

Every Creature Singing

Embracing the Good News for Planet Earth

Leader's Guide:

Unit 2: Pursuing Peace and Justice

[Session 5](#) Environmental Disasters, Ancient and Modern

[Session 6](#) Slow Violence and the Gospel of Peace

[Session 7](#) Hearing from the Global Community

[Session 8](#) Claiming Our Citizenship

Every Creature Singing Leader's Guide

Session 5: Slow Violence and the Gospel of Peace

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals *(Circle your highest priority.)*

Participants will...

- Be able to describe the elements of the biblical understanding of shalom.
- See creation care as an integral part of a Christian's peace witness and be able to explain why the two go hand in hand.
- Know what is meant by environmental injustice and slow violence. Be able to recognize ways we are all connected to this issue.
- Feel compassion for those in their community affected by nearby hazards and be motivated to seek just solutions.
- Find hope in Jesus as reconciler, Savior, Redeemer of all creation.

Advance Preparation

- **Review:** Beginning a new unit is a good time to reread the introductory material in this curriculum, just to make sure you are keeping the class focused and balanced in the way you would like. Did the ecological lens questions get lost along the way? Are you communicating well with your place leader about times and content? Adjust as necessary.
- **Look ahead:** Also scan sessions 6 to 8 so that you are oriented to this unit on Pursuing Peace and Justice.
- **Preparing for the climate change session:** Next week plunges into climate change. Depending on how much background your group has on this topic, you may want to point people to the Suggested Resources on Climate Change on pages 6-9 to 6-11. Ask them to spend a half hour or so with some of these. If you anticipate conflict, consider doing Session 7 before 6.
- **Role-play option:** If you plan to use the [role-play](#), make the necessary copies. If you want more informed actors, email the role sheet to participants in advance so they can look up the footnotes on their characters or find related articles.

Suggestions for Leading Session 5

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals:

Participants will...

- See creation care as an integral part of a Christian's peace witness and be able to explain why the two go hand in hand.
- Know what is meant by environmental injustice and slow violence. Be able to recognize ways we are all connected to this issue.

Sample Class Period:

- Open with the poem, "[Ordinance Plant](#)" mentioned in Spiritual Practice #1. Invite people to react and/or tell a story of your own that relates to the poet's experience.
- The essay contains five main points beginning with bold print headings. Have people work in pairs or threes to come up with a skit, drawing or situation based on your local area that illustrates one of the sections of the essay. Have each group share what they came up with.
- Have your place leader report on one of the Place Questions that proved fruitful for him or her.
- Close with a time of prayer using Jesus' tears in Luke 19:41-44. Pray for people and places in your own community who are affected by slow violence.

More Ideas

1. **Look for opportunities for lament and confession.** This week's biblical text is a lament, and there is much to lament about as we examine today's environmental violence. Perhaps allow a period of silence for this purpose. Confession #697 in the *Hymnal: A Worship Book* fits well with today's session and even mentions today's text.
2. **Look for opportunities to celebrate good news.** This session on environmental violence could be very heavy if your group recognizes the truth about all of our lives. We are all caught in webs of injustice and violence that we cannot escape. "Sin" may not seem like an important theological category for many law-abiding people, but sin includes those unseen broken relationships that we are powerless to fix on our own. This session helps us see our unintended sins, paving the way to powerful new insights into the meaning of repentance and salvation. Help people grasp the good news in the concluding page of the essay.
3. **Spend time with the weeping Jesus** in Luke 19:41-44. Here is additional material you might wish to share.

These words are uttered while Jesus is riding toward Jerusalem on a donkey. Commentator Fred Craddock describes them as a lament: a complex form of expression that interweaves love, grief, anger and the loss of a vision of what could have been.¹ They are found only in Luke and add an unexpected twist to the very familiar “triumphal entry” story that we celebrate with palm branches and happy children.

The processional could be called an “acted prophecy.” It is a claim to kingship based on Zechariah 9:9-10. While we often quote verse 9 about a humble king riding the transportation of the poor rather than a king’s warhorse, many readers may be ignorant of verse 10:

He will cut off the chariot from Ephraim
and the war-horse from Jerusalem;
And the battle bow shall be cut off,
and he shall command peace to the nations...

