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Climate Migration Lesson Plan

Week 1

Introduction to climate migration

This week's lesson will introduce the topic of climate migration to the University Church of Christ (UCC) congregation. The goal of this week is to give an overview of climate migration and present what the following weeks will look like. The lesson will start with a [video](#)¹ that tells the story of the Tukuraki village in Fiji and the people who were forced to relocate due to landslides. This video begins by discussing the people's relationship to the Lord and prayer, which is an important segueway into the main takeaway for this week, which is to highlight what climate migration is and that it is God's people and creation being impacted. Once the video ends, there should be a brief overview of the story and how it was a climactic event that led to the village of Tukuraki being forced to relocate somewhere else. This will lead into the larger issue of climate migration and how "there could be as many as 1.5 billion environmental migrants in the next thirty years alone."² To put these numbers in perspective, the United States is home to 331.9 million people³, which means in order to reach 1.5 billion people there would need to be 4.5 United States (consider drawing this on a whiteboard or having a graphic). With

¹ NDMO FIJI, "Tukuraki Village Relocation," 2020, YouTube, "<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sMjDmB5-KQ&t=183s>."

² Gaia Vince, *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World* (New York: Flatiron Books, 2022), 10.

³ "United States of America," Data Commons, https://datacommons.org/place/country/USA?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=en.

this in mind, picture our entire nation, including yourself, having to migrate somewhere else. Now picture this happening another 3.5 times. This is what the mass migration of 1.5 billion people would look like and it would all be happening in the next thirty years.

The second half of this lesson should give a brief overview of creation and what is causing this mass migration of people. Psalms 24:1 should be at the forefront of this part of the lesson as it talks about the Earth and all who live in it being the Lord's and how "he founded it on the seas and established it on the waters."⁴ This verse should lead the conversation into the importance of a strong foundation and how it is the land under our feet and the water that supports our needs that provides this firm foundation. The significance of God founding the world on the seas and establishing it in the waters is important to highlight as it is the precursor to talking about how this foundation is cracking and changing. This then paves the way to speak on how creation is changing, which is causing climatic events such as floods, fires, heat, and drought to impact all parts of the world. Emphasizing the events the congregation has witnessed and experienced such as the Woolsey fire or the drought California has been in for years now will help connect this large, complex issue to their own daily lives. To end this segment of the lesson, connect it back to climate migration and Psalms 24:1 as "the world, and all who live in it" are being impacted by climate migration and the climactic changes that are causing it. To end the first week, give a brief overview of the following weeks and how we will follow the story of climate migration by talking about creation, migration, interconnectedness, love, and what we can do.

Question of the week: What can I do this week to learn more about climate migration and how creation impacts my life?

⁴ Ps. 24:1 (NIV).

This week's lesson is critical for the congregation of UCC because it gives them a brief overview of the issue we will be tackling for the next six weeks. Giving the congregation a story to follow and allowing them to put a face to the issue of climate migration helps make the issue more personal and real. It allows them to connect this issue to people, while also thinking about how it connects to their own life when talking about how creation is changing. This will be integral moving forward as it creates a level of trust and understanding before we dive deeper into different issues and ask more personal questions of ourselves.

Week 2: Creation

What God says about it and what is happening now?

This week's lesson will begin with a brief overview of the video that was played last week so that the congregation has the issue of climate migration and the people of Fiji fresh in their minds. While talking about the video, there should be an emphasis on the land and how changes in Fiji's local weather patterns cause an increase in landslides, which made their land inhabitable. The first part of this lesson should be focused on the importance of the land we live on and survive off of and what God says about it in the Bible. Genesis 1:11-12 will be the backbone of this conversation as we talk about how God views the land and why he created it. These verses emphasize the creation of Earth and what God saw was best fit for the land. He created the land and spoke into existence "vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bears fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds...And God saw that it was good."⁵ There are three main takeaways about creation and why God created it the way he did in these verses. The first being the importance of seed-bearing plants, the second being the

⁵ Gen. 1:11-12 (NIV).

emphasis on their various kinds, and the third being that it was good. The lesson should then dive into how seed-bearing plants are important because they allow us to continue to grow food and feed our people. Without them, we would only have food for one harvest. God also emphasizes the various kinds of plants he placed on Earth. This diversity is important because it plays an integral role in helping keep the planet and our people alive as there are plenty of crops to eat from if one species were to die. Lastly, God says that this was good. This theme of what good means and looks like will be important to hit on as it helps connect the good we had to where our planet is at now.

The second half of this lesson will dive deeper into how our land has changed since God created it. This part of the lesson will focus on land around the world that has become inhabitable due to changes in the environment and how that is causing mass migration. The first example will be the people of Fiji and how their land became inhabitable due to landslides. Landslides happen when there is a “disturbance in the natural stability of a slope. They can accompany heavy rains or follow droughts, earthquakes, or volcanic eruptions.”⁶ The people of Fiji had to leave their homes because the land was no longer able to produce food or house people as it was being destroyed by the increase in rainfall. However, this is not the only evidence we see of land becoming inhabitable around the world and migration occurring because of it. The lesson should then go into how the land God created as good is now being destroyed and therefore impacting mass migration across the globe. Further examples of this can be found in Kiribati as their nation “may be completely underwater in the next 30 years,” in California as “2022 had the driest January, February, and March in over 100 years,”⁷ and around the world as there will be only

⁶ “Landslides and Mudslides,” CDC, Jan. 12, 2018, <https://www.cdc.gov/disasters/landslides.html#:~:text=Landslides%20are%20caused%20by%20disturbances,rock%2C%20earth%2C%20and%20debris.>

⁷ “California drought action,” The State of California, <https://drought.ca.gov/>.

“60 years of farming left if soil degradation continues.”⁸ These examples highlight how the land has changed since God created it and how it is impacting His people because of it. What God saw as good is starting to disappear and it is important we as His people understand this and its impacts.

Question of the week: How does the land you live on impact you and your family’s lives? What would it look like if it suddenly became inhabitable?

This lesson is critical to the University Church of Christ congregation because it highlights the importance of the land not only to us, but to God as well. It helps illustrate how God views the land, why he created it in the way that he did, and how it impacts the survival and migration of his people. This lesson is meant to help create a connection between the environment and God, as it is not always present for many people. This is important because it helps show how the destruction of the land we live on is also the destruction of God’s creation and people.

Week 3: Migration

Jesus as a migrant

To begin week three there should be a brief overview of the previous weeks and where we are in the story of climate migration. For example, taking a few minutes to talk about the land and how its destruction is causing the mass migration of billions of people.

This week will focus on the story of Jesus and how the Lord we follow as Christians was a refugee and an immigrant. The lesson will be centered on Jesus’s escape to Egypt as Mary and Joseph had to flee their hometown and migrate to Egypt in fear of Herod. This story is important

⁸ “Only 60 Years of Farming Left if Soil Degradation Continues,” *Scientific American*, Dec. 5, 2014, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/only-60-years-of-farming-left-if-soil-degradation-continues/>.

because it does not pose migration as a bad thing, but rather poses migration as a means of survival. It highlights how Jesus himself was a migrant and how his story and therefore our story as Christians is one of migration and movement.

In the second half of the lesson, Jesus's escape to Egypt will be used to connect his migration to the issue of climate migration we are seeing now. It is important to make this connection as it highlights how people are fleeing for the same reasons now as Jesus did long ago. There will be billions of people forced to migrate not because they want to, but because they need to in order to survive. The people of Fiji did not leave their homes because they wanted to, rather they left their homes because they had to. This part of the lesson should highlight how migration is not an easy choice. It was not easy for Mary and Joseph to move Jesus to Egypt and then to Nazareth after Herod died. "They [would have] covered approximately 1242.80 miles. Their means of transport was a weak beast of burden and the occasional sailboat on the Nile. But for much of the way, they must have trudged on foot, enduring the fierce summer heat and the biting winter's cold, suffering the pangs of hunger and the parching affliction of thirst."⁹ This is not so different from the billions of people who will have to walk through deserts, sail through the oceans, or travel through jungles in order to find somewhere safe to live. Migration is not an easy path, but it is one that will become necessary for the survival of billions in the coming years as land becomes inhabitable.

The last few minutes or so of this lesson should tie these issues of migration back to the congregation and leave them with questions that allow them to examine previous beliefs they may have had.

⁹ Danielle Peters, "All About Mary: Flight into Egypt," University of Dayton, <https://udayton.edu/imri/mary/f/flight-into-egypt.php#:~:text=It%20is%20estimated%20that%20the,occasional%20sailboat%20on%20the%20Nile>.

Questions of the week: What would it look like if you took Jesus's migration story seriously? How would it affect your view on migrants and migration? How would you feel if you were forced to migrate for your own survival?

This week is especially important for the UCC congregation because it touches on potentially sensitive topics such as migration and immigration. This lesson will be critical in depoliticizing immigration and migrating, and instead seeing it as a natural phenomenon that shaped the Old and New Testaments. This week is integral in building trust and reaching people who may hold differing beliefs. The lesson is built to make migration an issue we can all rally around as it is at the core of the Christian faith and Jesus's life. This is an important turning point as it begins to discuss our role in the issue of climate migration.

Week 4: Interconnectedness

What does it mean to be interconnected to those oceans away from you?

This week will begin with a quick recap of the previous weeks by outlining how the land is becoming uninhabitable, which is causing migration. However, while this week will build on these ideas, it will also start to talk more about our relationship with climate migrants and what role we play in the story of climate migration. This will lead back to the story of Fiji and how our actions here in the United States play a role in the landslides that are happening in the village of Tukuraki. This story highlights the interconnectedness of our planet and how the Earth's systems connect every nation across the globe together.

However, it is not just the Earth that highlights the interconnectedness of all people, so does scripture. Romans 12:5 says "we are many parts of one body, and we all belong to each

other.”¹⁰ This verse highlights how we are all interconnected as God's people. It talks about us not simply as individual parts, but as a whole body. We are all connected to each other through the body of Christ just as the Earth's systems tie us all together as humans.

An example of this would be the carbon cycle. “The carbon cycle describes the process in which carbon atoms continually travel from the atmosphere to the Earth and then back into the atmosphere.”¹¹ Carbon is the foundation of all life; however, an excess amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere is changing the way the Earth is able to function, which is why Fiji has been experiencing an unprecedented amount of rainfall and, therefore, landslides.¹² Because of the complex systems that interact within our planet, what we put into the air here in the United States has an effect on the people of Fiji thousands of miles away. While this connection may not be clear at first, the intricate nature of our planet highlights how interconnected we all are and, therefore, how thoughtful our actions must be.

This highlights how we as humans are interconnected through God and through the Earth's natural systems. Both God and nature illustrate how we are connected to each other in more ways than one, which makes our actions extremely important as they have the ability to affect those who are oceans away. This is why Romans 12:5 also states that “we all belong to each other.” This idea of belonging to one another is more than just understanding we are interconnected, it is doing something about it. While our actions may be having negative effects on ecosystems around the globe, this also means that our actions have the ability to make positive changes. Belonging to one another means looking out for one another, it means taking

¹⁰ Rom. 12:5 (NLT).

¹¹ “What is the carbon cycle,” NOAA, <https://oceanservice.noaa.gov/facts/carbon-cycle.html#transcript>.

¹² “Climate Risk Country Profile: Fiji,” The World Bank, 2021, https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/country-profiles/15854-WB_Fiji%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf.

our actions seriously as they can cause serious harm, and it means working together to help create a better world for all of us.

The lesson should end by tying together the themes of climate migration and interconnectedness while posing questions for the congregation to consider throughout the week.

Question of the week: What would it look like to take interconnectedness seriously? How would this change your behavior?

The goal of this lesson is to teach the congregation how interconnected we all are as God's people and that the Bible calls us to belong to one another. This lesson is critical for UCC because it ties nature and Christianity together. It helps the congregation see science and religion as complements rather than as two opposing forces. This lesson is important because it highlights our role in climate migration and helps others see how we are connected to those across the globe in more ways than one. This week is an important precursor to the last two weeks as it sets the stage for why we should care about this issue and how we are intricately tied to it.

Week 5: Love

How do we love climate migrants?

As Christians, love is at the backbone of the Christian tradition and Jesus's teachings. However, while it may be easy to show love to those we know and care about, how do we show love to those who live on the other side of the world?

This lesson should begin by reminding the congregation that 1.5 billion people will have to migrate because their land is becoming inhabitable and that our actions are directly impacting this number. This highlights just how important climate migration is and why our congregation here at UCC has a responsibility to love and care about those who are having to migrate.

After this, it is important to break down what God says about who we should love. Leviticus 19:34 says that “the foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the LORD your God.”¹³ This verse is integral in understanding how God views love. We are explicitly able to see how he is calling us to love the foreigner. How he is calling us to love those who do not look like us, who are not from the same place as us, and who may not believe the same things as us. He reminds us that we are all foreigners and that we are all deserving of love.

This segment of the lesson will lead into how God calls us to love the foreigner and what that may look like in our daily lives. In the second part of this lesson, the verse of focus will change to Mark 12:30 and what it means to “love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength”¹⁴ This verse highlights how our heart, soul, mind, and strength are four different ways to show love. It signifies that love does not always look one specific way, rather love can be shown differently depending on what part of ourselves we are focusing on. For example, loving with our heart focuses on our emotional connection with others, loving with our soul focuses on our spiritual connection with others, loving with our mind focuses on our intellectual connection with others, and loving with our strength focuses on our physical connection with others. This could look like showing love by reading a story about climate migration one day, telling a friend why you care about the issue another day, or going out and volunteering with the Malibu Labor Exchange next week.

Creating four different ways to show love is important because we as humans are limited. We do not have the capacity to love and care for everything and everyone all of the time, which can make loving and caring for climate migrants very overwhelming at times. However, when

¹³ Lev. 19:34 (NIV).

¹⁴ Mark 12:30 (NLT).

we are able to break love down into four different parts, it allows us to dive deeper into what love looks like and how we go about showing it.

This lesson should wrap up by connecting this idea of love back to climate migrants, Fiji, and ourselves. It should mention using these forms of love through the lens of agape love, which “is altruistic love, love that is given for its own sake, without expecting anything in return.”¹⁵

The final minute or so should be spent tying this idea of self-sacrificial love to climate migration and asking questions that will lead us into the final week.

Questions of the week: What part of love comes most naturally to you? How can you use this to love climate migrants this week? How can you add agape love into your practice of loving climate migrants?

This lesson is important to the UCC community because it emphasizes not only why we should love climate migrants, but the ways in which we can love them as well. The goal of this week is to give the congregation different ways to love climate migrants so that the idea is not some abstract concept, but rather practical ideas they can take with them. Oftentimes the church does not talk about how our actions are negatively affecting people, but this is an important part of climate migration, which is why it is highlighted throughout the lesson plan. However, it makes this week especially important as it helps ease some of the guilt and focus on the positive aspects of our actions and the importance of love.

Week 6: What can we do now?

Actions we can take to help climate migrants

¹⁵ John Templeton, *Agape Love: A Tradition Found in Eight World Religions*, (Pennsylvania: Templeton Foundation Press, 1999), 4.

This final lesson will touch on all of the previous weeks and give concrete steps the congregation can take moving forward. The lesson should start by commenting on last week and the idea of loving climate migrants with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength. This portion of the lesson should also tie in the people of Fiji and how our actions have the ability to make positive change in their lives. While our actions may have had negative consequences in the past, that does mean we cannot change moving forward. Love is a powerful force of change and when we combine this with action, it has the ability to change the world as we know it.

Jesus is a prominent example of this. He loved God and his people above all else and wanted to change the world for the better, so he did. He preached to thousands of people, he ate with sinners and tax collectors, he walked through the desert for forty days, and he ultimately died on the cross for our sins. He took action. He did not save the world by doing nothing, rather he went out of his way to do what he could to love others well and help create change. While climate migration might seem like an issue that is impossible to solve or change, so was saving the world from sin. Jesus showed us how love and action combined can change the world. So what action steps can we take to help love and care for climate migrants and create the change we want to see?

This next segment should focus on the practical steps we can take to show love to climate migrants through our heart, soul, mind, and strength. For example, loving climate migrants with our heart focuses on our emotional connection with others. This may look like talking to your friends or family members about climate migration and what tugs on your heart, or it could look like advocating for UCC or your local government to take climate migration more seriously. However, loving climate migrants with our soul focuses on our spiritual connection with others. This could look like praying for climate migrants across the globe, or practicing the spiritual

practice of generosity and giving what you can to different churches or organizations that are working with climate migrants. Another way to love climate migrants would be through the mind and our intellectual connection with others. This may look like reading books or articles about climate migration and the issue at hand, or it may look like watching a documentary with your friends or family about a story of climate migrants. Lastly, we can love climate migrants with our strength by focusing on our physical connection with others. This could look like volunteering at the Malibu Labor Exchange, or putting up posters around your community that touch on the issue.

