

GETTING RICHER AT THE EXPENSE OF  
**PEOPLE** AND THE ENVIRONMENT  
MAKES EVERYONE POORER  
WE CAN CHOOSE TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY

**WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!**

WE CAN CHOOSE TO LIVE IN A WAY THAT CREATES  
A BETTER WORLD FOR EVERYONE  
WHERE HUMAN DIGNITY  
AND THE **ENVIRONMENT** ARE RESPECTED

GOD CALLS US TO **LIVE SIMPLY**

**LIVE SUSTAINABLY**

AND LIVE IN SOLIDARITY  
WITH PEOPLE LIVING IN POVERTY

**National Youth Sunday 23rd November 2008**

**Session 1**

**Introducing Reclaim the Future!**



live simply

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



National Youth Sunday 2008

## Session 1: Introducing **Reclaim the Future!**

### Introduction

This year's National Youth Sunday (NYS08) takes place on the Feast of Christ the King (Sunday 23rd November.) Young people have an important role to play in the life of the Church: NYS08 celebrates this role by inviting them to join together in school and parish communities to reflect, pray, think and recreate. NYS08 draws on the theme of living sustainably, a crucial part of the *livesimply* key message. **Reclaim the Future!** reminds us that we have a great opportunity to work together as a Christian community, and to play our part in thinking about what's really important to us, respecting the environment, and striving to end poverty.

### About this session

There are lots of ideas and resources on the **Reclaim the Future!** website. This session is offered as a way to introduce some of the themes of NYS08. It can work well in schools, but is primarily intended for use with parish youth groups. Youth leaders and catechists may wish to use some of the ideas in this resource as part of preparation for NYS08 – perhaps even as part of a day of activities that would conclude with a special celebration of Mass. Liturgy resources for NYS08 are also available.

Flexibility is key to using this resource. We've written this up so that the whole session would last for around an hour or so. But you may want to choose some things and not others, to adapt some of the material, and to add in your own ideas. Try to think of things that will work well for your group. And most importantly of all, enjoy celebrating NYS08!

### Session Material

#### Icebreaker game 10 minutes

#### You will need

A dice  
Scarf, hat and gloves  
Block of FairTrade chocolate  
Knife and fork  
Plate

This is a classic, simple but fun icebreaker game that can be enjoyed by any number of participants. The aim is simply to welcome the group and help everyone to relax and have fun as you start the session.

Ask the group to gather in a circle. All the equipment apart from the dice is placed in the centre of the circle. Players take it in turns to roll the dice. Each time someone rolls a 6, they move to the centre of the circle, put on the scarf, hat and gloves, and can then use the knife and fork to start eating the chocolate – one piece at a time. They can carry on until the next 6 is thrown, when the equipment is passed on to the next chocolate eater. You can make this harder at the start by leaving the chocolate in its wrapper – it'll be quite hard to open with gloves on!

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



**But why?**  
10 minutes

You will need

Copies of the **Reclaim the Future!** poster or the text from the poster written out onto smaller cards.

This quick idea introduces some of the ideas behind **Reclaim the Future!** (RtF!) The **RtF!** poster lays down both a challenge and an invitation to young people to think about the issue of poverty and the environment and to see how God asks us to live differently. The issues surrounding climate change and so on are, of course, very complex. This activity asks young people to put across their own reasons and opinions as to why we should be concerned.

If you've got a large group of young people, you may wish to split into smaller groups.

The idea here is to spend a couple of minutes discussing the different parts of the **RtF!** message. Explain that young children often ask the question, '*But why?*' when they are presented with new information or when they're asked to do something. The leader reads out one of the five statements from the poster and then the group have to give reasons why the statement is important. They do this in turn: after each person has made a statement, the person to their left says, '*But why?*' and the next person on their left has to further the ideas just presented, giving good reasons for their answers! After the statement has been exhausted, move on to the next one.

It's important not to labour this activity – the aim is simply to start the group thinking about the key **RtF!** themes and to begin to think about why the themes are relevant and important.

The text of the poster is as follows:

Getting richer and the expense of people and the environment makes everyone poorer

We can choose to live differently

We can reclaim the future!

We can choose to live in a way that creates a better world for everyone where human dignity and the environment are respected.

God calls us to live simply, live sustainably, and live in solidarity with people living in poverty.

You may wish to conclude this activity by inviting groups to share some of the things they discussed. You might also want to share your own thoughts and ideas too. It might also be helpful, particularly if questions such as 'What's this got to do with Church?' arise, to introduce the concept that climate and environmental changes, global warming and so on, are seen as being important issues for young Christians to think about and act upon

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



because we believe that we have been given the earth to look after by our creator God. Our own consumer and lifestyle choices made now can contribute towards climate change, and it's widely acknowledged that this will have long term consequences on different parts of the world. As members of God's family, we recognise our responsibility not only in caring for the environment, but also for our sisters and brothers throughout the world – especially those living in poverty. We can begin to see how our actions here and now connect up with the wider global community.

**Your life  
in carbon**  
*10 minutes*

You will need

Computers with access to the internet (optional)  
or Copies of the **Your life in carbon** questionnaire

This quick activity asks young people to think about how ecologically aware they are. There's a lot of talk about working out your 'carbon footprint' – a measure of the impact our activities have on the environment, and in particular climate change. The carbon footprint is a measurement of all greenhouse gases we individually produce through things like the amount of electricity we use, the sort of transport we take, and so on. Our footprint is measured in terms of the amount of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) produced.

There are plenty of carbon footprint calculators to be found online. So if you're able to provide computers with access to the internet, you could ask members of the group to calculate their footprint in this way. Try these sites:

<http://www.carbonfootprint.com/>

<http://actonco2.direct.gov.uk>

[http://www.mtv.co.uk/switch\\_carbon](http://www.mtv.co.uk/switch_carbon) (This calculator, offered by MTV is particularly youth friendly!)

Otherwise, try the **RtF!** unplugged version! You can download the **Your life in carbon** questionnaire from the website. This version is, of course, very simplistic and unscientific and won't provide a carbon footprint figure. But it is a way for young people to think about the way the products and equipment that they use, the choices they make as consumers and their approach to ecologically sound living makes an impact.

Invite young people to share their results. Are they surprised by what they've answered? Does it concern them? Are there ways that they could reduce their environmental impact?

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



**Global  
Heart Print**  
30 minutes

**You will need**

Some craft materials, perhaps to items such as paint, pens, paper, fabric and so on

After calculating your carbon footprint, it's time now to look at our global heart print!

It's all very well thinking about 'green' issues and becoming clued up about climate change. It's also good to be aware of the effect this has on people living in poverty. But it can be another step forward to actually *care* enough about the issues to *do* something. Having a global heart print means that we begin to understand why, as young people in the Church, we are called to do something about it. If we think back to both the *livesimply* message and the **Reclaim the Future!** poster, a key aspect is that we are called to respond to God's invitation to live simply, sustainably and in solidarity with the poor. God speaks to our hearts, calling us to have compassion for one another and for the environment. We can recognise that our actions here and now affect not only ourselves but others too.

This activity asks the group to think very practically about how they can have a heart and **Reclaim the Future!** There are lots of simple ways that we can reduce our environmental impact and respond to God's invitation to live simply and sustainably – the group will already have lots of ideas! As part of NYS08, they can be invited to share some of their ideas with the rest of the parish community, by designing posters or banners that can be displayed in the Church, parish rooms or local schools. These could also be used as part of an NYS08 liturgy.

If you wish you can choose to create a larger banner. Basic lining material or calico is ideal for this, can be purchased cheaply from local markets and can be decorated with poster or fabric paints. Or use lining paper from DIY stores. Even better, why not try reused or recycled materials to make up your artwork? If you have a large group, think about creating a 'patchwork' of ideas. Each smaller group can be given a similar sized piece of card, paper or cloth and asked to contribute a design. These can then be placed together to form a larger banner.

To get the idea about this being a 'global heart print', you may wish to form the designs into a giant heart shape. Also, as the group think of their designs, ask them to consider how their actions might make a difference to others – especially those who live in poverty.

Encourage the group to think about simple, practical and achievable ideas. The aim will be to consider their own lifestyle changes but also to encourage others to **Reclaim the Future!** too. It will help to come up with simple slogans, bright and attractive images and motivational information!

If you're stuck for ideas, here are some to get you started...

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!



## SHUT DOWN AND UNPLUG

Unplug things like phone chargers, which still use electricity where there is no phone connected. Don't leave PCs, videos, DVD players on 'standby'

## REDUCE

Cut down on buying products with lots of packaging. Recycle any packaging you can. Take shopping bags to the supermarket with you!

## REUSE

Don't rush out to get a bestseller - visit a used bookstore, go to the library or start a book exchange with your friends to save 14kg CO2 a year. Make use of sites like Freecycle to get used items free - or to pass on things that will help others.

## TAKE A SHOWER INSTEAD OF A BATH

Did you know that a bath can take up to 190 litres of water? If you give up the bath in favour of a shower just once a week, you can save 45kg of CO2 a year.

## EAT MORE VEGETABLES, LESS MEAT

A diet of 30% meat, dairy and poultry produces 1485kg CO2 each year, but a vegetarian diet generates only half of that.

## REMOVE YOURSELF FROM JUNK MAIL LISTS

1 million trees are used to create junk mail each year and transporting this mail via CO2 emitting vehicles costs £275 million.

## RECYCLE

Recycle paper, plastic, newspaper, glass and aluminium cans. Does your school or parish actively support recycling?

## EVERY DEGREE COUNTS

How hot is your house? Is your church more like a sauna? Adjusting heating downwards even a little will help cut CO2 emissions and energy bills. Can clothes be washed at 30°C?

## FIX

Check out whether old mobile phones, PCs etc can be repaired instead of thrown out and replaced. Does that phone just need a new battery? Does it matter if you haven't got the latest iPod?

## What next?

There are many more ideas to be found on the **Reclaim the Future!** website, including a second session containing some **Prayer Stations** to help explore the theme further.

# WE CAN RECLAIM THE FUTURE!

# Your life in carbon....

Take our simple quiz to find out the sort of environmental impact your life has...

1 Do you switch off your TV at the plug when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

2 Do you recycle drinks cans and bottles?  
N/A Yes No Some times

3 Do you switch off your DVD player at the plug when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

4 Do you switch off your games console at the plug when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

5 Do you ever choose to buy things with the FairTrade mark?  
N/A Yes No Some times

6 Do you switch off the lights in your bedroom when you leave it for 5 minutes or more?  
N/A Yes No Some times

7 Do you ever buy things from charity shops?  
N/A Yes No Some times

8 Do you unplug your mobile phone charger when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

9 Do you recycle magazines and paper when you've finished reading them?  
N/A Yes No Some times

10 Do you take a shower rather than a bath?  
N/A Yes No Some times

11 Do you switch off your Freeview box at the plug when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

12 Do you try to save water – such as by turning off the tap when brushing your teeth?  
N/A Yes No Some times

13 Do you ever make donations to charity shops?  
N/A Yes No Some times

14 Do you switch off your computer at the plug when it's not being used?  
N/A Yes No Some times

15 Do you (and your family) try to walk short distances rather than getting a lift in a car?  
N/A Yes No Some times

**If you scored minus points** - oops, it's all a bit negative! Your carbon footprint is more like that of King Kong... Try changing your lifestyle: switch appliances off, ditch the car, and stop just throwing stuff away.

**If you scored between 0 and 14 points** - not too bad. You're doing well in some areas, but certain actions are letting you down. Perhaps you can try to recycle a bit more? Try to switch off rather than standby.

**If you scored between 15 and 29 points** - well done! You're really trying to live sustainably. Keep polishing your halo and you'll be looking like the Jolly Green Giant any day soon!

**If you scored 30 points - hurrah!** You're greener than a very green thing on a green day in Spring! Well done for **Reclaiming the Future!** - now think about how you can help others to do the same.

Score 0 for each N/A  
2 points for each Yes  
-2 points for a No  
and 1 for each Sometimes