

For such a time as this

Icebreaker

- Have you got any surprises in your family tree? Or who would you like to discover you are related to?

Worship

Depending on what your group feel comfortable with, either read aloud together Psalm 147, or listen to (and join in, if you want) *God, the maker of the heavens* https://youtu.be/fyYwCG4Tf_c

Word

Read Esther 4:1-16

Watch the first 2mins 22 seconds of <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m5NIC35OKPk>

- To what extent do you think the threat posed by climate breakdown is similar to the threat faced by the Jews in the book of Esther?
- Which of the characters in this passage do we relate to most, with regard to our actions on tackling climate breakdown?
 - Esther, in a royal position to speak out on behalf of God's people who are threatened, but worried about speaking up?
 - Mordecai, trying to alert others to the threat?
 - Esther's maids, praying and fasting for Esther as she takes risks and pleads the cause of those affected?
 - Hathach, listening to what those affected are trying to tell us about the threat and passing it on?
 - One of the Jews, weeping and wailing because of the threat that is upon us?
 - King Xerxes, in a position to do something to tackle the problem?
 - Haman, causing (or contributing to) the problem?
- Which of these characters should we try to emulate?

Read Proverbs 31:8, and Psalm 82:3-4

- What stops us speaking out for the voiceless, vulnerable, weak, poor or oppressed?

Read Luke 18:1-8

In this parable, Jesus is talking to his disciples about being persistent in prayer.

- Do you think this might also be an effective lobbying strategy with an MP who is reluctant to act on climate change?

World

Speaking out

- Have you experience of engaging with politicians on behalf of the voiceless, vulnerable, weak, poor or oppressed? If so, how did it go?
- How might you as individuals, or a small group, engage with politicians around climate change? There are some ideas below, ranging from the quick and easy to more sustained or demanding.

You can sign The Time Is Now declaration to tell politicians you want a cleaner, greener, fairer future at the heart of plans to rebuild a strong economy <https://thetimeisnow.uk/>

You can sign the Christian Aid Climate Justice Petition <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns/climate-justice-2021>

You can sign up to prayer and action with Tearfund's Reboot campaign <https://www.tearfund.org/campaigns/reboot-campaign>

The Hope for the Future website <https://www.hftf.org.uk/> has advice and template letters that you can adapt. They can also give you tailored advice and assistance.

Making changes in our own lives

The Creation Care scheme (developed at St Paul's Dorking, and now being used in more than 50 churches around the UK) is designed to help Christian households identify areas where they can better care for God's wonderful creation. <https://creationcare.org.uk/> It looks at 7 areas: Worship & prayer; Home; Garden; Travel; Food; Possessions; and Community & Global Engagement.

- Have you signed up to the Creation Care scheme yet? If so, what have you learnt, or what are the best changes have you made so far?
- Which areas of the Creation Care scheme will your household find easiest, and which do you think will be the most challenging?
- Could you commit, as a small group, to engaging with the scheme, and over the next year encouraging each other to reach your next award level?

Prayer

- Pray for Alok Sharma and the UK team as they lead negotiations with governments around the world ahead of the UN Climate Conference in the autumn - that they will be able to secure agreements that will effectively limit climate change. Pray also for the World Council of Churches, who are part of the international negotiations.

Small group notes 18 April 2021

- Pray for our government to take action that lives up to the commitments they have made on tackling climate change
- Pray for people around the world who are already suffering the catastrophic effects of climate breakdown
- Pray that the Creation Care scheme will help households around the UK to better care for God's wonderful creation.
- Pray that our MP will speak up for those affected by climate breakdown