This, along with Jesus’ rejection of help from a sword during his arrest, underscores Jesus’ rejection of violence.

Ecological Lens Question B: Usually, we think of the “triumphal entry” taking place in the city of Jerusalem, but Luke describes the procession descending from the Mount of Olives, a mile or so away. While we don’t know exactly what Jesus was looking at, the higher altitude would have given him a broad view of Jerusalem within its ecological context. In Jesus’ day, the land around Jerusalem was being intensively farmed for imperial estates. If Jesus had a good sense of history, he likely knew that this area was once beautiful parkland covered with trees. However, they were cut down to make catapults and battering rams during Pompey’s siege against Jerusalem in 63 BCE.² Jesus may also have had a good view of the social stratification of Jerusalem. The city was organized with the wealthier elites living in the center of the city and the poorest people and outcasts remaining on the outskirts.

The siege and the destruction that Jesus describes in these verses did come to pass in A.D. 70.

- 4. Role play option:** It is appalling to think of the price people in the developing world pay to provide North American lifestyles, but there are no simple solutions. Give your group permission to explore the complexities of environmental injustice by having a few of them spend the class in someone else’s skin. The Session 5 [Role-play Handout](#) introduces a lively and opinionated cast of characters, all related to the issue of using Africa as a dumping ground for toxic waste. Copy the sheet and distribute it to willing class members. Then proceed with the discussion questions. Actors should stay in character throughout the class period.

¹ Fred Craddock, *Luke. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching*. Louisville, MO: John Knox Press, 1990.

² Josephus describes this in the *Jewish Antiquities*.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Faith

Why The Questions Below Matter:

Environmental injustice is something many of us need to be trained to see. Jesus calls us to recognize “the things that make for peace,” and one of those things is fair sharing of environmental costs. Points 1 and 2 in the essay for this session discuss the fact that the poor and minorities often bear more than their fair share of society’s environmental costs. The place questions help you consider whether this is true in your community.

Help with Place Questions

Spending time in your map area is the best way to get a feel for these questions, but online research can be helpful as well.

- 1. What forms of environmental damage or potential hazards are you aware of within your map area?** Mark them on your map.

These might include any in the following list. In the time you have, you will only be able to look at the examples of greatest concern or the ones you have some hope of influencing.

- **Power plants:** The main emissions from power plants are: carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulfur dioxide and mercury. To learn more about air pollutants see [Six Common Air Pollutants](#).
- **Factories:** Companies are regulated and any toxic releases are public information. Type in an address and the [Environmental Protection Agency: Toxics Release Inventory program](#) will show you a map of the nearby industrial facilities with toxic releases on record.
- **Waste sites:** Landfills are designed by engineers and professionally run. Dumps are informal places people throw stuff they don’t want. [EPA list of municipal landfills](#)
- **Tainted buildings:** asbestos, lead paint, VOCs, sick building syndrome, cigarette smoke, meth labs.
- **Mobile sources:** Heavy traffic—particularly truck traffic—is one example. Crop duster airplanes might be another.

- **Sewage treatment plants:** These can be a source of water pollution when heavy rains overwhelm their capacity to treat the water.
- **Superfund Sites:** These are areas of concern where toxic waste has been abandoned. See the EPA's [Superfund sites where you live](#)

2. What do you know about income distribution within your region? What social classes live where?

Demographic information like this is widely available online in a variety of formats. Here are two:

- [City Data](#) Insert your zip code; then scroll down to a map where you can zoom in on any neighborhood you want and see household income, racial information and other data.
- [Rich Blocks, Poor Blocks](#) This site shows income, wealth, poverty.

3. Is racial segregation a part of your area? Where do minorities live?

Check your own observations using the City Data site listed under question 2.

4. Can you see any relationships between the location of low income or minority communities and potential environmental hazards such as landfills and factories?

If a particular hazard has come to your attention, it might be interesting to wander around nearby and ask people you run into whether they've experienced any concerns.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 6: Environmental Disasters, Ancient and Modern

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals *(What do you hope will happen?)*

Participants will...

- Be able to define climate change and list at least three kinds of measurements scientists take to determine if the planet is warming.
- Understand both the unprecedented nature of current environmental challenges and the continuity with losses people experienced in the past.
- Have felt God's anger and grief when the land is spoiled by human sin.
- Have found some common ground with the group as a whole in spite of whatever differences of opinion may exist.
- Leave feeling hopeful about some aspect of the discussion and empowered to respond to climate change in some way.

Advance Preparation

- Spend time with some of the recommended resources on climate change and decide which ones would be helpful to mention to your group.
- Find the EPA's pdf, [Climate Change Indicators in the United States, 2012](#) and print out pages 6-9. This is a summary list of 26 different indicators that scientists track to understand what is happening with the climate. Hang these pages up in your classroom.
- The Place Questions could be time consuming this week. Consider whether you want to spend your extra session on climate change.
- You need scratch paper for suggestion 2 below.

Pick and choose from the ideas below. Adapt freely!

Suggestions for Leading Session 6

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- Have found some common ground with the group as a whole in spite of whatever differences of opinion may exist.
- Leave feeling hopeful about some aspect of the discussion and empowered to respond to climate change in some way.

Sample Class Period

- Begin with More Ideas #1. This will give you a good idea of how to frame things during the rest of the class.
- Share some basic information on climate change appropriate to your group. Make it as a testimonial: something new you learned preparing for this session or from recent news. Or something that really bothers you.
- Approach the biblical essay through discussion question 8 and
- After discerning your group's unique angles and common ground, approach the biblical essay through Discussion Questions 6 and 8. The essay says that Jeremiah saw his people's crisis as a spiritual problem. Is there a spiritual dimension to climate change? Would your group call it sin, sickness or something else?
- Have the Place Question leader share what he or she has learned about the energy your church depends on using the resources provided for Place Question #2.
- Close by modelling carbon curiosity: In advance, calculate your carbon footprint as suggested in Household Practice #1. Share something that surprised you or a change you are considering because of what you learned. Challenge people to calculate their carbon footprints this week.

More Ideas

1. **Begin the discussion** by having everyone write down the following:

With regard to climate change...

- What is one thing you believe you have in common with most people present?
- Name an angle or perspective that is unique to you. This could be something others might disagree with or it might relate to your life experience.

First invite people to share what they think they have in common. Write these offerings on the board and then try to establish the common ground within your group. Maybe everyone is concerned about what kind of world future generations will experience. Maybe everyone agrees that reducing fossil fuel consumption is a good idea even if they don't all believe in climate change. Or maybe you all have a risen Lord.

Next ask about what unique insight each person brings. Hopefully this will provide space for climate change doubters in a room of believers, or vice versa. It could also turn up some really interesting perspectives based on line of work or life history. An insurance agent and a farmer, for example, would each have unique reasons to be concerned.

2. Provide background on climate change. How much time you spend reviewing information about climate change will vary with the needs of the group. At minimum, point out the items you posted on the wall, and mention a few of the indicators that scientists track with regard to climate change. Point out the recommended resources at the end of the participant guide. Or coordinate with your Place Question leader and leave the science piece entirely to him or her.

3. Another option for a starting point: Begin the class with a few minutes of silence during which you lead the class in a guided meditation along these lines:

- Imagine a time when someone else messed up a place that you value. Maybe you watched someone litter, or saw a bulldozer destroy the forest where you played as a child, or cleaned the house only to have it trashed an hour later. Think about how it made you feel.
- Now imagine what God must feel like when people, other species and landscapes cannot flourish because of human foolishness. These are the emotions described throughout the book of Jeremiah.

You could also use this meditation to conclude the session.

4. If your group is skeptical about climate change, take the approach implied in this [cartoon](#). Discern what environmental threats they *are* concerned about and shift the focus to smaller issues that are easier to act on anyway. Diesel fumes from school buses might be one nearby example.

5. **Discussion question 6 is important.** This question gives you the chance to review content from the first unit on biblical and theological perspectives and apply it to a real world problem. See what people bring up, but here are ideas that would be good to reinforce and connect to climate change:
 - **From Session 1:** God is with us no matter what, and does not plan to abandon this planet. Also review the Andrew Shepherd quotation on page 3 of the essay about Christian ecological living involving suffering.
 - **From Session 2:** Christ is both creator and redeemer of creation, and God's intent is to save all of creation, not just human beings.
 - **From Session 3:** All parts of nature are of value, and are able to voice praise and lament. If we understand these beings as part of our community, their distress is our distress as well.
 - **From Session 4:** What aspects of the human vocation suggested in Genesis 1 and 2 are most relevant to climate change? Appropriate dominion? Service?

