

LIGHTEN UP VIDEO



FACILITATOR'S STUDY GUIDE

*Lighten Up! Study Guide distributed by
The Regeneration Project*

Dear Lighten Up Facilitator:

Welcome to Lighten Up, a religious response to global warming. We are delighted that you are using this teaching tool as a means to involve your congregation in the Interfaith Power & Light Movement. We call it a movement because religious communities across the country are joining in coalition to help wean our country away from its dependency on fossil fuel for electricity and to show that we can quite easily cut our global warming pollution. The faith community expects to play a major role in this movement, just as we have in other social justice movements in American history. California is leading the way, and we hope your congregation will participate by joining California Interfaith Power & Light and signing the enclosed covenant.

I hope you will enjoy Lighten Up and learn from it. We welcome your comments and suggestions. You can order more copies through our website at www.theregenerationproject.org.

With Blessings and Love,

The Rev. Sally G. Bingham
Chair, California Interfaith Power and Light
Director, The Regeneration Project

Lighten Up Study Guide

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Back Cover: Lighten Up Video
and Study Guide ordering information

HELPFUL HINTS FOR THE FACILITATOR

- Read this Study Guide prior to session.
- Familiarize yourself with the video and view it (allow 20 minutes) prior to discussion.
- Share discussion Ground Rules (page 3) with group.
- Make copies of Pre and Post Test (page 4). Invite participants to take the test before showing video and conducting discussion. Give test a second time at the conclusion of the session. Compare results with group.
- Use Discussion Q&A (pages 5-10) as basis for the discussion. General answers are provided, however you may want to research responses specific to your congregation or to include more detail.
- FAQ's (pages 11-12) are questions frequently asked of the facilitator and are meant to help you respond. Website links on pages 13-14 will provide additional information.
- If you don't know the answer say so; you are not expected to be an expert.
- Conclude with summation of the discussion and the next steps your congregation may be willing to take (such as changing bulbs to CFL's, installing solar panels, forming an environmental/social justice committee, having an energy audit done on your facilities by the local utility, or by joining CIPL).

DISCUSSION GROUND RULES

(Facilitators please share with your group)

- Share your concerns and beliefs.
- Listen carefully to others.
- Be willing to examine your own beliefs in light of what others say.
- Speak your mind freely, but strive to maintain an open mind.
- Strive to understand the position of those who disagree with you.
- Cooperate with the leaders to keep the discussion on track.
- Don't monopolize the discussion.
- Address your remarks to the group and not at an individual.
- Communicate your needs to the leaders.
- Value your own experience and opinions.
- Engage in friendly disagreement: avoid emotional argumentation, yelling, and personal put-downs.
- Remember that humor and a pleasant manner can go far in helping you make your points.

PRE AND POST TEST

(Facilitators please give test at beginning and end of session and compare results with group)

1. There is no scientific consensus that global warming is caused by human activities such as the burning of fossil fuels.

True False

2. Global warming is happening now.

True False

3. The fuel consumption (MPG) of cars is an important factor in global warming.

True False

4. In the US, we will not feel the harmful effects of global warming.

True False

5. Currently, power plants and electrical production are responsible for a large portion of CO₂ emissions.

True False

6. It is a matter of faith for religious people to act on this issue (have a moral obligation).

True False

7. The temperature of the earth has warmed about one degree over the past century.

True False

8. The US supports the Kyoto Protocol, the international climate change treaty.

True False

9. Most major religious denominations have declarations stating concern about global warming.

True False

Answers are on inside of back cover

DISCUSSION Q&A

1. Why is global warming a concern and what are its causes and effects?

Answer: *It has been scientifically proven that global warming is occurring at an unprecedented pace. It is a very real problem that can have severe, negative impacts on the world we live in. Simplified, global warming is upsetting the balance of nature by putting too much carbon dioxide in our atmosphere. That excess carbon dioxide accumulates, forming a blanket around the earth, causing the planet's temperature to rise. Rising temperatures are causing the extinction of some species, the melting of polar ice caps, and rising sea levels.*

2. Why is it a matter of faith?

Answer: *Environmental stewardship and justice statements are available for many faiths on the California Interfaith Power and Light website at www.interfaithpower.org. Most religions hold that there is a covenant between God and humans, and that we are all called to be stewards of God's Creation. It means loving our neighbors, preserving living creatures and ecosystems, and not destroying them.*

3. If we don't act now to help stop global warming, what are its long-term effects?

Answer: *Rising temperatures, melting icecaps and rising sea levels. The United Nations predicts that the oceans will rise by as much as one meter (almost 40 inches) by 2100, affecting major coastal cities such as San Francisco, San Diego, New Orleans, New York and Seattle. We are already seeing regular flooding of some low-lying islands in the Pacific, causing contamination of drinking water and forcing their populations to abandon*

them as the sea rises. The island nation of Tuvalu in the South Pacific is making plans to evacuate its entire population over the next 50 years as their land is submerged. The Tuvaluans may be the first global warming refugees.

