



ECO CHURCH
RESOURCES

WORSHIP
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Small Group Resources

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think



Visions of hope can be found within those Scriptures that explore our relationship with creation, according to Christian Aid. Small groups could find and explore such passages, to inspire them about their place within creation, leading to new ways of living and acting.

In Christian Aid's document *Song Of The Prophets: A Global Theology Of Climate Change*, British theologian Richard Bauckham argues that we need to relearn from the Scriptures about our true place in the created world.

For too long, we've imagined the relationship between God, humankind – 'only a little lower than the angels' (Psalm 8:5) – and the rest of creation as a vertical structure. We've seen ourselves as having 'dominion' over creation. According to Bauckham, this view was so powerfully expressed in the Renaissance period, it became possible to see the rest of creation as being given to us for our use.

Even when we've tried to take seriously the idea of ourselves as 'stewards' – with a God-given responsibility to care for creation – sometimes we've thought too highly of ourselves. As a result, we've exploited creation without regard to other creatures – even to all other people.

Bauckham claims we need an understanding more rooted in the Scriptures. We are part of a horizontal set of relationships, with other creatures and with the earth itself.

In the first creation account of Genesis 1, people are not created on a separate day. We are among all the 'living creatures'. In the Genesis 2 account, the first people are named 'earth creatures', made from the earth, belonging to it, with the important task to 'till it and keep it', and when we die, we return to it.

We are part of the community of creation, rather than lords over it. We are effectively another 'small group' among many, within the wider congregation of the world's creatures.

SONG OF THE PROPHETS

<http://www.christianaid.org.uk/pressoffice/pressreleases/october-2014/christian-aid-turns-to-prophets-of-old-for-climate-change-hope.aspx>

do



Use these discussion starters to help your small group think about how faith and creation go together.

The points are taken from Dr Ruth Valerio's book *Environment*, part of CWR's Life Issues series.

- 1 Look at Genesis 1 and 2. Where do you see harmony in relationships, as God designed them to be?
- 2 Consider some of the items that have been in the news this week. How do they reflect the fact that relationships between God, humans and the non-human creation are damaged?
- 3 Do you feel connected with God, other people and the rest of creation? Are there any areas where you feel disconnected?
- 4 Think about God's 'acts of grace' in a broken world. Have you personally seen or experienced such acts?



RUTH VALERIO'S ENVIRONMENT
www.cwr.org.uk/store/p-299-life-issues-bible-studybrenvironment.aspx



Mobilise people in living out God's mission

Five group studies have been produced by the John Ray Initiative to do just that – and to see individual lives, communities and the environment flourish.

Use discussion starters on climate justice

Try these materials on that very subject, created by Christian Aid.

Celebrate food in your small group

These prayer materials include approach, confession, collect, intercession, thanksgiving and blessing prayers.

Explore the theme of biodiversity in a small group

The main question Psalm 104 makes us ask is: who is this all for? Everything is completely dependent on God, and draws its value from relationship with God. Explore the theme of biodiversity in a small group using this Bible study, 'What a Wildly Wonderful World'.

Examine other resources for small groups

A handy book of Bible studies for small group use has been written by A Rocha UK Churches and Theology Director, Dr Ruth Valerio. Environment is part of CWR's Life Issues series.

Join a Green Christian Local Group

Green Christian have a number of local groups around the country. See if there is one near you and join with others to be supported and share ideas

Get Planetwise

Dave Bookless' Planetwise is a great way to study the biblical material for creation care as a group

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JOHN RAY INITIATIVE RESOURCES

www.jri.org.uk/resources-studies

CLIMATE JUSTICE

www.christianaid.org.uk/Images/Calling-for-climate-justice-June-2014.pdf

CELEBRATE FOOD

atyourservice.arocha.org/en/just-food-good-gifts-prayers

BIODIVERSITY STUDY RESOURCE

atyourservice.arocha.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/WWW-Bible-Study-Psalm-104-Biodiversity.pdf

RUTH VALERIO'S ENVIRONMENT

<http://ruthvalerio.net/publications/environment/>

GREEN CHRISTIAN LOCAL GROUPS

www.greenchristian.org.uk/local-groups/

PLANETWISE

www.ivpbooks.com/product/planetwise/