6. **Stress the need for political pressure.** Spiritual practice 3 asks people to identify themselves as Christians and ask their leadership to address climate change, even at a cost. My colleague whose expertise is in policy says, "My state uses coal for 95% of all its electricity. With a simple, significant federal carbon tax at the source, that would radically change in five years. With enough federal will power, my carbon footprint would collapse infinitely faster than If I use LED lights and carpool."

7. **Include an action step:** The magnitude of climate change can paralyze people. Model active hope by discussing question 4 on small, solvable problems or encourage people to work on their carbon footprints.

8. **Remind people of their common ground:** At the end of the session, summarize some of the unique perspectives you have within the group and remind people of the common ground that appeared in suggestion 2 above. Underscore God's power to bring life out of death.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Faith

Why the Questions Below Matter

As stated in the essay, pumping large amounts of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere is an experiment likely to change the world as we know it. Reducing greenhouse gases needs to be a priority for everyone. These questions lead toward creating a Climate Change Action Plan.

Help with Place Questions

- 1. What are the primary sources of CO₂ within your map area?** Are there any carbon sinks in your area, absorbing CO₂?
 - **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), [Overview of greenhouse gases](#)**
This page describes the basic categories to consider: electricity generation, transportation, industry, residential/commercial heating and cooling. Power plants are the top source of CO₂ emissions, followed by the [oil and gas production sector](#). Other major sources of CO₂ are iron and steel production, cement production and landfills. Wild lands such as forests absorb and store CO₂.
 - [Agriculture](#) is the source of about 9% of U.S. CO₂ emissions due to methane from livestock, handling of manure and fertilizer, management of soils.
 - With these facts in mind, view your map area. You should be able to make some guesses as to the nature of the CO₂ generation in your area. Carbon sinks would be forests, prairies or other concentrations of vegetation.
- 2. What energy sources generate the electricity in your homes and church building? If fossil fuels are used, where do they come from?**
 - [EPA Power Profiler](#) With this nifty resource, you can plug in your zip code and see what mix of fuels your region of the power grid uses (coal, nuclear, oil, hydro, etc.) You can then see what kinds of emissions (CO₂, sulfur dioxide, etc.) your own

electricity consumption produces and learn about options for buying green power.

- [What's My Connection to Mountaintop Removal?](#) This feature of the ilovemountains.org web site, enables you to see what mines the coal comes from that feeds your power plant and to read about the communities near the mines.
- Over 90% of the uranium used by U.S. power plants is imported from Kazakhstan, Canada and Australia. Northern Saskatchewan is currently the source of Canadian uranium, with one site, the [McArthur River Uranium Mine](#), producing 14% of the world supply in 2011.
- Union of Concerned Scientists, [How Natural Gas Works](#) This page includes a map showing where natural gas is mined in the U.S.

3. How is climate change expected to affect your region?

- Union of Concerned Scientists, [Regional Information on Climate Change](#) Look on the gray sidebar on the left for the heading, *Regional Information*, and click on the appropriate region. In some cases, there are PDFs for each.
- [National Climactic Data Center](#) Plug in your location and make a graph of how its temperatures have changed over the past hundred years.
- [EPA Climate Change Impacts and Adapting to Change](#) This page shows climate change impacts by region and by sector. "Sector" refers to categories like agriculture, human health, ecosystems, etc.
- Another strategy is to search for climate change impacts and the name of your nearest city over 100,000.

4. Are people within your map areas planning for climate change? Are there business or government leaders who are concerned about this?

Most communities call their thinking on this topic a Climate Change Action Plan.

If an internet search does not turn up any climate change plans within your

area, call your city council and ask if anyone is working on this. If not, why not? Here are some examples of climate change planning at both large-scale and small-scale levels.

