



Weekly challenges

These activities are designed to connect your Christian faith with your care for the planet. They are suitable for all ages. You are encouraged to commit to these challenges as part of a community – a family, a small group, a youth group or a whole church congregation – and spend some time each week checking in with one another to find out how it is going.

Our care for creation is deeply connected to our Christian faith, but sometimes it can be easy to disconnect them or to feel like they're competing priorities in our lives and communities. This set of weekly challenges can be used to connect the dots between Christianity and climate justice, between mission and Mother Earth, between evangelism and environmentalism.

Week 1: 1–5 September

The gospel reading for this Sunday is Mark 7:24–end

In the reading, Jesus heals two people, and, at the end of the passage, it says: “They were astounded beyond measure, saying, ‘He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak’” as the people go out, zealously proclaiming the good news.

The good news of the gospel is not just for each of us as individuals but for all creation. God asks us to play our part in the good news story of healing and redemption in both what we do and what we say.

Your challenge for this week:

Help to heal the Earth by planting a tree. If you can't do this yourself, there are charities you can find online that will plant a tree for you. Think about somebody you know who isn't a Christian and tell them about the tree, and how your faith motivates your care for the planet. Be brave!

Week 2: 6–12 September

The gospel reading for this Sunday is Mark 8:27–38

Jesus asks his disciples who people say he is, and goes on to tell them: “For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it.”

Jesus tells his disciples that we will have to sacrifice things for the sake of the gospel. We know caring for creation requires us to give things up for the sake of protecting the goodness of the Earth.

Your challenge for this week:

Adopt a more plant-based diet for the week, give up driving for the week, or give up something else that can harm our planet – whichever is hardest! Post on social media about how Jesus sets us an example about how love often requires sacrifice. If you don't use social media, see if you can write something for the local newspaper or speak on local radio.

Week 3: 13–19 September

The gospel reading for this Sunday is Mark 9:30–37

In this passage, the disciples argue about who is the greatest and Jesus tells them: ‘Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.’

Jesus shows us that to be Christians we must practice servanthood, and, in this way, we can show others how God loves them and loves the world.

Your challenge for this week:

Go litter picking in your community – this isn’t just being a good citizen, this is witnessing to God’s love for the whole Earth. If you have one, wear a T-shirt with your church logo or a Christian message. Be visible Christians, demonstrating how your church loves its community.

Week 4: 20-26 September

The gospel for this Sunday is Mark 9:38–50

In this passage, Jesus tells the disciples: “salt is good; but if salt has lost its saltiness, how can you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.”

Jesus is saying that discipleship means living distinctively to the rest of the world. It means being salt – being the seasoning – amongst God’s people.

Your challenge for this week:

Think about what one change you could make to live more ethically and to be distinctively Christian. Could you make a permanent change like

managing your finances or pension more ethically, giving up air travel, becoming a vegetarian, or rewilding your garden? Tell others in your church community what you've decided to do and why.

Week 5: 27 September–3 October

The gospel reading for this Sunday is Mark 10:2–16

At the end of this passage, Jesus takes up little children in his arms and blesses them. Our children, their children and the generations to come are the inheritors of the Earth. All of us have a responsibility now to protect the planet for its future. We have much to pray about in relation to the way we've treated our world – to repent of, to lament, to hope for and to hold.

Your challenge for this week:

With a group from your church, make a climate-focused interactive prayer space in a public space (either outside your church or somewhere else where you have permission). It might be something that people can tie ribbons to or hang messages on. Put up a board explaining what it is and how to use it.

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