Weather patterns will change and crops will suffer. Insects will proliferate and cloud cover will increase. Oceans will warm fueling hurricanes over broader areas. Higher temperatures will cause more wildfires, as well as health problems like heat strokes and heart attacks. Pollution levels will rise along with the incidence of respiratory diseases like asthma and bronchitis.

4. What effect can my family or congregation's actions have on the earth's healing process?

Answer: Simple things such as changing one incandescent bulb to a CFL can reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 262 pounds a year. Change 10 light bulbs in your home and save 2,620 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions a year. Multiply that by just 100 households from your congregation and you are preventing 262,000 pounds of carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere each year that would otherwise contribute to global warming. Now change 20 light bulbs to CFL's in your congregation's buildings and prevent an additional 5,240 pounds a year or if 100 congregations changed to 20 CFL's each they would prevent 524,000 pounds a year from being produced.

You will save money, too. Each CFL you install will save you \$25 in electricity costs over its lifetime. So your home with only 10 CFL's installed will save you \$250, and your congregation will save \$500 over the lifetime of 20 CFL bulbs.

(Possible follow-up discussion question: How could your congregation use those extra funds?)

Converting to renewable energy sources such as solar power is a great step after efficiency measures are taken. A solar array on a church or other place of worship also sets a great example for the community. The new cathedral in Los Angeles has solar panels which provide up to 70% of their daily energy demand.

Also consider using efficient EPA “Energy Star” rated appliances, and driving fewer miles and buying a more energy-efficient car (such as the Toyota Prius or Honda Civic Hybrids). Together, these steps can all make a huge difference.

5. How did we get into this mess and how did energy use become a social justice issue?

Answer: *The irony is that as everyday life got easier for us we treated the environment worse. Home appliances such as washing machines, refrigerators, irons and dishwashers became necessities of life in 20th century America. So did the automobile, air conditioning, power tools, televisions, radios, CD and DVD players. They make life easier, more comfortable and more fun. But they also all consume our natural resources to manufacture and operate. Every time we flip a light switch or turn on the TV a little more pollution is created somewhere to make the power we are using.*

The electricity industry is the single largest source of industrial pollution in the United States. When electricity is created in someone’s neighborhood and pollutes our neighbor’s air it becomes an environmental justice issue. Many of these pollut-

ing power plants have been built in our low-income neighborhoods, resulting in higher rates of health problems such as asthma and lung disease.

Loving our neighbors means not subjecting them to polluted air and water. It means protecting our neighbor's children from asthma and other diseases caused by pollution. It means using less energy and working to improve the conditions of all our neighborhoods.

6. Is our government taking care of this problem? What should government do?

***Answer:** The United States has refused to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, an international treaty on global warming, or to take any federal action to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions. This in spite of being the largest global warming polluter, spewing out 25% of the world's greenhouse gases, although we are only 4% of the world's population. Some states however, including California, have implemented policies to curb industrial and vehicle emissions.*

7. In the video, Rev. Bingham calls on the faith community to lead the movement to care for Creation and halt global warming. What do you think she means by that? How could the faith community lead?

***Answer:** The faith community can lead by example. By reducing emissions from our own facilities through energy conservation and utilizing solar and other renewable energy sources, the faith community can demonstrate good stewardship of Creation. The religious community can also speak out on the issue, and provide the moral authority that scientists and environmentalists lack.*

8. What examples do we have of the faith community leading movements for social change? Why do you think religious leaders have been so central to these issues?

Answer: In the video it was pointed out that religious leaders were critical to the civil rights movement and the movement to abolish slavery. Religious leaders were central because of their ability to bring the moral and spiritual reasons for change to these issues.

9. What kinds of things have congregations done to address global warming? Look around this room, are there things we could do right here in this room or in our sanctuary, to address global warming?

Answer: Congregations have done many different things: installing energy efficient lighting, putting up solar panels, reducing energy use, preaching sermons on global warming, holding Earth Day events, etc.

10. Hundreds of congregations have joined IP&L's around the country and statewide programs similar to California Interfaith Power and Light. Is your congregation one of them? What is the cumulative impact of all those congregations' actions in terms of direct carbon dioxide emissions reductions?

Answer: In CIPL's first year of operation, 1.6 million pounds of carbon dioxide emissions were avoided by their member congregations. That is the equivalent of taking 130 SUVs off the road for a year.

11. Why is it morally correct for people of faith to be involved addressing global warming? What teachings in your faith are relevant to this?