- [U.S. Global Change Research Program](#) This site looks at climate change at the national level and provides clear explanations of terms like *mitigation*.
- [City of Albuquerque Climate Action Plan](#) The metropolitan area of Albuquerque, NM, includes about 900,000 people. Greening business and industry is one of this city's priorities. Their long to-do list includes establishing a Sustainable Business Council, providing loans to small businesses attempting to reduce energy usage, developing shared energy systems in new industrial parks and growing more food within the city limits.
- [Community Climate Change Action Plan](#) Calcedon, Ontario, is a mid-sized town in Ontario with a population of 59,000. This town's plans include enacting an anti-idling law, planting trees, changing building codes and implementing a composting program.
- [Energy and Climate Action Plan for Redhook and Tivoli, NY](#) These two small towns have a combined population of around 12,000. They are concerned about increased flooding due to a rise in the level of the Hudson River, a possible consequence of sea level rise. Their plan says they are also busy retrofitting buildings, improving bike lanes and sidewalks and upgrading agricultural irrigation systems to prepare for droughts.
- [Climate Action Toolkit](#), from the Ella Baker Center, Oakland, CA
This town not only prepared a plan; they're sharing how they did it.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 7: Hearing from the Global Community

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals *(What do you hope will happen? Circle what matters most to you.)*

Participants will ...

- Link Ephesians 2:11-22 with the contemporary church's need to work with divisive environmental issues and walls created by geography, culture and social class.
- Become curious about others' perspectives—either within your church, your map area or globally—and brainstorm ways to learn more.
- Notice ways in which human divisions lead to environmental damage or inefficient use of resources.
- Gain at least one new insight into the ways our lifestyles are connected to environmental impacts around the globe.
- Imagine ways to break down dividing walls class members have experienced and be motivated to take practical action

Advance Preparation

- Have the Ecological Lens bookmarks handy.
- This session discusses dividing walls—walls that disconnect us from global voices, as well as those environmental issues that act as walls dividing our communities and congregations. Pray for your classmates and any dividing lines you are aware of.
- Note that this session could be focused within your congregation, within your map area or globally. Decide which is most important to stress and select goals accordingly.
- Try one of the spiritual or household practices for this session in advance and be prepared to comment on your experience.

Suggestions for Leading Session 7:

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- Link Ephesians 2:11-22 with the contemporary church's need to work with divisive environmental issues and walls created by geography, culture and social class.
- Imagine ways to break down dividing walls class members have experienced and be motivated to take practical action

Sample Class Period

- Begin with your prayer of intent.
- Ask your group to think about their experiences with environmental dividing walls; either those separating them from the global community or those between people nearby with differing perspectives. Share stories.
- Spend a few minutes reviewing the Eco-Lens questions. Read Ephesians 2:11 – 22 together. What does this passage mean for today's environmental dividing walls?
- Work in small groups to imagine a practical action each person could take to connect over or through the walls they described.
- Have your place leader share a few facts from page 7 -4 of the Leader's Guide regarding common products that link us to the global community. Then bring out a basket of objects with known origins. After you describe where each object came from, allow a minute of silence for people to imagine the faces of the people who manufactured or grew it.

More ideas

1. **Recap and anticipate:** Whatever priorities you have embraced during this course, make sure each session looks both backward and forward. Briefly review last week's topic and allow a few minutes for people to report on any practices they tried.
2. **Coordinate with your place leader.** The Knowing Your Place Section below suggests two directions. See whether your place leader prefers to look at different groups within your map area or goods sold within your map area that connect you to producers in other parts of the world. Plan the session accordingly.

- 3. Try drawing a web** of your congregation's global connections. Start with a large sheet of flip chart paper or empty board. Draw a large circle in the middle, representing your congregation. Ask people to add their names inside the circle as they are entering the room. Then brainstorm all of the direct connections you have to other settings around the world. Jot these around the outside of the circle with lines connecting them to the individuals involved. International members of your congregation are one link to other places. Other ways connections may have formed include friends, travel, service experiences, sister church relationships and missionaries you support.

Step back and review which of these connections are most significant for your congregation. How can you strengthen them? How can they enable you to be better earth keepers?

You could also draw a web showing how you are connected to people with radically different ideas about environmental problems: friends, neighbors, relatives, sister churches, etc.

On discussing divisions: If you plan to raise questions about divisions within your church related to environmental issues, take a look at [Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love](#) on the MCUSA website.