Love and action together are powerful agents of change. They have the ability to change the world as we know it. What we do and say is important. What we choose to love and care about is important. These statements should then segue into how climate migration is going to be impacting 1.5 billion people in the coming years and how our actions will be integral in where the world goes from here. The last few minutes of the lesson should wrap up these ideas and ask questions to keep the congregation thinking about these issues for weeks to come.

Questions of the week: What stuck out to you the most about climate migration? What steps can you take this week to love climate migrants? What would Jesus do if he were on Earth today and faced with this issue? What friend or family member could you talk to about this issue?

This final lesson is important because it leaves the congregation with concrete action steps they can take moving forward. It focuses on love and positive change so that the issue of climate migration is one of hope rather than one of hopelessness. This is critical to communicate to the UCC community because it helps them feel like their actions matter and that they have the ability to help care for climate migrants. This final week helps the community take what they

learned these past six weeks and implement it into their daily lives. It equips them with the tools to not only talk about the issue, but take action steps to fix the issue.

A Planet of People:

6 Week Lesson Plan by Alysse Quin

Mission Statement: The goal of this series of lesson summaries is to provide guidance in teaching a church congregation about the importance of creation care, especially in regard to those who are impacted by the current state of the earth, through a Christian lens with use of scripture to translate to modern problems facing our world.

Notes:

- NIV is used for Bible passages listed or referenced, but another translation of personal preference is fine.
- All outside sources are listed in the endnotes at the end of this document in Chicago-style citation.

Week 1: God's Promised Planet

This week's lesson is the kickoff to a six-week exploration of our beautiful earth and our relationship with it in the 21st Century as Christians. To start off, we'll begin by revisiting the intricate beauty of where the world started in Genesis 1:1-25. God's creation of the world is a beautiful miracle on its own, but there is an even greater aspect of this beauty that comes from how intricately designed our planet is by God's hand. Of all the planets in our solar system, we are living on the one that is perfectly created for human life. We are the only planet with solid ground, breathable air, liquid water, and a safe atmosphere, and we have yet to find a planet that could sustain our life as we know it todayⁱ. There is a strong leaning into the power of these two sources, scripture and science, together. Scientifically we are living on the only planet designed for us, and it is all because of the intricate detail God had in the making of our planet. Our planet is so unique, and it is a testament to what God has done for us. Reread the passage of Genesis 1:1-25 after sharing these facts from NASA about how intentionally constructed our planet is.

But this is not the end to the creation story. Introduce the next section of the passage here: Genesis 1:26 "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground." Commonly, the focus on Genesis 26 is how amazing it is that God created mankind in his image (it is). But today the focus is on the part after that. God states in the creation of man that man has been given dominion over creation. We have been given the *responsibility* to watch over creation. That is a powerful idea, let people sit with it. The same creation that was so carefully designed with seasons, livable temperatures, dry land, and drinkable waterⁱ all so that we could live here is the same creation that God instructed us upon our creation to take care of. It is powerful and also shows that God had so much love and faith in

his beautifully designed world that he entrusted it to us to take care of. This is the main point of the lesson for the week here, to get people thinking with awe and wonder about how amazing it is that our planet can sustain us, and that we are its guardians all in the name of the Lord.

This week's lesson is important for beginning the discussion about climate migration because it answers the question "why should we care". The directive that as Christians we are to be stewards of the earth, isn't a reprimand, but rather a chance to revisit and appreciate on a deeper level how detailed the nature of our world is from the lens that it was all God's design for us. It should inspire a sense of awe in how every detail has been made so that we can survive, which can in turn spur a want and responsibility to care for it.

This week's lesson plan is about a newfound admiration for the planet that we live on and that it has been placed in our care. The challenge to end the lesson on this week is to ask people to find one aspect of God's natural world that speaks to them personally and thank God for it each day.

Week 2: Our Planet

This week's lesson plan should start with revisiting the intricate and unique properties of earth that make it able to sustain human life, and the promise of Genesis 1:26 in which God gives people stewardship over the earth and all of its living creatures. With this idea fresh in mind, it is time to steer towards the main idea of this week which is the impact to our planet and to us when it's not properly cared for. Start off with reading Psalm 65:9-13. This passage is written by David who is singing praises to God for the world he has created and provided. It's beautiful. It's paradise. It's the world as it should be. This is a land of plenty and where nature and man thrive. But this kind of goodness with nature is only found when we practice creation care, when we nurture the earth that God has given to provide for us. As God loves us, we demonstrate our love for Him by being stewards of what he has given us. It is upsetting to him when we do not show proper care for the uniquely created world that he gave us to live in.

There is a passage in Jeremiah which describes how the Lord feels when the earth he gave us is not properly looked after. Read Jeremiah 2:5-7, and really emphasize verse seven where the Lord says "I brought you into a fertile land to eat its fruit and rich produce. But you came and defiled my land and made my inheritance detestable." God is saying here that he has given the Israelites a good land, promised land, but by their actions and neglect of stewardship it is no longer sacred or cared for. Now the whole chapter details other grievances God has with the Israelites in that moment for their behavior, but he chooses here to include how they have treated the land he has given them. They have clearly not taken care of it and now it has been *defiled*. These are the same lands that David talked about being so beautiful and thanked God for

providing for his people. Instead of full streams and blessed crops of abundance, Jeremiah points out that God is distraught that the land has not been cared for.

Jeremiah clearly states that it breaks God's heart to see the planet he designed especially for us to be in a state of neglect. It puts us in danger too. Now ask people if they have ever been impacted by a natural disaster. There is no need to have actual hands raised, it is a rhetorical question to get people thinking. One of the effects from a lack of care of our planet is an increase in the frequency and severity of natural disasters. One example of this is the rise in uninhabitable temperatures. Currently we are on track to reach a rise in global temperature of at least 1.5°C which "at this temperature, around 15 per cent of the population would be exposed to deadly heatwaves at least every five years – that's 1.3 billion people, rising to 3.3 billion people at 2°C"ⁱⁱ. That is just one of the many effects that this current state will bring, including more frequent natural disasters which will also become more severe in nature. Jeremiah clearly states that it breaks God's heart to see the planet he designed especially for us to be in a state of neglect. But this state also hurts us too. God has put us in charge of his planet and as his followers it is our job to practice earthly stewardship, now more than ever.

The importance of this week's lesson plan is to provide understanding of the current state of the earth and how God is grieved when the earth he designed for us is not taken care of. The idea is to build on the first lesson by sharing facts and data to demonstrate that our call to care for creation is becoming very time sensitive. With this in mind, the challenge of the week is to try and reuse plastic water bottles this week instead of throwing them away after one use.

Week 3: God's People in Trouble

This week's lesson should start off as usual recapping what has been discussed the past two weeks. First, how God has created this world and given it to us with the charge to take care of it, and second, God's view of neglect and how our planet is in need of us now to renew our commitment to creation care.

This week is a revisit of God's second greatest command. Obviously, the first is love the Lord your God with all your heart soul and mind. Today we will focus on the one that follows "Love your neighbor as yourself". Read Matthew 22:37-40. This short little passage makes a very powerful point. Before Jesus states the command, he qualifies it by saying "And the second is like it"-meaning the first. Think about what that means. The second commandment is like the first. Yes, it is about love, but it is *also* about how to love God. What Jesus said here was that by practicing the second commandment we are also practicing the first. By showing love to others, we also show love to God.

By now you are probably asking what this has to do with creation care? Part of creation care includes caring for those who have been impacted by natural disasters and the current state of the planet. An example of this is the country of Vanuatu. This tiny tropical island of just over 300,000 residents was recently determined to be the "most at-risk country for natural disasters worldwide"ⁱⁱⁱ. At the bottom of this summary is a link to a video of a 9-year-old in Vanuatu^{iv}. The video is a few years old now, but the situation detailed is still the same. After playing the video, point out one of Vanuatu's biggest concerns right now is the ability to rebuild after cyclones like the one mentioned in the video. The country is trying to offer micro-insurance to help people recover, but it is not a perfect solution as it will cost millions of dollars, which is

millions of dollars a developing nation like Vanuatu does not have. This nine-year-old is just one of the millions of people who are being negatively affected by the current state of our planet. Even though these people are on an island nation which can feel far away from here, they are still our neighbors on this earth, and in helping to love our planet we must also think about how to love them as well. How do we as a church show love to the nine-year-old whose idea of wealth is being able to have stable access to food?

The importance of this week's lesson is to help people understand that a key part of creation care is to care for those who have been affected negatively by natural disasters. Jesus said to love our neighbor, and by how he phrased it he was telling us that it was also how we love God. Globally, we are all neighbors, and this call was to love everyone, especially those who are in need. This week's lesson plan is a key steppingstone in helping people empathize with those severely impacted by our earth's position, before we continue building on the importance of helping people in the next week. The first step is for people to see what is happening and be challenged to love their neighbor by taking action to help. This week's lesson plan ends with the challenge to find a website or organization that is helping developing countries rebuild and donate. There is a link to a specific organization supporting Vanuatu below.

Vanuatu Video Link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qersZxgMQcQ>

Vanuatu Donation Link:

<https://www.care.org.au/country/vanuatu/>

Week 4: Looking for the Promised Land

We are now past the halfway point in the lesson series. At the start of this lesson take time to check in with people about how the weekly challenges are going, and if they have enjoyed them. Quickly recap the previous lessons, especially about how an important part of creation care is caring for those who are negatively impacted by natural disasters and the current state our planet.

Last week we talked about loving those who are trying to rebuild where they currently reside. Today's lesson will focus on the people who are faced with the reality of having to leave home and find somewhere else to live because they cannot survive where they are now. They have been called to move. Read Genesis 12:1-3, which also states a call to move. This is for Abram (Abraham) and Sarai (Sarah). They were God's chosen people whom he urged to leave for greater prospects. But while they were told this by the Lord, that did not discount the anxiety and danger they experienced and felt on their journey. Abraham fears for his life in Genesis 20. Read Genesis 20:1-18. The focus of this passage is verse 11 where Abraham expresses a fear that he will be killed if he refers to Sarah as his wife. It causes him to make what in our modern day seems like a bizarre decision, but it demonstrates how real Abraham's fear must have been in this completely unfamiliar land to feel he needed to lie to save his life. God defends Abraham and Sarah which shows further that his fears were probably justified.

Currently, one third of migrants worldwide are Christiansⁱⁱ. Like us they are made in God's image, and they too share our concern for creation care. And as part of God's creation, part of our job is to care for them as well. Like Abraham and Sarah, these are people who are undergoing dangerous journeys to new and unfamiliar lands in search of a better life. They are

our brothers and sisters in Christ, in search of the same promise given to Abraham and Sarah by God, that they will be cared for and have hope of prosperity and a better life. As we learned last week, Jesus calls us to love our neighbors; and this week our neighbor is the modern-day Abrahams and Sarahs who are looking for a better life. Whether they are moving across the country or to a new nation, they are sharing the same hopes and dreams and fears that Abraham and Sarah expressed on their journey.

The importance of this week's lesson is to create empathy for migrants given the fear and anxiety they often feel when moving. Just like the fear Abraham felt when he was traveling with Sarah in lands with powerful people, they were worried about how they would be received while looking for a better life. The goal of this lesson is to heighten awareness of the struggles felt by people on the move from natural disasters. The challenge of the week is to spend 10-15 minutes imagining what it would be like if you were forced to move from your home to a place completely foreign to your way of life and journal the emotions you would feel. How do you think that today's migrants may feel similarly?

Week 5: Women's World

The start of this lesson can begin with a recap of last week. Ask people if they did the journal challenge and if it resulted in any discoveries or new understandings about the anxiety felt by people on the move from natural disasters. Today's lesson is one that continues the idea of anxiety and dangers, but we will specifically focus on the different impact felt by women in natural disasters.

Today we will discuss the story of Ruth. Ruth is the daughter-in-law of Naomi, who lost both her husband and sons unexpectedly. Instead of going back to her own people, Ruth insists on staying with Naomi as they travel back to her homeland. Read Ruth 2:1-23. As unmarried women, Ruth and Naomi had no protection or claims to property when they return to Naomi's homeland. Ruth has to provide for them and the only way she can do so is by asking if she may harvest some from the fields of Boaz. It's made clear throughout this passage that Ruth is lucky to have found favor with Boaz, because both he and Naomi emphasize the fact that with Boaz, Ruth has protection from men that she would not have elsewhere. Ruth is a strong and gracious character, choosing to stay with Naomi instead of leaving and trying to find another husband. But her story also shows a glimpse of what it was like to be a woman in biblical times. Had she not found favor with Boaz it is implied that she would have faced serious dangers in trying to provide and care for herself and Naomi.

The dangers faced by Ruth parallel that of women today in areas affected by natural disasters. As it stands currently, in the event of a natural disaster "women are 14 times more likely to die than men"^{iv}. This can result from anything from family responsibility to social standing to lack of access to education. Another risk is that of gender-based violence, meaning

that there is an increase of attacks towards women after a natural disaster. After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, “the rate of GBV [Gender based violence] experienced by women more than tripled, with many of them living in temporary shelters”^v. These atrocities and dangers are risks that women have had to navigate around for centuries. Some like Ruth may get lucky, but many do not and can experience hostile and dangerous work environments and living situations while trying to survive. There are women like this all over the world, and part of our earthly stewardship and creative care must include protecting this group which is especially vulnerable to natural disasters. As we work to build up the earth, we must also build up people as well.

The importance of this lesson is conveying the concept that women are at a greater risk of danger from the effects of natural disasters. The story of Ruth is used to show that this has always been a problem for women, especially in developing countries where they may not have the same rights and education we value here in Malibu. Ruth was able to provide for her and Naomi because of her favor with Boaz, but current statistics shed light on the vulnerable nature of women trying to survive within strained circumstances. This week’s challenge is to take the quiz on Ally Global Foundation asking, “how much do you know about human trafficking?” When the quiz is completed, an anonymous donor will donate \$2.00 to programs preventing human trafficking.

Ally Quiz:

<https://ally.org/quiz>

Week 6: Our Planet Our People

This is the final lesson of our journey in learning about creation care. We have covered so much material over the weeks, starting with the wonder of creation and our responsibility to it. Along the way we discussed the human aspect of creation care, and how the current state of the earth affects our brothers and sisters in Christ all over the world who are not equipped to handle the consequences of natural disasters. Today we discuss our future.

In his letter to the Romans, Paul talks about suffering, but he also speaks to not lose hope and to look to the glory ahead. Read Romans 8:18-30. Paul speaks not only for the liberation of Christians but also for all of creation from the “bondage and decay” it has suffered under up until Christ’s return. Paul says that creation is waiting for the children of God to liberate it. Are we not children of God called to care for his creation? Paul shows here hope for a future where God will come again. He is coming, and when He does, we will find salvation and the earth will also be freed from the disasters it has faced. But until that point comes, we are to take action now and show love to His people and our planet, that when He returns, we may share in the coming goodness he will bring. We are “called according to his purpose” in verse 28, and part of God’s purpose for us here is to be stewards of the wonderful, cosmically unique earth that he has entrusted to our care. One of the best ways that we can practice this is by looking out for his people who are struggling with the consequences of the bondage and decay the earth is currently under. We are called as stewards of his creation, brothers and sisters in Christ, and “global neighbors” to care for the 9-year-olds in Vanuatu, for the modern-day Abrahams and Sarahs forced to flee their homelands, for the modern Ruths and Naomis who have no one looking out for them. These are the neighbors we have been called to love; these are the people we must lift up as we practice creation care. Of all the planets in our solar system, we have found ourselves

on the only one capable of holding human life. Both the intricately designed planet and its people are living, breathing, examples of the miracle of the creation story all the way back in Genesis 1. God deemed that each and every aspect of his creation was good, and we were put on this planet to watch over. Even if we have failed at some times and in some ways, we still have time to practice good earthly stewardship and creation care by protecting our planet and the people most vulnerable to its condition. End with a reading of Matthew 25:31-40 as Jesus speaks to his disciples.

The importance of this week's lesson is to give people hope as Paul describes how Jesus is coming back and he will fix the sins cast on his creation. This does not mean we can be passive in creation care as we wait for him to return. Instead, we must take this found empathy for those suffering from natural disasters and build them up and welcome them as they flee destruction. It is our calling as Christians to care for all creation and a key part of that is caring for people. The goal of this lesson is to end the series on a note of hope, a call to action, and encourage the congregation to be creation care enthusiasts. The challenge of the week is to continue practicing creation care and be on the lookout to care for "the least of these brothers and sisters" in Jesus who are hurting from the earth's current state.

ⁱ NASA. "Nine Reasons We're Grateful to Live on Earth." Last modified April 21, 2020. Accessed December 10, 2022. <https://www.nasa.gov/feature/goddard/2020/9-reasons-we-re-grateful-to-live-on-earth>

ⁱⁱ Gaia Vince. *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World*. New York: Flatiron Books, 2022.

ⁱⁱⁱ "Vanuatu," International Organization for Migration, accessed September 1, 2022, <https://www.iom.int/countries/vanuatu>.

^{iv} UNICEF, "What a 9-year-old in Vanuatu can tell us about climate change | UNICEF," published December 11, 2015, video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qersZxgMQcQ&t=100s>.

^v Castiglioni, Martina. "3 Ways in Which Gender Equality Interlinks with Climate Migration as an Adaptation Strategy." International Organization for Migration, accessed December 11, 2022.

Week 1 - Israel's Exodus from Egypt

My first lesson plan will be a summary of the story of Israel in the book Exodus. This lesson is the prime example of how God's people were once the exploited men and women of an oppressive force. God came down to the slaves of Egypt and brought them out of their captivity and delivered them to the promised land. This deliverance from Egypt and migrant status of the Israelites is reminisced upon several other times in the bible, bringing newer generations to remember their roots in that they were once aliens in a foreign land. Throughout the old and new testament, and in recent history, the Jewish people had seen many oppressors and unwilling displacement by imperialistic and imposing forces, pushing from their homes and families to new land.

This lesson is an ideal starting point for the discussion of climate migration in a biblical context and from a christian perspective. This is a lesson all christians, even younger age groups, are familiar with. Starting from a familiar place will allow these young people to have a better grasp on the story as a base, and will therefore allow them to expand their perspective beyond what they've heard before, ensuring that they will process the intent and message of this story more deeply. This age group benefits from this perspective not only because it gets them to interact with stories from the bible in a more relatable format, but it exposes them to a more modern interpretation that correlates directly to current cultural and social issues. Looking at the events of Exodus within this context will help these students to form a more personal association to the immigrants in their community, and eventually even help them develop their own identity related to the many difficulties and realities of what it means to be an immigrant in the modern world.

Lesson Plan Template

<p>Topic/Theme/Unit:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Israel's Exodus from Egypt</p>	<p>Purpose(s):</p> <p>What do I want my students to learn? <i>Students will view the story of Exodus through the lens of immigration</i></p> <p>Why do they need to learn this? <i>To understand the connection between the early Israelites and modern Climate Migrants. Acknowledging our shared history with migration will help them to have more empathy to those facing the difficult reality today.</i></p> <p>How will I know if my students have learned this? <i>Students will share examples of why the Israelites had to migrate then, why people migrate now, and where both these groups had to move to. By doing this they will better understand how migration is part of the christian story and foundational identity.</i></p>	<p>Materials/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>projected images</i> • <i>non-biblical text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2014/jul/09/six-real-life-stories-of-migration • <i>visual aid options</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.ecosia.org/images?size=wallpaper&q=immigrants%20in%20britain# • <i>bible</i> • <i>student journals</i> • <i>pencils/pens</i>
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Essential Questions:

What can we learn from Exodus that can be applied to modern immigration stories? How is this biblical story related to people in similar situations now? What role do/can/should we play in this story, when considered in a modern context?

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

"I DO IT"

- Teacher will display visual aids to provide imagery for the lesson topic
- Teacher *can* use excerpts supplemental non-biblical text to further support lesson purposes, or to help only themselves have a stronger backgrounds on the lesson topic
- Teacher will introduce the *anonymous* story from The Guardian beginning with "I have had the most incredible journey of escape", including supporting visual aid.
 - This story is of a woman escaping an abusive father in Istanbul and starting a life in Birmingham, England.
- Teacher will read excerpts from Exodus explaining both the conditions faced by the Israelites while in Egypt and how God called them to remember their deliverance and to show compassion to others in their shoes, no matter where they're from.

- It connects to the Exodus story because it is of an incredibly vulnerable person (woman, immigrant, child) coming to a land that holds the promise of opportunity for a better life.

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

"WE DO IT"

- Teacher will ask students the tragedies they imagine the Israelites would have experienced before being led out of Egypt.
- Teacher will ask what events/circumstances immigrants of today could/are fleeing, both those we see in the news and those that may be more obscure to outsiders (*ex: climate change affecting harvest economies/societies*)
 - (see below: 1)
- Teacher will ask what role we, either in a broad context as US citizens or ourselves individually, have to play in this story
 - (see below: 2)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

"YOU DO IT TOGETHER"

1. students will talk in smaller groups the different factors they feel would cause people to seek refuge in a developed country such as the US or UK
2. students will talk in smaller groups on what they feel a country can do to change to be more hospitable to immigrants seeking refuge

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

"YOU DO IT ALONE"

- Teacher will ask students to consider how our actions and influence in our community affects other's views of immigrants and what we can do to change how we see and/or help others to cause a positive chain reaction around us.
 - *this "chain reaction" challenge would be great for kids going to malibu high school because it is such a mix of students from very affluent kids to the kids of the many migrant workers in malibu*

Week 2 - story of Ruth and Naomi

My next lesson will be based on the story of Ruth and Naomi. This story focuses on a woman obligated to leave home due to a severe drought. She has the choice to return home to her family, but instead chooses to remain with her mother-in-law as an act of sacrificing comfort and safety to ensure the survival and stability of another. Ruth must face being a stranger in a new land, abandoning her own customs to take on Naomi's culture. Ruth must also work to support herself and Naomi without any male counterpart. Ruth is eventually shown grace and favor by Boaz, permitting her to harvest from her field and eventually sharing their life together. Were it not for Ruth's bravery and sacrifice on behalf of Naomi, the two of them would have faced a very different fate, possibly which could have ended in death of Naomi, and the disgrace of Ruth from her own family once returning home then a single woman.

This second lesson will look less broadly at the idea of immigrants, as the previous week did, and more at individual experiences that persist through the broader realities of immigration. This age group is old enough to understand the issue of sexism among men and women in the modern context, but not yet old enough to have been exposed to the full realities of it, and hopefully not old enough to have experienced the more detrimental and systemic forms of these prejudices. Exposing this age group to the struggles many women face through the story of Ruth should spark a connection for them that what happened then is still happening now, just in a less publicized and apparent way. The issues of climate change are multifaceted and very complex experienced in a multitude of ways. Broaching the idea that climate effects are experienced more harshly by minority groups is important early on in this discussion to better foster student's empathy and understanding of other's experiences that may be vastly different from their own.

Lesson Plan Template

<p>Topic/Theme/Unit:</p> <p><i>story of Ruth and Naomi</i></p>	<p>Purpose(s):</p> <p><u>What do I want my students to learn?</u> <i>Students will learn the story of Ruth through the lens of immigration with emphasis placed on the roles of women and caregivers in and modern context</i></p> <p><u>Why do they need to learn this?</u> <i>To develop a deeper understanding of the experience of migrants. Building off the previous lesson based on the general Israelite population, this lesson will focus even more on those at greater disadvantage in times of crisis, namely minorities and especially women.</i></p> <p><u>How will I know if my students have learned this?</u> <i>Students' conversations will help them to process their thoughts and opinions. Sharing their thoughts will lead to better conversation around the subject and therefore a broader vocabulary to help them grapple with the issues of biases and disadvantages faced by so many already in threatening situations.</i></p>	<p>Materials/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>projected images</i> • <i>non-biblical text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2016/04/11/the-sacrifices-of-an-immigrant-caregiver • <i>video aid</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a7vRm8JV1z0 (first 3 min) • <i>bible</i> • <i>student journals</i> • <i>pencils/pens</i>
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Essential Questions:

What does the story of Ruth and Naomi tell us of the sacrifices of modern immigrants? To what extent does the feminine boundaries of this story affect the events and outcome of their lives? What role does culture play in this story and how does it resemble current host and minority cultures of immigrant settings?

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

“I DO IT”

- Teacher will share first three minutes of video on inhospitable conditions for female caregivers/nannies in Canada
- Teacher *can* use excerpts supplemental non-biblical text to further support lesson purpose
- Teacher will read excerpts from Ruth to/with the class with emphasis on portions pertaining to cultural conversion, struggle in foreign lands, female disadvantage, and personal sacrifice for others benefit and well being

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

“WE DO IT”

- Teacher will discuss with the class different examples from the story that show the ways in which Ruth either sacrificed her own comfort/safety for Naomi or how Ruth and Naomi were both at a great disadvantage in this situation based on their gender.
 - Teacher will ask students to form 3-4 person groups and discuss what groups in today's immigration system are at greater disadvantage than others (*ex: children detained at the US/Mexico border*)
- (see below: 1)
- Teachers will ask students to imagine themselves in the shoes of a female immigrant sacrificing her comfort and safety for the wellbeing of her family. Then the teacher will ask what way they feel others could offer aid and support to help female immigrants feel safer and more welcome when coming to foreign lands and cultures for better opportunity.

○ (see below: 2)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

“YOU DO IT TOGETHER”

1. students share their thoughts on what could put someone at an even greater disadvantage than their fellow migrants, and how are immigrants as a whole at greater safety and security risks than citizens of host countries
2. students will offer ideas on what governments and communities could be doing to help migrants find fair work and good housing, ideally they will begin to think about ways they can be more inclusive to the immigrant children, or children of immigrants, their age that they may interact with daily, or could find ways to volunteer and help those their age in their community they don't normally interact with.

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

“YOU DO IT ALONE”

- Teachers will ask students to be mindful in the coming week and make a point to observe the immigrant people around them or recent descendants of immigrants, in their daily lives.
- Teacher will ask students to write down their observations and what their initial reactions to these people were, and how they interacted with them, if at all
 - *The goal of this exercise will be to inspire mindfulness in young students of the lives of people around them and the role they play in their community. Hopefully this will lend itself to fostering discussions of the global community in later lessons for this course.*

Week 3 - Experience of the Disciples

The third week's lesson will look at the example of the disciples and their willingness to follow Jesus into new lands, relying only on the act of hospitality by strangers to house and feed them most days and nights of their journeys. Hospitality was an important virtue fostered by the first century Jewish community. The infamous Hebrews 13:2 refers back to the Israelites exodus from Egypt, and calls upon the more fortunate to take in and host strangers in foreign lands without any social nets to aid their travels and establish themselves in the new land; take in and host the

wearry traveler, for “by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it”. Care for the poor, sick, hungry, and generally helpless was a pillar of Jewish faith and practice in Jesus’ time. God calls on his people to care for underrepresented and marginalized people, namely widows, children, and foreigners. These people are at the mercy of others to survive in the culture of the day, and without God’s people stepping in to aid them, they are destitute and victims to inhumane living conditions.

The importance of this lesson is to help this age group to better understand the reality of the lives of the disciples in their day-to-day life. Focusing on their experiences and their living situations will help students to see that the very American evangelical view of disciples and their preaching is over glamorized and fantasized. In actuality, the disciples were often foreigners in new lands relying on the kindness and generosity of strangers to ensure their survival and safety in each new place they went to spread the word of god. In viewing these biblical players more like immigrants and less like celebrities, students will connect similarities between them and the efforts being made by modern immigrants. In addition to the importance of looking at the disciples experience, discussing and comparing the cultures of now and then and that the values of hospitality and generosity are at staggeringly different levels will work to show students their roles in society and culture and how they can work to display Christian values more strongly than the community they may be surrounded or influenced by.

Lesson Plan Template

<p>Topic/Theme/Unit:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Experience of the Disciples</p>	<p>Purpose(s):</p> <p><u>What do I want my students to learn?</u> <i>Students will begin to associate the experience of disciples with immigration similarities and to compare the culture of hospitality in 1st century Israel to modern day developed country cultures.</i></p> <p><u>Why do they need to learn this?</u> <i>Viewing the experiences of Jesus' disciples through a more mundane and grounded lens will help students to connect to modern immigrant experiences and to realize how God provides for those in times of struggle and difficulty to spread his influence across cultures even more so than in lives of success and opportunity. Understanding the virtue of hospitality promoted in 1st century Jewish culture will provide students with examples and context for how they can help immigrants in their own way, more than our current culture fosters and encourages</i></p> <p><u>How will I know if my students have learned this?</u> <i>Students will share their thoughts on how they think life was for the disciples now knowing the conditions they faced every town they came to. Students will compare these experiences to what they think immigrants face when coming to a new country hoping for safety and compassion from its citizens .</i></p>	<p>Materials/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>projected images</i> ● <i>non-biblical text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://diversity.utexas.edu/2017/06/04/coming-to-america-students-and-faculty-share-their-american-immigration-stories/ <i>(any story from here would work)</i> ● <i>bible</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Hebrews 13:2 ○ Mathew 16:24 ● <i>student journals</i> ● <i>pencils/pens</i>
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Essential Questions:

At the beginning of the lesson have the students think of how they think life was like for disciples. What stories have they heard of their travels, and share them out if they can. Then, after being presented with the materials, ask them to compare what they think now to what they have been told before and how those narratives differ?

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

“I DO IT”

- Teacher will first ask students what they think it was like to be one of the 12 disciples of Jesus.
 - (see below: 1)
- Teacher will then read Hebrews 13:2 and explain the importance of hospitality in 1st century Jewish culture.
- Teacher will next explain how Disciples were dependent on this practice of hospitality to sustain their work traveling from town to town and committing to being perpetual strangers in foreign lands

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

“WE DO IT”

- Teacher will finally pass out accounts from Immigrants who came to the US from all over and what their experience has been since arriving here.
 - (see below: 2)
- After talking in small groups, students will share what they discussed and compare the stories they were given to the other groups
- Teacher will lead the class discussion to guide students to talking about how the Disciples were like Immigrants and therefore how important it is that we practice hospitality in our daily lives to everyone, in small and great ways
 - (see below: 3)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING**“YOU DO IT TOGETHER”**

1. Students will share our thoughts of what they thought it was like for the Disciples in their travels and daily lives in foreign towns with no relatives or friends there already
2. Prior to the small group discussion, students will discuss in small groups the story of the immigrant they were given. What surprised them and/or what didn't about the experience, and how they think this relates to the Disciples?

INDEPENDENT LEARNING**“YOU DO IT ALONE”**

- Students will journal to compare their thoughts from before their lesson to what they think now of the experience of the disciples.
 - *the goal of this journal is to show the students that their perceptions of bible stories may be through subjective lenses that glamorize the experience of Christians rather than showing the sacrifice and risk they willingly stepped into to spread the word of God and grow the body of Christ*

Week 4 - Understanding and Upholding “Dominion”

The lesson of week four will be discussing the interpretation and boundaries of Dominion. In Genesis, God gives Adam and Eve dominion over all living things. Some have chosen to interpret this as the privilege and the right to exploit and pilfer away the resources of this earth. However, when we consider this verse along with other human characteristics in Genesis, for example being made in the image of God, the implied meaning of Dominion takes on a new meaning. If we are not only made in God's image, but also called to act in a way that brings glory to his good will and grace, then shouldn't we take it upon ourselves to protect and uphold the wellbeing and prosperity of all of God's creation, and not just the human part of it.

This lesson must be crafted with a very specific point in mind. When considering 'Dominion', it is easy to go right into discussing and defending the care and protection of all things by using wording that really only supports non-human creation, but what truly needs to be emphasized this week is the care and protection of human beings by other/fellow human beings. The power dynamic we foster in the US is that there is a finite source of human worth. People's

drive for prosperity combined with hierarchy of power in this world drives us to work against each other and place others below us in order to reach peripheral social/cultural/economic status. When people truly grasp the concept of shared humanity and the human condition we then see God's creation as fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). When we work to support and raise up one another we are taking hold of our Dominion as God had intended, not just to care for those subordinate to us, but to lift up those equal to us in our human nature.

Lesson Plan Template		
Understanding & Upholding Dominion	<p>Topic/Theme/Unit:</p> <p>Purpose(s):</p> <p>What do I want my students to learn? <i>Students will learn to interpret Dominion as a way of caring for and protecting all living things, especially fellow humans.</i></p> <p>Why do they need to learn this? <i>Knowing that we as humans are called to care for God's creation is more compelling than just a theoretical responsibility. Also, seeing the wellbeing of others as within our protection gives deeper reason to caring for and looking out for others.</i></p> <p>How will I know if my students have learned this? <i>Students will propose actions they can take to better care of their environment and encourage the same actions in others. They will also discuss ways they can be more aware of and defend marginalized people within and beyond their communities.</i></p>	<p>Materials/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • projected images • non-biblical text <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sUZqD6swuCI • Bible <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Psalm 139:14 ○ Genesis 1:26 • student journals • pencils/pens
<p>Essential Questions: <i>As christians, do we have a God-given responsibility to care for the Earth and those dependent on its well-being? How can we see ourselves not just as caretakers of God's creation, but within and amongst God's creation, learning to care for one another?</i></p>		

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION	"I DO IT"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher will show provided video regarding christians caring for the environment • Teacher will project the images from the material resources • Teacher will read Psalm 139:14 and Genesis 1:26 	
GUIDED INSTRUCTION	"WE DO IT"

- Teacher will ask students to offer ideas of what they think dominion means
 - (see below: 1)
- Teacher will ask students to break into smaller groups and to answer the question “*Do we, as christians, have a God-given responsibility to care for the Earth and those dependent on it?*”
 - (see below: 2)
- Students will rejoin the teacher and share their group answers.
- Teacher will then ask “*Does caring for God’s creation include taking care of fellow humans around the world. If so, how can we do this /or/ how can we do it better than we do now?*”
 - (see below: 3)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING “YOU DO IT TOGETHER”

1. Students will discuss in small groups what they think dominion means and why humans are entrusted by god with this responsibility
2. Students will share whether or not they believe we should care for the earth and its future wellbeing, and if so why?
3. Students will think of ideas how they can care for one another in a way that shows their responsibility to dominion. How does America and the church do this now and how can we do this better?

INDEPENDENT LEARNING “YOU DO IT ALONE”

- At the end of class, students will journal their ideas about how they can make a point of seeking the wellbeing of others.
- Also ways they can begin habits in their families that take better care of the earth and natural environment
 - *This journal entry is intended to get the students to see care for the environment as a humanitarian obligation that is actually aligned with the christian mission and not just a stand-alone modern activism trend.*

Week 5 - The Advent Story

The birth story of Jesus is a very interesting example of migration and foreigner experiences from the bible. The events surrounding Jesus’ birth involve immigrating to another land at demand of the government, facing the great issue of having no place to stay or anyone to offer aid in a foreign city, traveling at a most inopportune time of life, and having no security in one’s day to day life. Essentially, Jesus came into this world as a child of parents who had no reassurance from those around them that they would be welcome or even safe to stay in the place they sought refuge in. Mary, Joseph, and baby Jesus were totally helpless and at the will of the generosity and hospitality of strangers; strangers who saw the value in offering items of value and shelter to those in desperate need.

When we humble ourselves, we serve others; this is exemplified in the act of Jesus coming down to earth and therefore into our suffering with us. Since he is perfect, the world did not taint him or make less worthy, instead He gave us more hope and elevated our own possibilities in life. Now, in a modern sense, though we cannot see ourselves anywhere near as perfect and deserving as Christ, we can see that we have privilege compared to many, therefore when we seek to serve and commune amongst strangers, we are giving them hope and opportunity as Jesus once gave us also. This connection between what Christ once did for us and what we now must do for others is so important at this age because it is often hard to see the reward for stepping outside our own comfort zone to aid in the well being, care, and protection of others. Youth is a very selfish time in life, I say this not as a way to place blame, but more to just state things as they are. The sooner one learns to look beyond themselves and seek to serve others, the sooner they will understand their value in life and to those around them.

Lesson Plan Template

<p>Topic/Theme/Unit:</p> <p><i>The Advent Story</i></p>	<p>Purpose(s):</p> <p><u>What do I want my students to learn?</u> <i>How Jesus serves as the role model for meeting others in their misfortune, lowering ourselves to serve them, and therefore raising the hope and prosperity of everyone's future</i></p> <p><u>Why do they need to learn this?</u> <i>Understanding why we as christians must seek to serve others and how to go about this is important from a young age so that they may grow and strengthen their ability and likelihood to help others throughout their whole lives</i></p> <p><u>How will I know if my students have learned this?</u> <i>Students will share ways they could go out of their way to volunteer in their community along with how they can help others in their day to day lives in small ways.</i></p>	<p>Materials/Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <i>projected images</i> ● <i>video aid</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9Trdafp83U (start to 9:03, then skip to 10:10, from there to the end) ● <i>visual aid</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://docs.google.com/document/d/1B0QwFnzJOHg_vKawgV8S-9HVgLhOx8mfdOfUDoyhLMO/edit ● <i>Bible</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Luke 2:4-7</i> ○ <i>Matthew 2:13-15</i> ● <i>student journals</i> ● <i>pencils/pens</i>
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Essential Questions:

What can we learn from the Advent story about caring for others in and beyond our community? How can we use the story of Jesus coming to earth to find meaning in our actions to help and support others? What does it look like to lower ourselves in order to raise up those in need of help, resources, and protection? Why is it important to see Jesus as a foreigner who came to us on earth to lower himself and serve us, rather than an affluent king who can give us all we need to prosper and raise ourselves up in the world?

FOCUSED INSTRUCTION

“I DO IT”

- Teacher play the provided video from start to 9:03, then skip to 10:10 and play to the end
- Teacher will read from the bible [Luke 2:4-7](#) then [Mathew 2:13-15](#)
- After section (A) below, Teacher will discuss ways the church has historically talked about the birth of christ, emphasizing the identity of Jesus from a western context (ex:jesus is a glorious savior, not a foreign servant)
- Teacher will have students share their group discussions with the class, then to section (B)

GUIDED INSTRUCTION

“WE DO IT”

- (A) Teacher will break students into smaller groups for discussion
 - (see below: 1)
- (B) Teacher will again send students into small group discussion
 - (see below: 2)
- After small group discussion, Teacher will ask students what it would mean for the church to describe Jesus more as an immigrant than as the King of Heaven.
 - (see below: 3)

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING

“YOU DO IT TOGETHER”

1. Students discuss what they think the events leading up to and after the birth of Jesus would have been like and how they shape our view of Christ in human form
2. Students will then discuss how their view of Jesus's birth and social standing in the world may be influenced by their cultural/social influences

3. Students will share as a whole class how they think the church might change in action and identity if Jesus was seen more as an immigrant

INDEPENDENT LEARNING

“YOU DO IT ALONE”

- Students will journal just about how, now after this lesson, if they think their perspective of immigrants as a whole has changed and if so, how it will change their views of those in their community, on social media, in political propaganda, etc...

Week 6 - a Call to Love

Love and all the ways we express it is one of, if not simply, the most important concepts in the Bible, old and new testament. Love your neighbor, love the sick and destitute, love your enemy, love your brothers and sisters in the church, and of course love God. Love is the reason God created man, the reason he delivered us from evil, and even the reason we face difficulties and opposition; all because God loves us and wants to see us prosper and succeed in our life on earth. We are called to show others the love God has for us by showing love to all people and things around us. To know love is to know God, therefore sharing and showing love to all people and things is to share and bring God to all people and things. The responsibility to show love is the only argument we need to show hospitality and care to immigrants and the earth. All God's creations are not a means to and ends, they have in themselves intrinsic value; essentially they have value because they belong to God, and there need not be any other reason for their value. Recognizing this value in all things is essential to caring for the earth and others. God cares for the sick and hungry because they do not have the worldly strength and privilege to fight and rise up on their own, we should help them to do so because God does this also. If God could send his own son into this fallen world to save us who have gone so astray, how could we not act in his image to help those suffering from the consequences of this sin in this world.

This call to love is not generic, but specifically to the type of love we see from God. Even though we cannot achieve the same level of unconditional and perfect love as God, it does not mean we should not strive to reach for this goal. We are imperfect humans, and there is no hope to change that but through Christ we have hope that we may be redeemed. Sacrificial love does not have one definition or set of boundaries, but it is expansive and dynamic for each person. We can sacrifice in small and great ways for one another, and this is what we should strive to do unanimously. Without acceptance of our call to Agape love, we cannot say that we truly love all people as we love ourselves.

Lesson Plan Template		
<i>a Call to Love</i>	<p><u>Purpose(s):</u></p> <p><u>What do I want my students to learn?</u> <i>Love is the greatest, most inclusive, and most substantial concept in the bible. Love comes in many forms but often does not reach its full potential in people's actions today. Understanding the far reaches and ways love manifests in us is key to caring for the world around us.</i></p> <p><u>Why do they need to learn this?</u> <i>Most of what the Christian faith preaches finds its roots in the justice of love. Also consider that God is Love, therefore showing and sharing love is the greatest most effective way we can show the presence of God on earth.</i></p> <p><u>How will I know if my students have learned this?</u> <i>Students will interact as a class and in small groups to share ways love is shown and acted upon in unusual ways. Students will journal of ways they can be more loving to family, friends, strangers, and the environment.</i></p>	<p><u>Materials/Resources:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>projected images</i> • <i>non-biblical text</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ https://www.mentalfl oss.com/article/87681/how-man-who-bombed-oregon-became-honorary-citizen • <i>bible</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Colossians 3:12-14 ○ 1 Peter 4:8 • <i>student journals</i> • <i>pencils/pens</i>
<p><u>Essential Questions:</u> <i>How is love shown and taught throughout the bible? What actions can we take to show love in subtle and grand ways, all in our daily lives? Why is Love such an important concept and/or why must we keep making strides to love more fully and deeply all things around us?</i></p>		
FOCUSED INSTRUCTION		“I DO IT”

- Teacher will introduce the provided article on the WWII Oregon bomber-became-citizen to students
- After brief discussion Teacher will read the provided bible verses to students
- Teacher will connect how loving others can be shown in many ways, and this includes forgiveness on many levels
 - (see below: A)
- Teacher will explain the different type of love found, defined, and promoted in the bible
 - (see below: B)

GUIDED INSTRUCTION **“WE DO IT”**

- A. students will share how they feel about this story, share experience of forgiveness in their own lives, or maybe reasons they've found it hard to forgive others in the past
- B. students will give examples they think apply to the definitions provided by the teacher for each “type” of love
- Teacher will break students into smaller discussion groups

COLLABORATIVE LEARNING **“YOU DO IT TOGETHER”**

- Students will break into smaller groups to discuss what love would look like in the church or US if we applied the definitions of love in the bible, despite our socio-cultural-economic predispositions.
- Students will share ways they feel the church and then the US as a whole could do better to practice the virtues of love

INDEPENDENT LEARNING **“YOU DO IT ALONE”**

- Students will journal about ways they can show love to their community more often and deeply (strangers, family friends, environment)
- students will journal ways they can encourage loving others
- students will reflect on how the impact they think they will have by influencing others through their actions

Lesson #1

I noticed Falon avoiding gendered pronouns by repeating God's name throughout our talks. Because I do not believe any deity could be defined by human ideas of gender, I will do the same in this lesson plan. To keep things organized and easy to understand, I will assign a theme to each day, the first lesson's theme will be creation care.

The lesson will start by discussing the story of creation and God's intent for humans and the natural world. In Genesis one, we see God spending six days creating the natural world, and then creating the first human in one day. This reflects God's care for nature, as God spent much more time creating it than creating humans. Even before humans were even created, God calls creation good six times. This reflects God valuing creation and caring for it, as God has a great appreciation for it and creates it in great detail, as we can observe all around us.

Next, God places Adam in the Garden of Eden to "work it and take care of it," showing God's initial intent in creating a human was to take care of the Garden of Eden.¹ Next, God goes through each creature with Adam and allows him to name them. By making it a priority for Adam to name the animals, God shows God's care for animals. The emphasis on creation throughout the first few chapters of the Bible illustrates God's love for the natural world and demonstrates how we should take care of it.

A verse that is very important to read in context is Genesis 1:26. In the New International Version, God says God will make man to "Have dominion" over the natural world (the fish, cattle, birds, air).² On the other hand, in The Message, which is a translation that puts entire phrases into context, the translators chose to write that God makes man to be "responsible" for the natural world.³ While many modern-day churches in America adopt an attitude of dominion

over the Earth, it is important to reflect on God's true intent and purpose behind the creation of beautiful living and non-living things and how God would want God's people to interact with those things. Some questions to ask the class at this point would be: what would it mean for us as humans to dominate the earth, and what would it mean for us to be responsible for the earth? How can we take seriously the role of Earth's caretakers? Do Christians specifically have a unique calling to creation care?

Overall, the first lesson aims to introduce the idea of creation care while keeping the entire class focused on what the Bible says about it. As Falon has told us before, I aim to avoid using any scientific terms or any polarizing terms such as "The Climate Crisis." Because the students are signing up for a Bible Class, I aim to keep my focus on that and steer clear of trying to tackle huge and complex secular topics such as the causes and consequences of climate change. While inevitably I will have to speak on the implications of climate migration in the future, I try to limit the first lesson to a more manageable and familiar topic which is simply having respect and responsibility for our shared planet.

Lesson #2

The aim of the second lesson is to bridge the gap on how our destruction of the environment affects real people, and forces so many to lose or leave their homes. This lesson is called Climate Migration.

The Industrial Revolution was the beginning of an era of overconsumption like the world had never seen before, and ever since then, we have only seen our output and consumption increase. Our constant exploitation of Earth's natural resources has caused an immeasurable amount of suffering to humans and non-humans alike. One of the main consequences of this has been an increase in the duration, frequency, and size of natural disasters. Petteri Taalas, Secretary-General of the World Meteorological Association says natural disasters are becoming more common because of human intervention, which is causing a rise in human migration.⁴ From droughts to fires to hurricanes, when extreme weather events occur, many people lose their lives, and others are forced to reevaluate the safety of their homes. Environmentalism and care for human beings are interconnected in a million ways, but looking at climate migrants is an important reminder that hurting the natural world hurts people. At this time, the students should split into pairs and try to think of three other ways in which harming the natural world can be harmful to people.

Migrants who move because of increasing safety risks in their hometowns are often completely incapable of staying. It is important to emphasize that most migrants are up against impossible odds when they choose to migrate, and the choice is never an easy one. Matthew accounts Jesus' own story of migration which started when he was still a baby, as his parents took him to flee King Herod. In this story, Jesus is fleeing certain death, as Herod ordered all of the baby boys in Bethlehem to be killed. Jesus' own experience with migration is an important

reminder of his attitude towards migrants and how common forced migration is. Some questions to ask students to answer in pairs at this point would be: What are some examples of situations that would force people to leave their homes? What posture would Jesus take towards migrants, considering he was a migrant himself?

Not only was Jesus a migrant, but he was also a nomad for most of his adult life, relying on the kindness of strangers to provide food and shelter for him. As he goes from town to town, we see countless examples of unlikely friends inviting him in. In this way, Jesus' story exemplifies the beauty of taking care of each other. Answer in pairs: What are some ways that we can be the hands and feet of Jesus to migrants in our area? What would it mean to be an inviting person in 2022?

Although this lesson plan starts out with more of a scientific perspective, it is important to illustrate to the class the connection between human action, climate change, and increasing migration. I try my best to leave out the term climate change and cite the World Meteorological Association, which is a well-respected agency of the United Nations. I wanted to choose someone who is clearly an expert in his field to not come across as biased, political, or pushing the "Climate change narrative." The last half of the lesson focuses on Jesus as a migrant and aims to get the class to think about the migrant struggle and the various reasons people might migrate. Because the class is for 18 and up, I introduced some potentially bigger concepts quickly, assuming they could catch on. Usually, I would prefer to spend more time explaining how climate change drives migration, but since it is a Bible class, I tried to make it as brief as possible.

Lesson #3

Lesson number three brings together many of the previously discussed concepts by showing an all-encompassing video that explains the link between climate change, migration, and real-life stories. The theme of this lesson is climate injustice.

The lesson should begin with the video linked [here](#). In the video, migration expert Francois Gemmene says the poorest, oldest, and least educated are the most vulnerable to climate change as they are often the ones who are unable to escape, flee, or relocate. The inequalities that already exist are amplified by extreme weather events and rising sea levels, as those who are unable to flee are often left behind. The Bible has much to say about helping the marginalized. Psalm 82:3 says, “Give justice to the poor and the orphan; uphold the rights of the oppressed and the destitute.”⁵ Throughout the Bible and Jesus’ life, it is clear that he cares a lot about vulnerable communities. Can you think of any other examples where God showed his concern for vulnerable people? Can you think of a time in your own life when someone helped you when you felt vulnerable?

In the video, the president of the island nation of Palau suggests to the United Nations he would rather (large industrial nations) bomb their country than watch them suffer a “slow and painful death,” as he says there is no dignity to a slow death. These powerful words display the direct connection that many of the small island nations see between their frequent disasters, sea-level rise, and the world’s main contributors to climate change. Proverbs 31:8-9 reads “Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves... defend the rights of the poor and needy.”⁶ The leaders of these small island nations of the Pacific have been speaking up for their people for many years with little to no luck as they are not afforded a significant platform on the world

stage. They must be an example to all of us of how climate migrants are often robbed of their voices and rely on advocates they may never meet.

Lastly, Gemmene talks about how first-world countries often get the wrong impression that they are immune to climate change because of their adaptation strategies and technological advancements, but in reality, no place is immune. Ask the class to think about a place that they love to go to and that means a lot to them. It could be their hometown, a lake, their favorite ski mountain, or a beach vacation spot. They should all go around and share why that place is of very special importance to them. Next, ask them to go around and describe how their life would change if that place was devastated or permanently damaged by climate change. How would this change their future? What would this mean to them?

By asking yourself how you would feel in this situation, you are practicing empathy, or putting yourself in the shoes of others. In the case of climate migrants, many are facing much more devastating effects than losing their favorite ski mountain but trying to get yourself in a headspace of empathy is very important and all too uncommon these days. Empathetic decision-making is key to moving in the right direction, especially as decisions about migrants' rights are often made by people who don't have personal experiences even remotely close to those of climate migrants. By practicing empathy, we can help others better, as we are able to gain useful clues about what their needs might be and how to best address them.

I start the day with a video that illustrates the scale of the problem as this will be an important visual reminder as we move on to talk more about climate migrants. After seeing the video, the students will have a better understanding of the scale of the problem and hopefully hearing the migrants' stories will inspire more of a passion for the topic and better discussion. I don't get too specific about climate injustice because I want to stick to a more Biblical-led topic

of helping the vulnerable. As Falon said, I keep the topic more on helping suffering people than an ethics discussion.

Lesson #4

The aim of the fourth lesson is to break down some barriers people might have about migrants and offer a perspective of how the Biblical God might suggest we treat migrants. The theme of this lesson is caring for migrants.

The lesson should start with the video linked [here](#). Here are some discussion questions to ask after the video: similar to the church community portrayed in the video, what are some ways our church can come together to support migrants? How did the video make you feel?

In Luke 10, an expert in the law asks Jesus how to inherit eternal life. Jesus answers to love God and to love your neighbor. Then he asks who is his neighbor, to which Jesus responds with a parable. Although many of the class have probably heard the parable before, it is worth summarizing for those who have not. A man was walking on the road and then attacked by robbers who beat him half to death. As he was lying there suffering on the side of the road, a priest walked by, going out of his way to avoid the dying man. Next, a Levite passed by. In those times, Levites were people who also worked in the church. In the context of the priest and the Levite, both were supposed to remain ceremonially clean in order to perform church duties, thus they were not supposed to go near anything messy like a mangled man. Lastly, a Samaritan passed by. In the days that Jesus taught, Samaritans were seen as lower members of society, especially by religious leaders. The people at that time would have been shocked to hear Jesus use a Samaritan person as a good example.⁷ Not only does the Samaritan help the man, but he also helps care for his wounds and pays for him to stay at an inn.⁸

Overall, Jesus' goal in reciting this parable is to clarify that his command to love your neighbor extends beyond people who are similar to us. Christians are called to treat everyone as their neighbor, regardless of the arbitrary borders we often build up around us. Discussion

questions are: Are there people groups that you feel you are especially called to help? What are some attributes about yourself that make you more inclined or prepared to help these groups? Is there a specific story when someone different from you showed you neighborly acts of kindness/love?

The lesson should end with a note on UCC's partnership with the Malibu Labor Exchange. The labor exchange aims to connect people in our community with day jobs in order to build resumes in hopes that they will land more permanent employment. As a place that helps many migrants find jobs in our own backyard, getting involved is one way to be a good neighbor.

After the last class was science and climate heavy, I wanted this class to focus primarily on a Bible story. Although this story is one of the more well-known in the Bible, it is still helpful to remind the class of the different dynamics at play and tell the story after the video, from the perspective of migrant care or care for people in general. The current church in the United States seems to be focused on helping either people in your direct circle (friends and family) or people in some rural village thousands of miles away. While the intent to help is there, the people in the in-betweens such as migrants in our own country also need help. Creation care is often commonly overlooked, as it does make an impact but doesn't give the instant gratification that painting a school in Haiti would. Most of the adults in the class grew up with this false binary between your inner circle or communities far away, so I hope this lesson would break this down a bit.

Lesson #5

The aim of the fourth lesson is to define how to be a good neighbor and how to define who is called a neighbor through a Biblical lens.

The fourth lesson should start with the class watching the video linked [here](#) until 4:40. The class should be prompted to notice themes of neighborliness as they watch the video and be ready to discuss them afterward. Some discussion questions are: Who in the story is a good neighbor? How does this reflect how we should act as neighbors? And who is considered our neighbor?

The story begins with a show of loyalty, as it would have been no easy decision for Ruth to follow Naomi back to Israel. Firstly, Ruth was a Moabite which made her distinctly different from Naomi but also from all of the Israelites. At that time, anyone who wasn't purely Jewish would have had a difficult or impossible time flourishing in Israel, and even more so because Ruth was a widow. In the book of Ruth, she is portrayed as a shining example of what it means to be a good and loyal neighbor, thus being a reminder that we should always seek the good in whoever we consider "outsiders."

Although Ruth is the only main character in this story who is non-Jew, she shows herself to be an extremely trustworthy friend to Naomi, so much so that she treats her as a family member across cultural and ethnic lines. This story prompts us to question our own identity. Discussion: how do you identify yourself? What comes to mind first when you think of your identity? Maybe it's a sport, your nationality, your family, or your talents. How do we identify who our neighbor is? It could be the person sitting next to us, our family, our community, or beyond. How might our definition of identity limit or expand who we call our neighbor?

In the next part of the story, Naomi shows neighborliness as she teaches Ruth how to act appropriately in a foreign place, and Ruth reciprocates by marrying Boaz who is able to provide for them. The story concludes with a marriage between a Moabite and an Israelite, something that would have been seen as scandalous or unheard of. In this situation, both the immigrant and the native are crossing cultural barriers as it took courage for Ruth to move away from her home and for Boaz to choose loyalty to his family over anything else.

As Christians, you may be part of god's greater family, but how far does this family extend? Maybe the best way to view this is a greater *human* family. We all share a common human desire to love and be loved, to share our lives, and share in our suffering. Today, there are many forces and barriers that make life uniquely difficult for migrants in particular. As the amount of human migration is only expected to rise more and more in the coming years, it's important to reflect deeply on what kind of community we want to surround ourselves with and who we will call our neighbor.⁹ The takeaway from the story of Ruth is that everyone deserves a second chance, we all deserve to be treated as neighbors, and there is much to gain from crossing cultural barriers (in Ruth's case, she gained a husband, a child, and an inseparable bond with Naomi).

For this lesson plan, I focus mostly on Ruth and Naomi because their story is complex and deserves a longer explanation. Because the video explains most of the plot of the story, I dive right into more of the cultural components at play that were left out of the video. I chose to show the video at the beginning because in an optional Bible class it shouldn't be assumed that the students know Bible stories and people can always use a review. Overall, the point of this lesson is to get the class thinking about who they are called to love and treat with respect using the idea of the Biblical "neighbor."

Lesson #6

The goal of this lesson is to equip the class to act on some of the lessons they have learned and encourage them to use their gifts. The theme of this lesson is action.

Throughout these lessons, we have talked about some sad issues that are complex and seemingly impossible to fix. In closing, we will reflect on all we have learned and discuss how we hope to live differently because of this class. As climate migration is a somewhat new problem that rarely makes it into mainstream media, what has surprised you over the course of this class? Is there anything you have learned on your own you would like to share? Or any meaningful conversations outside of class that have been impactful?

If you take one thing away from this class, I hope that it's the connection between how your actions here can affect people all over the world. In being globally minded citizens, we can accomplish so much more and become more intentional about the way we spend and use our time, energy, and resources. Additionally, as many of us have experienced a big change in environment at some point in our lives, we can draw on those experiences to see ourselves in a more nomadic sense, letting go of any feelings of possession over any particular land. What are some moments in your life where you were a migrant even if you didn't see it that way at the time? Maybe it was a semester abroad, moving across the country for college, or accepting a job in a new city. How can these experiences inform a sense of empathy towards migrants?

Jesus directly talks about how we should treat each other in Matthew 25 with the parable of The Sheep and the Goats. In this parable, Jesus is describing the "Son of Man" sitting on his throne separating the sheep from the goats. One can imply from the parable that the king on their throne is God. The king says to those on his right they are the people who fed him when he was hungry, gave him a drink when he was thirsty, invited him in when he was a stranger, and looked

after him when he was sick. The people ask when they did these things for Jesus and he replies, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”¹⁰ Jesus’ message here is clear that caring for the vulnerable and marginalized is a way to directly serve him. What are some ways that we can serve climate migrants? Is our service limited to direct aid or is it more complex?

Throughout these lessons we have all gained a level of understanding, and with understanding and awareness comes an aspect of responsibility. That responsibility can be to educate others around us, to call out injustice, or to simply remain informed about this topic in case an opportunity arises to step in and help. We all have special gifts and are called to use them. In Romans 12, Paul writes we should use each of these gifts whether it be service, teaching, exhortation, generosity, leadership, or mercy.¹¹ Our unique gifts can be used to solve these big problems and no contribution is too small. Whether it’s lessening our resource use and emissions, advocating for immigrants here in America, or volunteering our time, there are many ways to get involved and use our gifts for good. What are your gifts? How could you use them to give back to the climate migrant community? Are there areas of your life you could reduce you or your family’s contributions to climate change?

The final class would end with discussions about the last few questions. Overall, I wanted this class to include some teaching in case people show up just for the one class, but still wanted it to feel like a good conclusion. The story of Matthew 25 could have been mentioned sooner in the lessons but I felt it was a strong conclusion to put right before some of the all-encompassing questions at the very end. While the term climate change is used in this class, I feel the previous classes have prepared the students to be more comfortable with using the term, and after all, we are talking about climate migrants.

Notes

¹ Genesis 2:15 NIV

² Genesis 1:26 NIV

³ Genesis 1:26 The Message

⁴ “Climate and Weather-Related Disasters Surge Five-Fold over 50 Years, but Early Warnings Save Lives - WMO Report | UN News.” United Nations. United Nations. Accessed December 12, 2022. <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/09/1098662>.

⁵ Psalm 82:3 NLT

⁶ Proverbs 31:8-9 NIV

⁷ “The Good Samaritan Meaning (and 4 Powerful Lessons).” Rethink, March 1, 2022. <https://www.rethinkknow.org/the-parable-of-the-good-samaritan-meaning/>.

⁸ Luke 10:25-37 NIV

⁹ Watson, Julie. “Climate Change Is Already Fueling Global Migration. the World Isn't Ready to Meet People's Changing Needs, Experts Say.” PBS. Public Broadcasting Service, July 28, 2022. <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/climate-change-is-already-fueling-global-migration-the-world-isnt-ready-to-meet-peoples-needs-experts-say#:~:text=And%20scientists%20predict%20migration%20will,Change%20report%20published%20this%20year.>

¹⁰ Matthew 25:40 NIV

¹¹ Romans 12:6-8 NIV

Dawnielle Wright

Creation Care as an Act of Worship

Week 1: Intro to climate change

The introductory week of the lesson plan aims to gauge the audience's level of understanding of the topic of climate change to ensure that the following weeks develop at an appropriate pace. Week 1 needs to lay the foundational information for the audience so everyone is at the same basic level of understanding in hopes to curb some discomfort around the issue. This week will be crucial to developing engagement and commitment to the series, but also attempting to eliminate the natural tension that comes with talking about sensitive topics like climate change and climate migration. The goal for this week is to leave the participants with a clear connection between the issue of climate change and their personal Christian faiths.

While the participants will most likely be all Pepperdine University students, it is important to note that all will bring their own backgrounds, socioeconomic status, and preconceived notions regarding climate change. To begin, it would be helpful to address these potential differences by highlighting similarities and building familiarity with one another. This could be done with simple introductions and a bonding exercise such as the name game. However, to actually transition into the material, starting with scripture is an approachable and comfortable way to transition. The majority of the first week will focus on Genesis and the creation story.

Genesis should be framed in a way that prompts a sense of responsibility for God's creation. In the context of being created in the image of God, humankind is given the vocation of ruling over the Earth. In the image of the Garden of Eden in Genesis, God rules over creation so that life can flourish. In humankind ruling over creation today, are we ruling so that life can

flourish as God did? It will be crucial to leave this as an open-ended question to transition to a short video that breaks down climate change.

The video “What's the Big Deal With a Few Degrees?” highlights, simply, the basic causes and effects of climate change.¹ After the group watches the video, the floor should be opened up for comments and questions. The facilitator should guide the conversation to reflect the creation story previously discussed and highlight a Christian’s role in caring for the planet. As the discussion comes to a natural close, the facilitator will ask what some common reasons the participants have heard for denying climate change are. This will help to transition to the last part of the lesson for this week.

To conclude the first week, the facilitator will talk about how it is common for Christians to argue that climate change is not real or unimportant because God has a plan and worldly things do not matter; God will make believers new again in the afterlife. Following these statements, read Colossians 1:15-20.² The Colossians Christ Hymn shows how Jesus was present in creation from the very beginning, bringing the creation story full circle for this week. God declared the world very good, so caring for creation in the present is an embodiment that God's kingdom is here now. If Christians believe that Jesus is present and matters now it should change everything about how believers live and interact with creation. Ultimately, Christians hear stories of heaven that imagine golden gates up in the clouds. However, it is important to highlight that the Bible is clear that believers’ bodies will be resurrected in a bodily way. Christians are taught not to treat their bodies with the mindset that all things are going to be made new in the afterlife and, therefore, can do whatever they want. Creation is no different. God gave His children the

¹Katherine Hayhoe, “What's the Big Deal with a Few Degrees?” *YouTube*, March 20, 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6cRCbgTA_78.

²ESV

responsibility and free will to rule over their bodies *and* creation. Connecting the Colossians Christ Hymn with the creation story inherently involves the individual with creation and discussion should focus on this idea.

At the end of this final discussion, the goal is for participants to better grasp their personal roles in caring about climate change as Christians. In order to end on a hopeful note, the facilitator should share some encouraging words about how Christians have a unique and powerful relationship with God through creation. As a call to action, and framing action as an act of worship, the participants should be called to do or think of one thing before the next meeting that connects them with creation.

Week 2: Climate change is causing migration

This week's lesson plan will focus on the basics of climate migration. The goal of this week's meeting is to help participants reframe their beliefs about migrants to be beliefs informed by their Christian faith. Week 2 is all about characterizing Jesus as a migrant to build empathy for those fleeing their homes due to the climate crisis. Then, the discussion will touch on Christian hospitality and the biblical call believers have to be hospitable to strangers. In turn, these ideas will lend themselves to the following week, focusing solely on Christian empathy for these migrants. Essentially, participants will walk away with an understanding of how climate change is causing human movement and why, as Christians, they should care.

To begin, the facilitator should ask an opening few questions to get the audience members primed for the following videos. Questions such as "How many people have talked about migration or heard about migration in the United States as a positive thing?" "When you hear the words 'migrant' or 'refugee' what comes to your mind?" and "How many people have

heard the term ‘climate refugee’ or ‘climate migrant’?” Following these questions, the facilitator should play the video “Extreme Weather Events Fueling 'Climate Refugee' Crisis” and “Coping with Climate Change in the World's Largest Refugee Camp.”³

These videos can be hard to watch, so there should be a short time allotted for a discussion for people to air how the videos made them feel or state something they did not know prior to watching. As this discussion comes to a close, the facilitator should ask what comes to mind when people think about the life of Jesus. To prompt these answers the facilitator should give an example by saying something like, “He was a carpenter or preacher.” After answers are given, the facilitator should read the following passage:

The Jesus we follow was a refugee and an immigrant. After he was born, fearing that King Herod would murder Jesus as they returned to their homeland in Judea, Mary and Joseph fled with their child to Egypt. The story, in Matthew 2, is not often read in churches because it disrupts our ideas of the nativity. Who wants to move from a peaceful and joyful manger scene to a chaotic story of violence and fear? But this is our story, and this is the Jesus we follow: a child who survived a massacre by fleeing to a safer land. Two thousand years later, with the refugee crisis going on all around the world, we must remember that the very existence of Jesus calls us to see the presence of God in all people. We must see those who immigrate and flee and seek refuge across borders as images of God, no more and no less than any other person.⁴

The passage helps depict Jesus so believers can relate to refugees through their Christian faith as opposed to a dominant political understanding of migrants. After reading the passage, allow for a discussion as it is likely this will be a new idea for most participants. Allowing participants to bring their doubts and questions to this new characterization of Jesus is crucial. Guide the conversation in a way that ultimately brings it back to the idea that through Jesus there is an inherent relatability to those forced to flee their homes because of climate change.

³UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency, “Coping with Climate Change in the World's Largest Refugee Camp,” *YouTube*, November 3, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc4TL-466WE>.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q0xy9HdDWEU>.

⁴Lindsay Popper, “Jesus Was a Refugee and an Immigrant,” *Southern New England Conference of the UCC*, December 4, 2017, <https://www.sneucc.org/blogdetail/jesus-was-a-refugee-10150466>.

To conclude the discussion and this week's lesson, the facilitator will read Leviticus 19:34.⁵ Allow for the participants to interpret the scripture out loud amongst one another. The facilitator will read the following Hebrew translation of "stranger": "it usually denotes a foreigner, who is not a native of the land in which he resides."⁶ Then, the facilitator should ask how this idea of strangers and the hospitality in the scripture relates to climate refugees. In the end, the audience will be left with a more clear connection between climate change and migration and ultimately their own implications with climate migrants in the context of their faith. Would you invite Jesus in? It is important to end with encouragement. Christians have the privilege of leveraging their church community all around the world. The Catholic Church alone owns more than 177 million acres of land.⁷ The participants have the capability to act within their own church communities to spread the word about how, through Jesus, they are called to care for migrants and strangers.

Week 3: Christian empathy

After talking about a heavy topic in week 2, week 3 aims to equip the participants with a greater understanding of what they can do as a Christian to empathize with and host climate migrants in a Christ-like way. This week will be highly discussion based as it is important for everyone to work through their thoughts and feelings on the subject. In order to talk about empathy in the context of a large and somewhat abstract issue like climate change, it will be essential to start discussing empathy on a smaller scale amongst the participants. It will be easy to show how, between one another, the participants can empathize with each other as they have

⁵ESV

⁶"Topical Bible: Stranger," *Smith's Bible Dictionary*, <https://biblehub.com/topical/s/stranger.htm>.

⁷Dan Budzyn, "Who Owns More Land: Bill Gates, McDonald's or the Catholic Church?" *Yahoo!*, September 13, 2022, <https://www.yahoo.com/video/owns-more-land-bill-gates-132113385.html>.

many similarities: Pepperdine, Christianity, American, etc. Highlighting how to create empathy with those who are very different and distant from the participants will be this week's challenge.

To begin, the participants will be asked to share aloud what they think it would feel like to experience certain scenarios. Begin with basic scenarios like "How would you feel if someone you did not know took something from you?" and "How would you feel if you could no longer go to school?" Then, begin asking questions that are even more applicable to climate refugees. Questions like, "How would you feel if you could never return home?" and "How would you feel giving up your culture?" "How would you feel about separating from your family members for an indefinite time period?" These questions may be hard to answer and that is perfectly fine. In fact, the facilitator should acknowledge the potential silence in response to these questions as it dramatizes how difficult it can be to empathize with experiences that participants cannot relate to. Ask why it might be difficult to imagine the circumstances presented in these questions and then follow these questions with scripture.

Read Luke 8:43-48 aloud.⁸ In this story, Jesus heals the bleeding woman who has been shunned for having a rare and shameful disorder. Jesus, however, calls the woman "daughter." He becomes an equal with her; she is a daughter of God as he is a son of God. The Bible often uses the word "compassion" to describe what Jesus shows to people he encounters. The Hebrew translation for compassion is essentially "he feels what they feel."⁹ In this story, Jesus showed the woman compassion, or empathy, despite their different circumstances. Through Jesus, Christians have a unique ability to empathize with those they cannot relate to otherwise because

⁸ESV

⁹"Rakham: A Touch of Compassion," *Hebrew Word Lessons*, May 9, 2021, <https://hebrewwordlessons.com/2017/11/19/compassion-its-more-than-thoughts-and-prayers/>.

ultimately, God created each person in His image and everyone, climate refugees and the participants, are children of God.

Discuss this new idea of Christian empathy and explore where and how participants can act this out in their own lives. As the discussion progresses, read one final scripture for the week where it feels natural. Leviticus 19:34 says, “You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”¹⁰ The discussion following the scripture will center on the idea that all humans have similarities because God created it that way. The facilitator will highlight what empathy means to them and have each person follow with their own newfound definition of empathy.

Now that this week’s discussion and scripture have built a bridge between the Pepperdine University students and the climate migrants they learned about last week, the facilitator should ask the audience what they can do in their own lives to show empathy to those around them but also to climate refugees. If the participants struggle with what they can do for climate refugees, the facilitator can provide the following suggestions. 1) Be environmentally conscious. This could look like eating locally grown foods or less meat because this ultimately reduces carbon emissions and helps mitigate climate change. Mitigating climate change ultimately mitigates its effects that displace people from their land. 2) Talk about it. Talk to your friends and family about climate change and climate migrants and why you personally care about the issue as a Christian. 3) Vote. Vote for policy that reflects Christian empathy.

Week 4: The Role of the Church in a Crisis

¹⁰ESV

The purpose of the week 4 section is to help dismantle the overwhelming feeling that climate change is an individual problem. The goal of this week is to curb some potential guilt and help the audience feel empowered within their church communities to make a difference. This week will focus on the book of Acts and the overall call for community that the New Testament repeats many times. The participants will uncover the potential for church communities to take a leading role in the face of crisis. There is a biblical call for the church to unite people across differences and prevail through hard times as a stronger and more populous community than before.

To begin the conversation, the facilitator should give a brief overview of the context of the book of Acts. The church at the time was facing a massive amount of persecution and hardship from the government. It followed as Paul tried to spread the Gospel of Jesus to Gentiles everywhere. In the end, despite the hardship and danger it posed to be a Christian, believers united across socioeconomic lines, across racial lines, across gendered lines, and occupational lines to form a church community. It shows that the only way the church could get through the turmoil was with one another.

The facilitator will now read Acts 2:42-47.¹¹ After reading the scripture, it is essential to highlight the idea of communal salvation in the passage. Allow for discussion on what this means for the participants in their own lives or experiences with the church community. Emphasize that the ideal of communal salvation should encourage each participant and relieve them of any worry that they themselves must carry the burden of solving climate change. Through the church community, there is a support system of people who can encourage one another while tackling this issue.

¹¹ESV

In Genesis, the Lord declared that humans should not be alone.¹² The facilitator should provide some time for participants to break up into pairs and brainstorm all the ways Christians are better in community. After bringing the group back and discussing their ideas, read the following list about why community is important:

1. It is evidence that we walk in the light (1 John 1:7). We fulfill Christ's commands by helping those in our faith community (Galatians 6:2).
2. It provides us with prayer support for our healing, which is not found elsewhere (James 5:16). It is the place where we can challenge each other and help each other grow to maturity (Proverbs 27:17).
3. It is the place where Christ promised His presence would be (Matthew 18:20). It is the place where we can be encouraged by each other's faith in times of abundance, as well as in times of difficulty (Romans 1:11-12).
4. We are not just individuals, but part of the Body of Christ, and part of our calling is to show concern for the other members of that Body (1 Corinthians 12:25-27).
5. We are called by Christ to this one Body, and He expects us to be in unity with that Body (Ephesians 4:2-6). It is the place where we can use the gifts God has given us, loving and serving others without complaining or resentment (1 Peter 4:8-11).¹³

It may be helpful to project a copy of this list because the participants will go back to their pairs after reading aloud. The pairs will go through each point and write down why it is important in regards to addressing climate change and climate migrants. For example, students may respond to point one and say something like, "Churches could be safe spaces for climate refugees to go when they arrive in a new place." Bring everyone back to the group and have yet another discussion about what they came up with.

The facilitator should end this week by reiterating the importance of community, specifically the church in crisis.. Nowhere in the Bible is individual salvation apart from communal salvation. Like the scripture showed in Acts, only together can the church prevail. Today, with climate change and such severe political polarization in the church on the topic, it is

¹²Gen. 2:18.

¹³Jack Ashcraft, "What Does the Bible Say about Community?" Christianity.com, September 15, 2021, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/church/what-does-the-bible-say-about-community.html>.

more important than ever for believers to emphasize community and work to utilize the church to make a positive impact.

Week 5: Dignity

As the lesson plan wraps up, this week will be a final lesson on what a Christian's response to climate migrants should look like. The lesson will cover the important biblical theme of dignity. It will be essential to cover the scriptural emphasis on dignity and how it relates to climate migration prior to discussing the topic of sacrifice next week. The discussion on dignity will lend itself to a more holistic way of thinking about sacrifice, apart from the traditional resurrection-centered conversation. In the end, the goal for this week is to wrap up the lessons that have been discussed thus far, so that next week can focus on how to put these lessons into action.

To open the conversation on dignity, uncovering the participants' preconceived understandings of the word will be necessary. Go around and allow everyone to share this. Then, the facilitator should read the scriptural definition for dignity. "Human dignity originates from God and is of God because we are made in God's own image and likeness."¹⁴ Follow with this short passage:

"Being made in the image of God means people have the capacity to reason, feel, and make moral choices (Gen. 1:26-27). We honor people by appealing to their intellect with honesty and truth, being sensitive to their feelings, and respecting their right of self-determination."¹⁵

Then, the facilitator should ask if the audience thinks climate migrants' human dignity is recognized as they are forced to flee their homes. The answer should be mostly no, but regardless

¹⁴Gen. 1:26-27.

¹⁵Steven R. Cook, "What Does the Bible Say about Dignity?" Thinking on Scripture, November 20, 2017, <https://thinkingonscripture.com/tag/what-does-the-bible-say-about-dignity/>.

highlight some of the following reasons why that is. Climate migrants are often forced to settle in refugee camps without water or electricity. They are forced to work in dangerous and grueling manual labor jobs for very little pay. Women and girls are at an increased risk for gender-based violence, such as sexual assault and sex-trafficking. Climate migrants also face xenophobia. And while this happens all around the world, it also all occurs right here in the United States.

The facilitator should open the floor up for discussion on the audience members' reactions to this idea of dignity and honor in the context of climate migration. Prompt some questions regarding how respect and the previously discussed idea of empathy relates to affirming someone's dignity. Spend some time asking participants how respect comes into play with affirming the human dignity of a climate migrant who perhaps does not practice a lifestyle they agree with. Then, read the following passage to clarify the relationship between respect and dignity:

Respect is not the same as honor. We may not respect someone, but we can and should still honor him or her. For example, I have a friend whose father was an alcoholic. My friend did not respect his father who was frequently drunk, often humiliated his wife and children, and failed to provide for his family adequately. Nevertheless, my friend honored his father because he was his father. He demonstrated honor by taking him home when his father could not get home by himself. He sometimes had to defend him from people who would have taken advantage of him when he was drunk. Similarly we may not be able to respect certain government officials because of their personal behavior or beliefs. Still we can and should honor them because they occupy an office that places them in a position of authority over us. We honor them because they occupy the office; we do not just honor the office. Peter commanded us to honor the king and all who are in authority over us, not just the offices that they occupy...Honoring others is our responsibility; earning our respect is theirs.¹⁶

Discuss with participants how one can still affirm someone's human dignity in the absence of respect and why this is important for Christians. The Bible calls for Christians to show love to all people, regardless of their beliefs. Believers can show empathy for those different from

¹⁶Ibid.

themselves because they are both made in the image of God. Through this similarity, believers can honor and affirm the dignity of others because we are all a part of the Lord's creation and deserve to be shown the mercy of Christ.

The facilitator should wrap up the week by guiding a discussion on how they, or governments, should be affirming climate migrants' human dignity. There are no wrong answers. This simply gives participants time to imagine a hopeful solution to this heavy topic which could be as big an idea as universal passports or as small as talking about climate change daily. As always, it is important to leave the audience feeling equipped to apply hope to the climate migration issue, as it will ultimately allow for a feeling of empowerment which prompts hopeful action.

Week 6: Sacrifice and Resilience as an Act of Worship

The final week of this series will build on all previous lessons to reframe the common mindset that sacrifice is a noble and courageous act. The lesson should show participants that sacrifice should happen daily and is mutually beneficial. In the end, sacrifice is an act of worship. The lesson will also wrap up the series by defining acts of worship and highlighting what it looks like to show resilience as an act of worship. Week 6 is supposed to put the previous lessons to use and equip the participants with the tools to act.

Begin this week by asking the participants to define what sacrifice means to them. Then, relate sacrifice to climate migration. The dominant narrative is that to accept migrants into our country, cities, and communities means people will have less for themselves, less jobs, less housing, less space in schools, and more fear of strangers. However, studies show this is not the case. On a practical level, migrants do not take from the economy, they add to it. Even so, how

does each participant's personal sacrifice help a climate migrant? By sacrificing the engrained comfortability of a community of natives, one can empathize with a stranger, affirm their dignity, and welcome them with the love that Christ showed Gentiles. A personal sacrifice for migrants to rebuild their home and their futures emphasizes the mutually beneficial relationship between human interactions.

The facilitator should highlight the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. Sacrifice is not self-interested, but when believers care for others they also care for themselves because all things made by the Lord are interconnected and He celebrates this. The idea that sacrifice is not sacrifice if it is not painful is a grave misunderstanding. Mutual sacrifice between human beings is relationally sustainable; people look out for each other's needs before their own as the Bible calls Christians to do and there is a mutual benefit. The facilitator should now ask participants what it might look like to implement daily sacrifice in their lives. Then ask, "Is this an act of worship?"

The conversation should naturally transition into what an act of worship looks like. The facilitator should highlight the following points. As a Christian, one's life is an act of worship. It is a 24-hour job to commit one's life to Christ. The importance of this lies in a Christian's ability to form themselves into the likeness of Christ on a daily basis. In the face of climate change and how it is disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable people around the world whom the Bible calls Christians to care for, how can believers' daily lives serve as an act of worship? The answer is in the last 6 weeks. Believers can act for those who need it! Talk about climate change and climate migration in churches. Show those who are suffering from climate change affects empathy as fellow children of God. Mobilize one's church in the face of said crisis as the Lord

has desired it. Affirm the dignity of migrants because the Lord would. Sacrifice comfortability for the livelihoods of vulnerable climate refugees and hold those who will not to scriptural asks.

Wrap up discussion for the final week on how the participants can implement these lessons into their daily lives as acts of worship. Leave space for final questions and considerations. End with the following scripture:

What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, and one of you says to them, “Go in peace, be warmed and filled,” without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that? So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.¹⁷

¹⁷James 2:14-17, ESV.

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Climate Migration

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UCC Lesson Plan

Lesson 1

The first lesson is critical in creating a positive foundation for the students to learn and communicate with each other about challenging and emotional topics. The first five minutes of lesson one will be designated for students to introduce themselves, as this will create a safe environment for open conversation. Each student will say their name, grade, home of origin, their favorite part of the environment, and why it is essential to them. Assuming that the majority of Pepperdine students know little about the topics of climate change and climate migration, this first lesson will work to address the basics. The following fifteen minutes will be used to define climate change and climate migration. For this lesson portion, students will be asked if they have any previous knowledge about climate change or migration. After students have an opportunity to answer this question, the facilitator will provide a more structured definition of climate change and climate migration. The facilitator will use the United Nations' description of climate change: "climate change refers to long-term shifts in temperatures and weather patterns. These shifts may be natural, such as through variations in the solar cycle. But since the 1800s, human activities have been the main driver of climate change, primarily due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas".¹ The facilitator will define climate migrants as "environmental migrants who were forced to flee their homes due to sudden or gradual alterations in the natural environment related

¹ "What Is Climate Change?," United Nations (United Nations), accessed December 14, 2022, <https://www.un.org/en/climatechange/what-is-climate-change>.

to at least one of the three impacts of climate change: sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and drought or water scarcity.” After giving these definitions, the facilitator will ask the students why they think sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and drought might force people to flee their homes. The facilitator will then ask for any examples the students could think of that would demonstrate this phenomenon.

The next portion of this first lesson will include a documentary for students to watch so they are able to visualize what climate migration might look like. If the lesson is taking place in a room with a projector, the students will watch the documentary together, but if this is not possible, they will be asked to pull up the video on their personal devices. The video they will be watching is called “Climate Change Causes Islands to Disappear” by 60 Minutes Australia². This video looks at the Solomon Islands in the Pacific Ocean and how rising sea levels are causing the islands to vanish underwater. It will take approximately twenty minutes to watch the video, leaving the remaining twenty minutes of the session to be used for discussion. Following the film, students will be put into small groups of two or three to discuss what they saw in the video. The facilitator will give the students three prompts to discuss in their small groups: What surprised you most about what was discussed in the video? Did you have any previous knowledge about these small Pacific Islands sinking due to sea level rise? Do you think it would be easy to leave your home if it became increasingly difficult to live there?

The students will spend about ten minutes discussing these questions within their small groups before returning to a full class discussion. The last ten minutes of the session will include a large group discussion about our role and responsibilities as Christians to help the environment and the people impacted by climate change. To start this discussion, the facilitator will ask the

² “Climate Change Causes Islands to Disappear | 60 Minutes Australia,” YouTube (YouTube, May 13, 2019), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N1cdCUZNh04>.

group if they feel Christians are morally obligated to care about and help the environment as it is God's creation. Students will share their thoughts and opinions with the group. The facilitator will wrap up the discussion by asking if anyone has any final thoughts or questions.

Lesson 2

The second lesson will focus on the concepts of empathy versus sympathy as it pertains to climate migrants. The first five minutes will be spent with a large group discussion where the facilitator will ask the students if any part of the previous lesson stuck with them throughout the week. This part of the lesson is important because the overall goal of these lessons is to create a meaningful learning experience. For college-age students who are constantly absorbing new information, it is beneficial to make time for reflection and refreshers of information. After this brief discussion, the facilitator will ask the students what they believe the definition of empathy is. Then, the facilitator will ask what they believe sympathy is and what is the most important difference between the two. This conversation will take approximately ten minutes. The facilitator will then show a three-minute video on empathy versus sympathy by Brene Brown.³ This video quickly explores the nuances of both empathy and sympathy, and though it is short and simply made, it delivers a powerful message. The purpose of using a video in addition to discussion is to provide different spaces for students to engage in the topic of empathy. Some students may benefit from a visual aid, while others may prefer discussion.

After viewing the video, the facilitator will ask the students if they have ever experienced the effects of climate change. The facilitator will use the example of wildfires in Malibu to start the discussion. The purpose of this conversation is to have students think about climate change

³ "Brené Brown on Empathy vs Sympathy," YouTube (YouTube, April 1, 2016), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZBTYViDPIQ>.

and migration from a personal perspective, as it can be easier to engage in conversations about climate migration after a personal connection is established. The facilitator will then ask students if they can imagine what it might look like if they were forced to leave where they grew up because of a climate-related event. The facilitator will ask the students to split into small groups to discuss three different prompts: Is there anything that would make leaving your home particularly difficult for you on an emotional level? Is there anything that would make leaving your home particularly difficult for you physically (ex., Disabled family members, older grandparents, lots of animals, etc.)? Would you leave your home at the first signs of a threat (ex., Rising sea levels), or would it take a climate-related disaster (ex., hurricane) for you to leave? Students will discuss these questions in their small groups for about five minutes and then return to the large group discussion. The facilitator will ask a few students to share the highlights of their small group conversation. In all, this section of the lesson will take about fifteen minutes.

For the last part of the session, the students will be asked how they see empathy portrayed in the Bible. The students will be asked to return to their small groups to find an example of empathy in the Bible. They will be given about five minutes to find an example and discuss how it shows empathy in their small group before returning to the larger group discussion. Each group will be asked to share their example. After discussing their examples, the group will be asked if they think it is possible to show empathy for people experiencing something they have never experienced. Because this is a difficult question, the group will be given several minutes to discuss it. Following this question, students will be asked if they think it is part of their duty as Christians to show empathy for climate migrants and how they might be able to do this. The goal of this section of the lesson is to tie together previous conversations

about climate migrants and empathy using the Bible and students' prior knowledge of Christianity.

Lesson 3

The third lesson will primarily focus on how climate migration disproportionately impacts certain populations. This lesson is important to teach to Seaver students because the Pepperdine campus can often feel like a bubble of security. In order to truly understand the ways in which climate migration is affecting the world, students must be able to look beyond their immediate surroundings and see that just because they themselves are not being impacted by climate change does not mean others are not. The first five minutes of the lesson will begin by reflecting upon the previous lesson about empathy. Students will be asked if they thought any more about what it means to be empathetic and if they were able to apply that knowledge to their own lives since the last lesson. This is an important segway into the topic of this lesson as students will be learning about the ways in which climate change and climate migration disproportionately affect particular groups of people. To start this conversation, the students will be asked if there are any areas in the world that they might imagine being impacted by climate change more than others. The students will also be reminded of the factors that put people at risk of being affected by climate change, such as sea-level rise, extreme weather events, and drought or water scarcity. Because the students will likely have to take a few minutes to think about their answers to this question, this portion of the lesson will take about ten minutes.

After sharing their answers with the class, the students will be asked what areas of the world contribute the most to climate change. The answers to this question will be tied back to the previous question by asking students if they think that it is fair that the populations that

contribute the most to climate change are generally impacted the least. The goal of this discussion is to make the connection in students' minds that the effects of climate change are not shared equally by all. More importantly, these questions will help students understand that those who contribute the least to climate change are impacted the most. This conversation should be about ten minutes. Following this discussion, the students will be shown a video titled "Breaking the Link between Extreme Weather and Extreme Poverty."⁴ This video discusses how natural disasters tighten poverty's grip on communities throughout the world. Using this video in the lesson will help solidify students understanding of topics discussed throughout the session.

Students will be asked to break into small groups to discuss anything that stood out to them in the video. While in these groups, students will be given five minutes to discuss whether or not they believe that those who contribute most to climate change should provide the most aid to those affected. After discussing this question in their small groups, class will come back together and share their thoughts. This portion of the lesson should take about fifteen minutes, including the video. For the last twenty minutes of the lesson, students will split into two large groups to discuss Genesis 2:15 "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." This Bible verse is a clear reminder that God has intentionally placed humans in a position of responsibility over creation. Furthermore, this verse reminds us that we are accountable to God as stewards of His creation. These concepts should be discussed by the facilitator with the class before they break into their two groups. The groups will be asked how this verse pertains to the previous conversations about climate change and how Christians might

⁴ World Bank Group, "Breaking the Link between Extreme Weather and Extreme Poverty," World Bank (World Bank Group, January 17, 2017), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/14/breaking-the-link-between-extreme-weather-and-extreme-poverty>.

use this verse to remind them of the importance of caring for the earth. After about ten minutes of discussion in their groups, the class will come back together to share their answers.

Lesson 4

The fourth lesson will primarily focus on how climate migration disproportionately impacts women. Though this is a challenging topic, Seaver students have the mental and emotional capacity for such discussions. Because gender plays such a large role in how climate change impacts people, it would be a missed opportunity to avoid this topic. Additionally, discussing women as it pertains to climate migration will allow students to employ empathy to a more specific population they may be able to relate. For example, it may be difficult to empathize with a male fisherman living on an island in the Pacific who is experiencing the effects of climate migration. It may be easier for the class to relate to a woman who has to flee her homeland but does not have access to sanitary products because that is more familiar to the class's personal experience. This being said, the class will open with five minutes of reflection on the previous class session. Students will be asked to recall what they learned in the previous lesson. As the previous lesson was about how climate migration disproportionately affects particular populations, emphasizing those in poverty, this lesson will dive deeper into that topic by looking at the female experience.

The students will be asked if they have any ideas of how climate migration might disproportionately affect women. The class will discuss their initial ideas as a group. The facilitator will then offer some ways in which women face the impacts of climate change differently than men. For example, the facilitator will say that women's vulnerability to climate change stems from social, economic, and cultural factors. The students will then be divided into

small groups to read and discuss the article “Women... In the Shadow of Climate Change”. The students will share what they found most surprising about the article in their small groups. After speaking in their small groups for about ten minutes, the class will come back together for a group discussion. During this time, the facilitator will ask the students what they thought about the section of the article that discusses how women are and should be considered active agents and promoters of adaptation and migration. The purpose of this discussion is to get students thinking about how women, though victims of climate change, have the power and knowledge to help find solutions to challenging issues brought about by climate change. This discussion should last about ten minutes.

For the last section of this lesson, the students will be asked to watch a short video on how climate change triggers gender-based violence.⁵ After watching this video, the students will return to their small groups to discuss what they saw. The students will be asked to talk about the most surprising parts of the video and if they would have linked climate change to gender-based violence before watching it. The students will also be asked to talk to their groups about ways in which we can protect women from gender-based violence during climate disasters. The purpose of this conversation is to remind students that though this information is incredibly disheartening, there are solutions to be made. After ten minutes in their small groups, the class will come back together to share their discussion. The purpose of this lesson is to leave the students feeling informed about this important facet of climate migration and also feeling hopeful about ways in which they might be able to help.

⁵ “Wion Climate Tracker: Climate Change Triggers Gender-Based Violence: Scientists Notice Odd Pattern,” WION, accessed December 14, 2022, <https://www.wionews.com/videos/wion-climate-tracker-climate-change-triggers-gender-based-violence-scientists-notice-odd-pattern-500556>.

Lesson 5

The primary focus of this lesson is to go over various solutions that have been put in place to help mitigate the harmful effects of climate change and how people are providing aid to climate migrants. The importance of this lesson for Seaver students is to not overwhelm them with negative information but rather provide a solution-based approach to learning. If students are only given information regarding the challenges people are facing, the problem may seem too big to help. By incorporating solution-based thinking into this lesson, students should have a more hopeful but realistic outlook on climate change. The beginning of the lesson will include five minutes of group reflection on the topics discussed in the previous lesson.

The students will then be asked to watch two short videos. The first video goes over steps that cities are taking to cope with the upward trend of arrivals from rural areas to improve opportunities for education, training, and jobs.⁶ The second video details ways in which countries can help prevent the damaging effects of climate change that lead to climate migration.⁷ After watching both videos, the students will split into small groups to share their thoughts on what they saw. In their small groups, the students will be asked to come up with a list of five small ways in which they can reduce their impact on climate change and five ways that Pepperdine might be able to reduce its impact on climate change as an institution. The students will be given about fifteen minutes to create these lists. The students will then come back together in a large group to share what their small groups came up with. This will take about ten minutes.

⁶World Bank Group, “Climate Change Could Force over 140 Million to Migrate within Countries by 2050: World Bank Report,” World Bank (World Bank Group, March 19, 2018), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2018/03/19/climate-change-could-force-over-140-million-to-migrate-within-countries-by-2050-world-bank-report>.

⁷World Bank Group, “Groundswell: Acting on Internal Climate Migration,” World Bank (World Bank Group, September 13, 2021), <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2021/09/13/millions-on-the-move-in-their-own-countries-the-human-face-of-climate-change>.

Following this activity, the students will be asked if they think that climate migration is a pressing issue that should be addressed by the UCC. For example, the facilitator will ask if the students think it would be beneficial to have the UCC find mission work that helps climate migrants. This conversation aims to get students thinking about their sphere of concern in the world. If their church is involved in a program that works with climate migrants, they will likely be more inclined to help. This portion of the lesson will take about fifteen minutes. For the last part of this session, students will be asked to think about the way in which Jesus feels empathy toward other people. This question is important for students to see that Jesus still affirms human dignity in his empathy and never belittles someone. This question will then be tied back into the discussion of helping climate migrants while maintaining their human dignity and respecting who they are as individuals. This conversation aims to clarify that even as victims of climate-related disasters, climate migrants are still capable individuals who deserve a say in their futures. It can be easy to be swept up in the hero narrative when discussing ways to help others, but that is not a productive self-narrative. This last portion of the lesson will take about fifteen minutes.

Lesson 6

This lesson will wrap up all the information learned throughout the past five sessions. It is important for this last session to be used as a conclusion and reflection period, as it will help students to gather their thoughts. Learning about the nuances of climate migration in such a short period of time can be overwhelming, which might cause students to forget what they have learned. The purpose of this last session is to solidify the student's new knowledge through meaningful conversation that will hopefully stick with them. The first portion of this lesson will be used to go over the highlights of the past five lessons. The students will first be asked what

stood out most from past lessons. Each student will be required to share their answers with the class. This will take approximately five minutes.

The next portion of the lesson will be a personal reflection period. Students will be asked to write down their answers to three things on a piece of paper: 1. What is one thing you learned about climate migration that surprised you the most? 2. What is one thing that you have taken away from the past sessions that you will likely continue to think about? 3. What is one thing that you have learned that you would like to share with a friend or family member who might not have much knowledge about climate change or climate migration? After about five minutes, the students will return to the large group to share their answers. This activity aims to encourage students to continue the conversation about climate migration outside of the lessons. The students will be asked if they would feel comfortable sharing their knowledge about climate change with family, friends, or peers. The students will also be asked to elaborate on why or why not they would feel comfortable discussing this.

For the last portion of the lesson, students will be asked to discuss in small groups concepts seen in Genesis 1:27. Genesis tells us that humans are made in God's image and that we hold a unique status that no other creature holds. Students will be asked to find ways in which they can relate Genesis 1:27 to climate migration and what it means to be stewards of what God has entrusted to us. The importance of including this verse at the end of the lesson is to remind students that the Bible tells us to be good stewards of the earth, to help those in need, and to support policies that will protect people from the impacts of climate change. After about ten minutes, the small groups will return to the larger group and discuss their answers. This portion of the lesson is meant to promote meaningful conversation and should be led in a way where students feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and ideas. Lastly, the facilitator will say a few

words about how they hope that through the past six lessons, students were able to dive deeper into their faith and views of the world to be more empathetic and understanding individuals, especially as it pertains to climate migrants.

Important Links

- [Lesson 1 Video](#)
- [Lesson 1 Video 2](#)
- [Lesson 2 Video](#)
- [Lesson 3 Video](#)
- [Lesson 4 Video](#)
- [Lesson 5 Video](#)
- [Lesson 5 Video 2](#)

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How We Honor God Through our Care of Creation and Climate Migrants

Six-Week Lesson Plan for UCC Malibu

Introduction

This lesson plan for the congregation of UCC Malibu will aim to introduce the church members to the topic of climate migration, as well as introduce the community to a possible Christian response to climate change. The hope for this plan is to initiate new conversations in the community, increase members' knowledge on this topic, and equip members to engage in their own personal reflection and possibilities for action. Each lesson will begin with an engagement and breakdown of a scripture passage, an application of this scripture to the topic, and an area for reflection. The first week will begin with a broad introduction to climate change, with the second week exploring the effects climate change has on climate migration. Weeks three and four will explore how Christians should consider responding to climate migration and the importance of caring for creation. Lessons five and six will wrap up the information covered in the previous four weeks, exploring how individuals can actively live out this call in their lives, and how the community could reflect on this call together.

Lesson One: We Hear Creation Groaning – Introduction to Climate Change

Week one of the lesson plan will begin with an overview of climate change, starting with the reading of Romans 8:20-25 as a basis of our discussion, and ending with a reflection topic on the hope Christians can have amid a changing climate. Romans 8:20-25:

“For the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience”¹

There is recognition in the Bible that as we look forward to our own renewal in Christ, the earth also looks forward to its renewal. It is a distressing reality to see our rapidly changing climate, but scripture leads us to believe that this is not a creation of wholeness and perfection. As Christians, we should recognize that creation itself is awaiting its own freedom from brokenness, just as we are.

The lesson will continue with an explanation of how this passage correlates to an understanding of climate change. Creation groans in the extreme weather conditions and increasingly destructive climate disasters occurring around the globe resulting from temperature

¹ Romans 8:20-25 NIV

rise. The global temperature has risen by 1 degree Celsius since pre-industrial times. The reason for this heating is the increasing use of global energy, most of which is generated by the burning of fossil fuels that releases carbon dioxide into the atmosphere.² Without significant emission cuts, this temperature could rise by 4 degrees Celsius in this century.³ Though we are already seeing extreme heat events, increased frequency and intensity of precipitation, and increase in cyclone activities, the projected impacts of a 4-degree Celsius rise are distressing.

There will be unprecedented heat extremes, precipitation changes that will greatly affect water availability, reduced crop yields and production losses, large-scale forest degradation, increases in ocean acidity, rising sea levels that greatly affect communities on the coast, and increasing glacial melting creating a high risk of flooding and a reduction in freshwater resources.⁴ Without action to greatly reduce this temperature rise, we are headed towards a future with increasingly drastic effects of climate change.

The lesson plan will end with an idea on which to reflect, that combines the realities of climate change with the passage we read in Romans. As we hear the sounds of creation groaning, we also see the biblical evidence that helps us understand the nature of climate change. Paul understood the nature of a broken creation in this letter to the Romans, and used it as an analogy for our own awaited redemption. The creation groans. We cannot plug our ears to it. However, we know what the end holds for creation, and for us. As Christians, we have a unique way of addressing climate change. We have the ability to imagine a creation that is whole, and not only imagine it, but hope for it. While there is pain on this earth, and there is work to be done to

² Vince, Gaia. *Nomad Century* (New York: Flatiron Books, 2022), pg. 2.

³ Delgado, Sharon. *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, (1517 Media, 2017). pg. 20.
<https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1pwt3z9.15>.

⁴ World Bank. 2014. *Turn Down the Heat: Confronting the New Climate Normal*. Washington, DC: World Bank, pg. xix-xx.

remedy that pain, we have a hope that we ourselves will one day be freed from our brokenness, and creation along with us.

This week's lesson will be critical for the congregation at UCC, as it provides the groundwork for all of the other topics we will discuss related to creation care and climate migration in the next couple of weeks. For those who may not have explored the impacts climate change is having on our planet, it will be important to gain an understanding of the magnitude of the issue. Without a clear understanding of what climate change really entails, we will not be able to fully discuss the effects it has on others and the need for Christians to respond. When we are able to address the nature of climate change starting from the passage in Romans, we can approach this difficult topic from a place of hope instead of hopelessness as we work on ways to address it together.

Lesson Two: Migrants Throughout Scripture – Introduction to Climate Migration

Week two of the lesson plan will explore how the effects of climate change impact vulnerable communities especially, and give an overview of climate migration. We will begin by exploring the story of Ruth, a story in the Old Testament chronicling the journey of migrants from Judah to Moab, and back to Judah. We would start by reading through Ruth 1:1-7. The passage begins with a description of the struggles Naomi and her family experienced due to the famine in Judah. This led to their migration to Moab, where Naomi's sons and husband died. Naomi and Ruth then traveled back to Judah, in hope that they would find not only food, but an improved life.

The lesson would transition into an explanation of the effects climate change has on vulnerable individuals, and how the changing climate conditions cause climate migration. The drastic effects climate change has on our planet do not affect us all equally. They exacerbate the other social, environmental and economic problems that populations around the globe face.⁵ For many areas in Sub-Tropical North America, Sub-Tropical South America, Southern Africa, Southern Asia, and parts of Australia, in a world with a 4-degree Celsius increase, multiple severe impacts could occur at the same time – on top of many of these areas being food insecure. These impacts could include extreme heat stress, river flooding, drought and wildfire risk.⁶ This will ultimately cause many of these areas to become uninhabitable for communities, necessitating migration for safety, and improved living conditions.

Climate migration will cause many families and communities to be uprooted from their homes, their traditions, and their histories. We see in this story of Ruth a family placed in a

⁵ Vince, *Nomad Century*, 10.

⁶ Vince, *Nomad Century*, 11.

vulnerable environment due to famine, a loss of social protection, and a loss of familiarity. They must become foreigners not only once, but twice. Ruth must work long days in the fields to provide for both her and Naomi, and through the marriage of Boaz is able to supply stability for them. As readers of scripture, we see migration throughout the Bible. We see communities placed in vulnerable, unknown situations often. There is a migration from the beginning of Genesis as Adam and Eve leave the Garden of Eden, to Abram migrating to Egypt due to famine in Genesis 12:10. Not only this, but Jesus and his family were immigrants themselves, fleeing to Egypt directly after Jesus' birth in fear of King Herod.⁷

As we examine these stories in scripture, it will be important to ask ourselves what it could mean that these stories are so prevalent in the Bible. Do we often view Jesus in this light, starting off his life as an immigrant in a foreign land? Do we often read through these stories of migrants and contemplate their struggles and difficulties? As we examine the struggles many communities now face and will continue to face due to a changing climate, it will be important as Christians to look to the stories of migrants in scripture in order to see those who flee in search of a better life as valued and important.⁸ There is a reason that scripture includes so many stories of migrants; they are valued individuals with valid struggles.

This week's lesson will be very important for the congregation of UCC, as it will not only introduce them to climate migration, but will point them to important biblical stories of migrants that may not have been closely analyzed. Many in the congregation may be unfamiliar with climate migration, and an overview of the topic will be important to introduce in order to build upon the ideas we discuss in later lessons. With these stories and an understanding of the vulnerabilities

⁷ Popper, Lindsay, "Jesus was a Refugee and an Immigrant," *Southern New England Conference*, December 4, 2017.

⁸ Popper, "Jesus was a Refugee and an Immigrant."

many face due to climate change, the congregation will have an opportunity to reflect on the importance of migrants in the Bible, and what that means for the importance of migrants today.

Lesson Three: A Christian Response – Creation Care

Week three of the lesson plan will explore a Christian response to climate change, specifically regarding creation care. We will begin by reading Psalm 19:1-6, describing how “the heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”⁹ In this passage, we see a clear description of the wonder of God seen in creation. There are countless examples throughout the Old and New Testament of God revealing himself through creation. To witness the magnificence of God and his handiwork, we need only look up. The radiance of the sun through the trees, the brilliance of the stars on a clear night, the reflection of a full moon on the ocean waves. As believers, creation is a way to experience the splendor of God. For many of those who don’t believe, it’s the experience of the divine in a way that many cannot ignore. Creation is not only important to us as Christians, but also a way to bring others closer to the creator.

The lesson would continue by looking at the ways Jesus displays his glory through creation in scripture, and the importance of creation throughout the bible. Genesis 2:15 states, “The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.”¹⁰ There was a purpose for man while he was in the garden, he was instructed to be a good steward of the beauty around him. There are countless parables of Jesus that involve nature and use metaphors that people could relate to by simply looking around them. The parable of the Mustard Seed in Matthew 13:30-32, the Weeds Among the Wheat in Matthew 13:36-43, and others that illustrate pictures for Jesus’ followers to clearly grasp the meaning of his lessons.¹¹ There are also instances where Jesus would engage in prayer in nature. For example, leaving to the

⁹ Psalm 19:1-6 NIV

¹⁰ Genesis 2:15 NIV

¹¹ Delgado, *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, 47.

mountainside to pray in Mark 6:46.¹² For many, the time spent in nature is time spent in worship of the creator, or perhaps just a quiet place to find connection with the Lord.

We would then transition into the effects climate change is having specifically on the earth and its ecosystems, and applying the passage we read to this problem. The situation is increasingly drastic. Our fossil-fuel dependency has created disasters in accidental oil spills, methane plumes from natural gas storage wells, and crude oil train explosions. Extreme fossil-fuel extractions cause mountains to be blown apart to access coal, the creation of water pollution, mountains of garbage, herbicide and pesticide usage, and islands made of plastic.¹³

Consequently, species are lost as ecosystems are disrupted and destroyed.

The 2019 bushfires in Australia were a direct consequence of climate change, killing thirty-four people, and causing an estimated 400 premature deaths due to smoke pollution. Nearly 3 billion wild animals were wiped out, making the fire one of the worst ecological disasters in modern history.¹⁴ Forests around the globe are facing similar effects of climate change. The increasingly hot and dry conditions, reduced winter snowfall and rain, and increasing invasive pests “turn vibrant trees into tinder.”¹⁵

We would then transition into possible questions for reflection. If creation is a way to experience the divine, and a means used by the creator to bring others to experience His glory, how is it that we often participate in the act of destroying it? Are there daily habits we practice that exacerbate this problem? How should we interpret the use of creation for Jesus’ mission throughout the Bible? Creation clearly played an important role in the advancement of God’s

¹² Delgado, *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, 47.

¹³ Delgado, 53.

¹⁴ Vince, *Nomad Century*, 13.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

work in ancient biblical times, and continues to today. What is our role as a follower of Jesus and reader of scripture to care for this planet?

This week's lesson will be important for the congregation of UCC, as it not only describes the drastic effects climate change is having on our planet, but also will emphasize a need to respond as Christians who care for creation. It can sometimes be easy to miss the important role creation plays in Jesus' ministry throughout the Bible, and it may be beneficial for people in the congregation to take this lesson to focus on these areas in the Bible. This lesson will introduce several important reflection questions about caring for creation that will build on the discussion of caring for climate migrants in the next lesson.

Lesson Four: A Christian Response – Caring for Our Climate Migrant Neighbor

To begin our fourth lesson, the congregation will be asked to read and consider Mark 12:31, Leviticus 19:33-34, and Luke 14:12-14. Through these verses, we will examine the call to love our neighbor, love the foreigner, and provide hospitality to the least of these. Mark emphasizes the importance of the call to love our neighbor, Leviticus calls believers to love the foreigner as themselves, especially since the Israelites were at one time foreigners in Egypt, and Luke calls believers to provide hospitality, especially to those who are often not offered it.

The lesson would then transition into a discussion of what realistic responses to climate migrants as Christians could look like, approaching caring for climate migrants through the calls in Mark, Leviticus, and Luke. There is a long line of thought throughout the Old and New Testament that God takes care of strangers in a strange land, and he cares for the least of these. Deuteronomy 10:18 states, “He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing.”¹⁶ Jesus desired for his followers to understand the importance of this call. As we discussed in week two, climate change is uprooting families and communities, leaving many with no place to go. Climate migrants will be forced out of their homes, and into an unknown land. As this occurs, we have the opportunity to respond in a way that puts love of a foreigner at the forefront of our decision-making, and ultimately gives us an opportunity to love like Jesus loved.

Many of these migrants will be people who have lost their homes, their social safety net, and any familiarity they’ve known. There will be an increased number of these migrants entering into our own communities. If we chose to follow these commands laid out in scripture, what kind of actions would we take? What if, as these migrants entered our communities, we took the time

¹⁶ Deuteronomy 10:18 NIV

to understand the magnitude of their situation, and we welcomed them in. Whether that was through places for them to stay, food for them to eat, or simply making it known that they were welcome in the community. What if we provided assistance to help migrants find employment, language classes, or provided them with financial resources through groceries, help with paying bills, or even just a home-cooked meal. What if we actively lived out the call of hospitality in scriptures by inviting those in who are often uninvited.

Climate migrants across the globe are also facing increasingly dire situations. What if the love of our neighbor extended to our neighbor on the other side of the planet? While it logistically becomes more difficult to assist our neighbors across the globe, we can show our love through working towards justice for these individuals, and working towards immigration policies that put the value of migrants and their well-being at the forefront. We can engage in relief efforts as these weather-related disasters increase in frequency, and open up our churches or our homes to shelter these individuals if disaster occurs near our own communities.¹⁷ There is a clearly laid out call throughout scripture to love our neighbor, care for the foreigner, and provide hospitality to those who need it most. As climate migration becomes a reality near and far, what would it mean for us to become the hands and feet of Jesus through our welcoming of these individuals, as well as the action we take to create policies that protect them?

This week's lesson plan will be crucial to the congregation of UCC, as it pulls in much of what we've learned about climate migration and creation care and puts it into concrete actions the community can consider taking. It will be important for the congregation to consider both a response to love climate migrants in their own communities, as that will become an increasing reality, but also a love for those across the globe who are suffering. This will begin the calls to

¹⁷ Delgado, *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, 187.

action that will continue unpacking in the next two weeks, as we dive into what it means to be a Christian who follows Jesus, believes in the power of scripture, and cares for our neighbor in an age of climate change.

Lesson Five: Caring for Creation and Climate Migrants in Individual Ways

Lesson five would begin with the reading of James 1:22, “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”¹⁸ Scripture encourages us to live out the calls we see in the Bible. If we desire to follow the word of God, we can’t read passages that call us to care for creation, love the foreigner, and show hospitality to the least of these and not live it out in our own lives. This action will look different for everyone in the congregation of UCC. It is important that wherever the individuals are at in their understanding of climate change and climate migration, they are able to take away an action they can implement in their lives from this lesson plan.

The lesson plan would then transition into possible actions individuals can take in their own lives. Perhaps this begins with the contemplation of reflection questions that may have been challenging. The question posed at the beginning of the lesson plan asks Christians to consider viewing climate change with a lens of hope. We have hope in Christ to find redemption, just as creation does. At times, because climate change and climate migration is such an enormous problem where change feels out of reach, it can be challenging to remain optimistic when hearing of its drastic nature. However, perhaps the best way for some people in the congregation to begin working on steps they can take in their own lives to address climate change and care for climate migrants would be to contemplate what it means to have hope in climate change. Perhaps this looks like a time of prayer and meditation for some, or for others a time they can take to journal about this question.

¹⁸ James 1:22 ESV

For others, it may have been a different way of looking at scripture, and perhaps not the view they choose to take on the way these biblical passages have been interpreted. While that is to be completely understood and respected, perhaps this is a chance for these individuals to unpack their own biblical interpretation, and why it is they read passages the way they do. Oftentimes, we approach biblical passages using eisegesis instead of exegesis. We approach scripture having an idea we want to validate, and we look at the Bible and search for those passages that prove this idea. It is easy with this lens to ignore other passages, or misinterpret what we are reading. Using exegesis, we look to scripture and see what it says on its own. I would ask those who struggle with these passages whether the approach we took in this lesson plan was from an eisegesis or an exegesis lens, and ask these individuals to examine their own tendencies when reading scripture. Perhaps for some, this is the best place to start when it comes to creating steps toward climate action.

For those who may be looking for ways they can begin this process in their own lives, I would begin with suggesting some lifestyle changes that people may or may not have considered. This could be in simple practices like avoiding single use plastic, being mindful of water and electricity usage, or reducing our carbon footprint through the way we travel. Overall, finding ways as individuals we can avoid excess by looking at the bigger picture of how our consumption of resources affects those around the world.

This week's lesson plan will be important to the congregation of UCC, as it begins to provide real steps for change that individuals can begin taking. These may be smaller steps for some, but it could be the spark that lights a lifestyle change for someone in the congregation. These steps are not meaningless. Though the problem looms large, a mobilized group of individuals who care deeply for the planet through the way they live their lives can have a great

impact. For some, these could become spiritual practices that help them find deeper relationship with God. Perhaps if those around us look at our lives knowing we are followers of Christ, they will see Christians who care deeply for God, others, and creation. Christians who do not ignore the calls in scripture that are challenging or uncomfortable, but work to look more like Jesus everyday.

Lesson Six: Caring for Creation and Climate Migrants in Community

Lesson six would begin with the reading of Matthew 25:40, “the King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’”¹⁹ We are called to see Jesus in every human being, we are called to see value in every human being, as we are all made in the image of God. Genesis 1:27 states, “So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.”²⁰ Our actions towards others carry great importance, as every time we support a climate migrant or show hospitality to a family escaping natural disaster; we are showing hospitality to Jesus. Not only in these actions, but the actions we take to work towards solutions for these communities as well.

The lesson would continue by emphasizing ways the community of UCC can work together to care for creation and climate migrants through community bible studies, involvement in outreaches to assist vulnerable communities, and a reflection of the policies in place for migrants. UCC perhaps could decide to make time and space for these problems to be discussed and wrestled with. This could be through the creation of a Bible study that is optional to those in the congregation who are interested. This could be a place where individuals in the UCC community could look to scripture for responses to climate migration and creation care. Perhaps this could also involve a reading of a book, a recommendation being *Love In A Time of Climate Change: Honoring Creation, Establishing Justice* by Sharon Delgado.

¹⁹ Matthew 25:40 NIV

²⁰ Genesis 1:27 NIV

The congregation of UCC could also work together to find organizations that need resources or volunteers specifically relating to climate migrants, and find ways to become involved. One of these groups could be the human rights organization Climate Refugees. Support could be through monetary donations, or any volunteer opportunities that may come about near the church.

To help valued climate migrants become cared for, it will take analyzing the systems in our world that allow for climate migrants to go uncared for, and the excessive need for fossil fuel use to continue. While individual action matters, the extent of the problem calls for immediate, courageous action.²¹ We must support those who face the most drastic consequences of climate change, while contributing the least to the problem. We must renounce policies that do not offer protection to climate migrants, and support the work of creating policies that do. We must value God's creation in the way we live, for if we devalue creation, we devalue a key step that can be used to bring others to God. When we begin to work towards becoming a community engaged in these topics, we bring glory to God as a community who pours out love. We pour out love on God's creation, on all God's creatures, and ultimately love for Him.

The final lesson for UCC will be incredibly important, as it wraps up the ideas we've discussed the past six weeks and asks the community to question what they can do together, as a mobilized community who loves God and loves others. This will give realistic avenues for change through a Bible study, and bigger avenues for change through the policies that are in place in our systems. Ultimately, it is important that the lesson plan ends with possibilities for action, and how these actions bring glory to God. As we've taken these six weeks to learn about the massive problems that need solutions, this week will allow the congregation to begin

²¹ Delgado, *Love in a Time of Climate Change*, 188.

contemplating what it could really mean to begin discussions and work on this issue together, knowing that they have immense capabilities to create change as a community in their church body, and the world around them.

Jaelyn Wishard

SUST 415

Doran

December 13, 2022

UCC Six-Week Lesson Plan

I formulated a six-week lesson plan for the general congregation at UCC. The weeks, while all incorporating faith and climate migration, can be split into 3 “climate migrant-focused” weeks and 3 “faith-focused” weeks. This is to really drive the point home of why it is an important issue for them to care about, while also informing them on the issue.

WEEK 1: Intro

The introduction focuses on the concept of bringing the kingdom of God “on Earth as it is in Heaven.” This is an important opener because it opens the hearts of those less inclined to social justice to the issues we are about to discuss. Eric said that while much of the congregation would be open to hearing about climate change and climate migration, some would be hesitant or even turned away from the idea. By starting with forging the connection between God and justice in this area, rather than just opening with climate facts, I am hoping that everyone would at least be open to learning more, and most people would see how this is an important issue for Christians.

The first sentence of the Lord’s prayer goes like this, “Our father who is in Heaven, hallowed by your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.” Jesus emphasizes the kingdom of God in the very first sentence of how one should pray and

references it many other times throughout scripture.¹What the kingdom of God is may be difficult to define in measurable ways, so it is easier to define what it is not.

The kingdom of God is not just the promise of life after death. The line is not “sit tight” or “hold on” for the kingdom of God IN Heaven, but rather “ON Earth as it is in Heaven. The kingdom of God is something to be accessed and brought on Earth right now while we are alive.

In John 18:36, Jesus says, “My kingdom is not of this world.”² However, this is somewhat of a skewed representation of what he said in literal Greek. Jesus originally said, “Ek you kosmou toutou, ouk estin enteuthen,” meaning, “My reign is not from this world, but from another place.”³ This is an important distinction, as “My kingdom is not OF this world” is often used to shirk responsibility from making change while we live on Earth. By saying God’s kingdom is not of this world, we could argue ourselves out of almost any good deed besides evangelism, claiming the only true justice is found afterlife. However, what the verse really implies is that Jesus’ kingdom is not FROM this world, meaning His power is derived somewhere else. God’s power is not claimed through wealth, status, manipulation, or conquer the way power is obtained in the world. It is given to those who claim his name and it is available to everyone equally. Where worldly power seeks to be concentrated among a few and held over many, God’s power seeks to be spread throughout all and held over none.

Luke 17:21 is translated to, “The kingdom of God is within you,” while the original Greek said, “The kingdom of God is ‘entos hymon,’” or, “in your midst.” This is not to say that God does not touch human hearts or cause internal transformation, it does. However, it is not

¹ *New International Version*. 2011. Compiled by Bible Gateway. