groups to explore how desire that is rooted in greed creates issues of injustice that need to be addressed.

2

When used in a clockwise direction (Desire Righteousness Justice) the tool enables groups to explore how desire that is rooted in righteousness leads to the creation of social and environmental justice.

Once you have decided the direction you will be using for your current conversation, there are three main steps to follow to get the best out of this tool:



STEP 1. ACTIVITY: Starting from Desire, use the exploratory questions that are provided to guide a group conversation as you move around the tool (in either a clockwise or counter-clockwise direction). This should be conversational, as you allow participants to share their views and experiences.



STEP 2. SUMMARY MESSAGE: Once the group has finished discussing the questions for each stage, share the summary message and supporting pieces of scripture for the group to reflect on.



STEP 3. ACTION: Conclude the activity by supporting participants to think about actions they can take, based on what has been discussed. The 'Four Cs of Climate Justice' provides guidance on the different types of action people can take.

Visual Church conversation guide

As you move through the different sections of this visual, please refer to the next pages of the guide. These pages will guide you with relevant discussion questions, key messages and supporting pieces of scripture to reflect on.





Justine Mboya lives with her five children and husband near the Kalikuvu earth dam in Kitui south, Kenya. It was built by ADSE after consulting the local community via local structures. The dam very nearly dried up during the drought. Christian Aid/ Richard Finch.

DESIRE

Creation

Land

Community

Creation originated from God's love for us, and His desire that we would live fruitful lives and not be alone on this earth. We too feel desire when we yearn for our lives to be connected to something bigger than ourselves, and to play a role in the stewardship of God's creation. However, human desire can sometimes become corrupted.

In this section we'll reflect on the biblical themes of creation, land and community, and explore how our own desires relate to these themes.

Reflective exercise

We see desire at work in the story of Genesis. God created an environmental paradise for us, but our desire for wanting more than we needed put our survival at risk.

As a group or on your own, read Genesis 8 and Psalm 24. Once you've reflected on this, discuss the questions below.



What is God's desire for creation, the land and community (people) in the scriptures?



Reflect privately on your personal desires in life (e.g. growth, economic prosperity, possessions, control, power, etc.)



How could your personal desires become more closely related to what God desires for humans, nature and the world?



Broken, dry and cracked ground at the Mikuyuni earth dam located near the village of Kyeng'e. Kitui district is eastern Kenya is a semi-arid region suffering from the impacts of climate change. Photo credits: Christian Aid and Adam Finch

GREED

Domination

Dispossession

Exploitation

Human greed in all its forms leads to a rupture in God's purpose for His creation; greed is at the root of many social and environmental injustices that we face. One way that we see this is through overconsumption and wastage of the earth's natural resources. Overconsumption is causing extensive environmental breakdown and having devastating effects on communities, for example through severe problems such as pollution, drought and flooding.

In this section we'll reflect on how greed has been expressed through human acts of domination, dispossession and exploitation, and we'll consider what is possible for us to do about this.

Reflective exercise

As a group or on your own, read Luke 12:15. Once you've reflected on this, discuss the questions below.



What do the scriptures say about greed?



Are you aware of situations (historic or present-day) where greed has had a negative and destructive impact on creation, land and community? Share some examples with the group and discuss them together.



What could you do to make a difference to communities who are affected by the greed of others?



Rose is widowed and lives with her six grandchildren in a village affected by severe drought. Her two daughters work away from the village so Rose is the sole carer for her grandchildren. As the children are in school, she collects water from miles to cook for them. She prays that the rain will become more normal like they used to be. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Richard Finch

RIGHTEOUSNESS

Care

Kinship

Equity

Righteousness – by which we mean a life of good relationships with each other, and with the environment - ultimately leads to the creation of justice here on earth.

In this section we'll explore how righteousness can be expressed through acts of care and kinship, and through a commitment to equity in all aspects of our lives.

Reflective exercise

As a group or on your own, read Psalm 1 vs 6. Once you've reflected on this, discuss the questions below.



What do the scriptures say about righteousness?



What does the term 'community' mean to you personally?



How does your commitment to community get expressed through actions in everyday life?



Discuss your ideas for how humans could co-exist in a more righteous relationship with nature.



Margaret is a businesswoman who farms and sells her crops at a local market. Thanks to your support, she was able to join Wosa Programme which trained her in resilience to better prepare for the potential devastating effects of climate change. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Adam Finch

JUSTICE

Environmental
Justice

Restoration

Racial &
Social Justice

Justice is at the heart of the Gospel, and it must be the end goal of all our individual and collective actions.

In this section we'll explore how different kinds of justice are interconnected with each other. We'll also reflect on two key summary messages: the importance of tackling injustice that is caused by greed, and the possibility of achieving justice through righteous living.

Reflective exercise

As a group or on your own, read Micah 6 vs 8. Once you've reflected on this, discuss the questions below.



What does justice mean to you?



Do you believe the heart of the Gospel to be about justice? Can you explain why?



What do you think climate justice is? How do you think it is linked to racial and social justice? Discuss your ideas as a group.



Do you have any personal experience of taking positive action on environmental issues?

JUSTICE

Environmental
Justice

Restoration

Racial &
Social Justice

Summary message for tackling injustice:

When human desire is rooted in greed, we see acts of domination, dispossession and exploitation, and a devastating impact on creation, land and community. These are issues of injustice that need to be addressed through acts of restoration and repair.

Supporting scriptures to study:

Matthew 6:24, Matthew 6:33

Summary message for achieving justice:

When human desire is focused on righteousness, our relationship with creation, land and community is grounded in care, kinship and equity. This enables us to achieve justice here on earth.

Supporting scripture to study: Psalm 89:14



Rosalia Kusungo Ndinghi, is a member of the Climate Change Advocacy Group in Kyeng'e village, Kitui. The group raise awareness of climate change in their community and beyond. Rosalia benefits from the Mikuyuni earth dam constructed by ADSE in Kyeng'e village. She makes 'sisal' fibre (a hard rope made from the leaves of a sisal plant) to earn an income. Photo credit: Christian Aid/Adam Finch

Taking climate action as part of God's mission

In Romans, Paul suggests that creation itself is groaning and needs redemption. God has an eternal purpose for His creation, and it is our role as humans to take climate action as part of God's mission.

"The inescapable consequences of inaction makes climate justice the theological imperative for all churches. Inaction could result in a life or death situation for our brothers and sisters suffering in our home countries, and indeed other areas in the global south. It has to be not merely on the agenda, it must be at the top of our agenda." - Dr David Muir, Senior Lecturer of Ministerial Theology & Co-Chair of National Church Leaders Forum

Below are some things you might want to consider with your church, to make a positive difference to those in need.



Change

Are there changes you could make in your day-to-day life to have a positive impact on climate change? If you're pursuing an environmental activity, however small, we would love to help. Please tell us about it by emailing campaigns@christian-aid.org



Create

What can you do to raise awareness and understanding about the importance of climate justice? Dedicate a Sunday to climate justice, or organise a prayer event at your church. For more info visit caid.org.uk/prayer-chain



Campaign

In what ways can you speak out publicly on climate justice issues? Join our online campaign skills workshop to equip you and your church to speak out on the climate crisis for change.

Email campaigns@christian-aid.org



Claim

What can be done to empower those affected by climate change, to uplift their voices and agency to demand change?

Acknowledgements

Christian Aid would like to thank many of those without whom this resource would not have been possible. We would like to give special thanks to all of those who led and supported the development of this resource, who welcomed this work so warmly. Key contributors include:

Dr David Muir - Theologian at University of Roehampton

Dr Robert Beckford - Theologian at The Queen's Foundation Centre for Black Theology

Gideon Commey - Eco Theologian and Founder of Ghana Youth Environmental Movement

Revd Israel Olofinjana - Director at the One People Commission, Evangelical Alliance

Revd Alton Bell - Senior Pastor at Wembley Family Church

Melanie Nazareth - Climate Activist at Christian Climate Action

Pastor Ayo Adedoyin - Head of Community , Jesus House

Bob Kikuyu - Christian Aid Global Theology Advisor

Sue Richardson - Christian Aid Theology Advisor

Seyi Ojedokun - Christian Aid Youth Prophetic Activist

Sarah-Jane Nii-Adjei - Climate Justice Church Programme Manager, Christian Aid

Terrayne Brown - Graphic Designer

Louise Foreman - Design Coordinator

About Christian Aid



Christian Aid exists to create a world where everyone can live a full life, free from poverty. We are a global movement of people, churches and local organisations who passionately champion dignity, equality, justice and love worldwide. We are the changemakers, the peacemakers, the mighty of hearts

Additional resources

Christian Aid has created a range of resources designed to support Black-majority churches to take action for climate justice. In addition to this conversation guide, current resources include a storybook sharing perspectives of Black church leaders on issues of social and environmental justice, and a poster series featuring theological principles to inspire climate action. To access these resources and for more information, please **email campaigns@christian-aid.org**

Christian Aid 'Black Lives Matter Everywhere' Report

Download your copy at caid.org.uk/blm-everywhere