- 4. Treat the global community with respect.** While preparing this session, we struggled with how to portray the voice of the global community. On the one hand, we need to be aware of the suffering and injustice that the earth and its many peoples endure. On the other hand, no one wants to be known as a needy victim. Graver circumstances elsewhere may have inspired ingenuity North Americans do not yet possess. Our global neighbors are resourceful people who have much to teach us. Try to keep the conversation in that vein. Be prepared to challenge people who revert to a mindset that sees North America as the source of all solutions.

One way to counter our tendency toward arrogance is to do a little reading on traditional ecological knowledge. Indigenous people have thousands of years of experience living in harmony with their land. This knowledge base is now understood as a valuable resource alongside modern science and is known as traditional ecological knowledge. See the following sources listed under Suggested Resources:

- [Ancient Roots](#)

- [Indigenous People's Restoration Network](#)
 - [Why Traditional Knowledge Holds the Key to Climate Change](#)
5. **Household Practices 2 or 3** could be done in class. For #2, check the tags on your clothing. For #3, do your own research in advance and share your findings. Let the class wrestle with the economics of fair trade purchases. For example, is it better to spend \$12 on organic fair trade socks or to go to Wal-Mart and send the money you save to missions? Why?
6. **Human dividing walls that affect the earth:** If you discuss question 5, here are some examples you could mention.
- Neighbors who don't know each other are unlikely to share items such as tools and lawn mowers, whereas neighbors who are friends might share.
 - Churches and denominations often duplicate resources.
 - The environmental destruction that war brings about was mentioned earlier in this unit, but it bears repeating. Review the Slow Violence essay, Session 6.
 - As North Americans, we have tended to send money, goods and people to other places on the globe to meet various kinds of needs. It could be argued that this is an inefficient use of resources that creates dividing walls. How can we foster "exchanges" between people in ways that benefit all parties involved and conserve natural resources?
7. **Invite a guest** from a different race, class or culture to lead this session with you and provide a contrasting perspective. Or you could interview a member of your congregation who has insights from somewhere else to share.
8. **Ask people to read** the [Lausanne Global Consultation on Creation Care](#), listed under Additional Resources on page 7-6 of the Participant Guide. What are these global voices saying to you?

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Faith

Why the Questions Below Matter

- We are often oblivious to the diversity and dividing walls in our own communities. An unknown nearby congregation could become a valuable partner for you in the future, or provide you with an alternate viewpoint that you need.
- American wealth enables us to outbid other consumers for resources such as land use. Therefore, our consumption is sometimes at others' expense. It is important to know that we are connected to people around the world through the goods we buy and to hear their stories.

Help with Place Questions

- 1. Are there ethnic groups different from your own living within your map areas? Who lives where? What about congregations of different nationalities, races, or religions? How do you think these other congregations would answer the questions in this study?**

On other congregations: Most places of worship are already marked on Google Maps, or you can look in the Yellow Pages. Start by reviewing other congregations' web sites, if they have sites. Then make a friendly phone call or visit during office hours. Mention this study and ask if the congregation has ever done something similar. Connecting points might be managing church property for energy efficiency or a local environmental issue that has been in the news.

To figure out what language these congregations might use to talk about creation care, look for a denominational eco-justice or creation care web site beforehand, or consult the [National Religious Partnership for the Environment](#) site. This is an association of a broad spectrum of faith groups including Catholic, Jewish, Mainline Protestant and Evangelical partners. The links to individual sites will help orient you.

2. What kinds of goods are *not* produced in your region and are shipped in from international locations? Choose one or more common products and research where they come from. Can you find out where your winter vegetables, petroleum or electronics come from?

This question overlaps with household practice 2, so you are giving people a head start on their homework. You'll have plenty of items to choose from: most communities don't make their own electronics, cars, clothes, fuel or grow very much of their food.

It may be enough just to share these facts with your group:

- [Only 2% of clothing](#) Americans buy is made in America. [Here's a journalist](#) who visited the countries and factories it comes from.
- [FoxConn](#), the multinational corporation based in Taiwan, manufactures 40% of the world's electronics. One of their Chinese factories alone employs several hundred thousand workers.
- [According to the FDA](#), about 20% of the total U.S. food supply is imported. That includes 35% of fresh produce and 70% of seafood.

In short, the take-home message is that each of our home places is tightly linked to a global economy that has little accountability to any one place and that is dependent on fossil fuels for shipping. See Session 9 for more on building a local economy.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 8: Claiming Our Citizenship

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals *(What do you hope will happen? Circle what matters most to you.)*

Participants will:

- Draw inspiration from biblical narratives involving witness to empires, local governments and the faith community.
- See themselves as citizens of their bioregion as well as citizens (or residents) of the United States.
- Have identified the issues related to faith, creation care and ecological justice that matter most to them and imagined working to influence one such issue.
- Believe they can make a difference in the governance of their communities—and go out and do it.

Advance Preparation

- Look back over the four sessions in Unit 2 on Pursuing Peace and Justice. How might you summarize what the group has covered and bring it to closure? Look ahead to Unit 3 so you can give people a sketch of where they are going next.
- Hazard a guess as to what most often hinders your group's public witness with regard to creation care. Are they skeptical that this is what Christians should be doing? Are they uninformed about the issues? Are they passionate about particular issues but uncertain how to influence them? Or are they simply too busy? Plan the session accordingly. Depending how you answer these questions, you might let your place leader have at least half the period or spend the time writing letters.
- If you want to use Household Practice 2 in suggestion 3 below, plan your route and calculate how much time you want to spend that way.
- The Third Way Café page listed below on [Speaking to Our Government](#) is good background for leading this session.

Suggestions for Leading Session 8

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- All of those listed on page 8 - 1.

Sample Class Period

- **Practice landscape citizenship:** Begin this session by having each person introduce him or herself according to local geography rather than municipality. "I'm Louann and I'm from the Dusky Creek Watershed... I'm Jim from the Flint Hills," etc. Talk about how it feels to identify yourself as a citizen of a landscape or watershed. Move to Discussion Question 1.
- Connect to ideas in the essay by asking which biblical examples in the essay your members identify with most. Then spend your time on Discussion Questions 2, in which people reflect on their identity and imagine themselves creating positive change.
- Pass out scratch paper when you pose the hypothetical question as to what people would work on if they could choose one environmental situation to influence. Encourage people to draw themselves witnessing to governing structures in some way, or to write about their responses. Allow plenty of time for mental play and then hear from each person. Reinforce their offerings with the challenge to do one thing this next week related to the concern that moves them.

More Ideas

1. **Begin with a poem:** Another interesting way to start off could be to read the poem, "[Patriotism](#)," by Ellie Schoenfield listed under Additional Resources, page 8-7 of the Participant Guide. If your class members were writing a poem about patriotism, what would it include?
2. **Walk around the neighborhood:** The walk suggested in household practice #2, page 8-6, could be done during class. Many eyes will come up with more answers than one person could.
3. **Less talking, more doing:** Drawing on current events or previous work in this course, select one or two creation care issues that matter to your community. Spend your class time writing letters to governing officials. The first two resources mentioned on page 8-7 of the Participant Guide can point you to current legislation. Be sensitive to the fact that people may not share the same position. Propose at least one issue that everyone agrees on.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Faith

Why the Questions Below Matter

It can take six months to sew on a button or check the air in your tires if you've never done it and don't know how. The same is true of witnessing to government. You can model engaged behavior and help people get started.

Help with Place Questions

1. What organizations are responsible for overseeing the environmental health of your area? What do they do?

You may wish to focus on just one area, such as: waterways, air pollution, land management/urban sprawl, climate change master plan.

These organizations fall into two basic groups:

- Government agencies such as the Soil and Water Conservation District, Solid Waste Management District, parks, and so on.
- Non-profit advocacy organizations such as a river alliance, a land trust, regional offices of national organizations like the National Wildlife Federation, and so on.

To figure out the patchwork of government agencies whose role touches on environmental health, scan county or city office pages in your phone book or on the Internet. Search the Internet using phrases related to the area of environmental health that interests you, along with the name of your city or county. Pick one or two offices and call them to ask them what they do. Questions could include:

- What issues are you dealing with right now?
- Who else do you collaborate with to address this problem?

2. How does one gain input into these groups?

Here, your questions could include:

- How are members elected to this board?
- If I notice a problem with XYZ, whom would I talk to?
- Do you hear a lot of concern from the public about XYZ?
- When are public meetings held?

Nonprofit organizations are always looking for volunteers or supporters and will be happy to talk to you.