Answer: Global warming is an environmental justice issue. Primarily, it is the rich, industrialized countries that are responsible for the lion's share of global warming pollution, with the U.S. leading the pack. But it is the people of the world's poorest nations who will suffer the most and be least prepared to deal with the impacts. People of low-lying island nations will lose the very ground they stand on; many will be forced to become refugees.

For relevant scripture passages and religious teachings, see www.interfaithpower.org.

FAQs

STUDY QUESTIONS FOR THE FACILITATOR

The following is a list of frequently asked questions that you, the facilitator, may want to be prepared for. You will not necessarily get asked all of these questions, or even any of these questions. Furthermore, most of the questions you get will not be difficult, but we want you to be prepared.

1. What is renewable/alternative energy?

Answer: *Renewable/alternative energy sources do not pollute the atmosphere and do not have harmful by-products. Examples include solar, wind, biomass and geothermal. Fossil fuels (oil, gas, coal) are power sources that, when burned, pollute the air by releasing greenhouse gases that cause global warming.*

2. Isn't global warming still being debated by scientists?

Answer: *No - a consensus has been reached. The overwhelming evidence by the majority of scientists is that global warming is real and already affecting us. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a United Nations agency comprised of 1,500 of the world's leading scientists, found conclusive evidence that human activities are causing global warming.*

3. What about nuclear energy? Isn't it a possible solution?

Answer: *Nuclear does not release any greenhouse gases but the waste created through this process is radioactive, dangerous, and stays in the environ-*

ment for thousands of years. The risk of accidents is still too high.

4. Isn't global warming a political issue? Why should our church/synagogue/mosque get involved in politics?

Answer: Although there are political aspects to solving the problem of global warming, it is also an issue of faith. If religious people profess to love God and creation, then we have a moral obligation to address our contribution to global warming. This does not necessarily mean being political; rather, it means allowing our various religions' teachings about stewardship to guide us. In so doing we can integrate into our daily life activities to care for creation, such as energy conservation and the education of others.

5. Since global warming is such a big issue, how can one person or even one congregation make a difference?

Answer: Although it may seem like an overwhelming issue, every act each individual makes to reduce their contribution to global warming does make a positive impact. The cumulative efforts of many people to cut our greenhouse gas emissions will reduce our reliance on polluting power plants. Furthermore, every major social movement in our country, such as the abolition of slavery, women's rights and civil rights initially seemed overwhelming and daunting but eventually became widely supported movements because of the dedication and commitment by activists. Remember Margaret Mead's famous quote: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed people can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has," or Ghandi's statement: "Be the change you want to see happen."

USEFUL RESOURCES/LINKS

California Interfaith Power and Light: Lists member congregations, energy tips/sample sermons, and denominational statements on global warming. You can also find more materials geared to the Lighten UP Discussion, including “Tips for Effective Discussion Leadership.”
www.interfaithpower.org

The Regeneration Project: Includes a map showing which other states have Interfaith Power and Light programs, and contact information.
www.theregenerationproject.org

Ecological Footprint: Tool to measure the environmental impacts of our typical daily activities.
<http://www.earthday.net/footprint/index.asp>

EPA Energy Star for Congregations: This program offers energy saving tips, program information, rebate information and technical support for congregations.
http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=small_business.sb_congregations

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops Global Warming Declaration: A comprehensive statement about global warming with an emphasis on action.
<http://www.usccb.org/sdwp/international/globalclimate.htm>

Islamset: Environmental stewardship from an Islamic perspective.
<http://www.islamset.com/env/contenv.html>

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:

Leading United Nations agency, comprised of over 1500 scientists that have concluded that global warming is caused by the burning of fossil fuels.

<http://www.ipcc.ch/>

Union of Concerned Scientists: Good resource for information on the impacts of global warming on California. (Click on Global Warming then Confronting Climate Change in California.)

<http://www.ucsusa.org/>

National Council of Churches Eco-Justice Working Group:

Program for Protestant and Orthodox denominations to protect Creation. Includes theological materials and general stewardship of creation information, specific global warming and energy information, and an environmental justice program. <http://www.webofcreation.org/ncc/index.html>

Coalition on the Environment and Jewish Life (COEJL):

Detailed information about environmental stewardship and Judaism. Includes political action updates, theological information, program and holiday ideas and a monthly e-newsletter.

<http://www.coejl.org>

Center for a New American Dream: Turn the Tide Program offers nine simple steps everyone can take – complete with calculators to tally and track our individual and collective impact.

www.newdream.org/TurntheTide/

ANSWERS TO
PRE AND POST TEST QUESTIONS
FROM PAGE 4:

1. FALSE
2. TRUE
3. TRUE
4. FALSE
5. TRUE
6. TRUE
7. TRUE
8. FALSE
9. TRUE

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