

SESSION 4. SERVING

How do we care for the world around us?

Aims of the session

I definitely take it for granted that my actions don't impact other people or the natural world around me. I am not fully engaged in issues of the environment or poverty in the world. But Jesus died to reconcile all things to himself. That includes literally everything and everyone. God cares about it, so in this session we want to stir a passion in our young people and leaders to start caring about it, and what we can do to care about the world in the way God does. We can do something,

Game – 10/15 mins

Empires

Everyone has to secretly take on a different identity, they need to choose a famous person who people wouldn't necessarily associate with them, and that most people would know. Then one by one they go to another room and tell the facilitator who they are, the facilitator writes down the names.

Once everyone has done this, you get everyone in the room and the facilitator reads out in no particular order all of the names of the list. The facilitator can read this out twice really clearly. Then the young people have to try to guess who everyone is. If they guess someone right that person becomes part of their empire and can help them guess who other people might be. If they guess someone wrong the person guessed then has a turn.

The game goes on until you have about 2/3 empires left (groups of teens), but generally by this stage those that haven't been guessed have completely forgotten who is left.. so it gets tense. You should get to the place where there are 2 people left and either the biggest empire wins or they guess who one another is etc.

Group Discussion– 10/15 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d68yRIE9OvQ>

This clip is from the film back to the future and gives an insight for an 80's guy to what things are like in the year 2015!!

If we went 100 years into the future, what would the world look like and what would we do? Individuals or groups can dream, draw, write, act, discuss, etc. possible scenarios.

What will our world look like?

Testimonies 5/10 mins

Thinking back about our challenges last week, how is that going?
Have you experienced God doing anything else in your life this week?

Video – 5 mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w7u2YpRm5ys>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xlavxNk2o8>

Talk – 5 mins

The Bible gives three main reasons why we should care for the environment.

1. First, God Himself says that His creation is very good. The material world matters to God; He sustains it all the time. Without Him it would fall apart into chaos. "He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together" (Colossians 1.16–17). So if we neglect, abuse and spoil the environment, we are damaging something that is precious to God.
2. The second and even more important reason why we should care for the environment is that in Genesis 1.28 and 2.15, God specifically commanded humankind to do so. He told us to take care of both the living and the non-living creation. We are to work at ruling and ordering creation as good stewards without abusing it for our own selfish ends. By caring for the earth properly, we enable it to be fruitful and to play its intended role in giving glory to God. That is part of our proper worship of God.
3. The third reason is that one day the cosmos will be renewed and re-created as the "new heavens and new earth", to which both the Old and New Testaments look forward (Isaiah 65, Revelation 21). That will bring the fullness of life that God intended and purposed for His creation: a place where people will truly be at home, where God will dwell with His people, and both they and the whole of creation will worship Him and give Him glory.

So how we treat the environment now ought to be a preview – a practice run of what we will do in the new creation. The certain hope of a renewed future creation is not a licence to abandon or not care for this one. Rather, the opposite is the case: there is every incentive to foster and to use the innate goodness and fruitfulness of this material world to do what is pleasing to God in our time and place. As Luther is supposed to have remarked, "If I knew Jesus would return tomorrow, I would plant a tree today."

So what can we do?

1. Raise awareness with our friends and schools/colleges (have and organise an environmental day) this is your future world!
2. Use less plastic! And recycle things properly. Litter and throwing plastic away is so damaging not just to the environment but to wildlife
3. Use less water, when brushing teeth etc.
4. Switch lights, TV and other electrical appliances off when we are not using them.
5. Simply care enough to do these things and to speak out when people are not treating the environment in a good way. Write to your local counsellors about things, tell your parents when they aren't doing the right thing, this is your future world, that God cares deeply about.

Challenge – 5 mins

- Work together to identify what some of the needs in your local community are (food poverty? Litter? Etc.), and make a plan together for how you might do something towards this – i.e. donating towards a food bank, committing to pick up and throw away litter whenever you see it, writing to your local MP/Town councillor about the issues. You could commit to all doing something small through the week, or working towards a bigger activity (i.e. organising a group litter pick or social action project)
- Read through a newspaper, choose 5 things to pray about this week. And choose 1 thing you think you could do something practically about – do 1 small thing about it this week.
- Write a letter to your local MP about something that concerns you – you could ask them what they and their party will be doing to engage with this issue.

Worship/response suggestions – 10 mins

You can do sung worship, reflective worship or for more ideas - <https://engageworship.org/ideas>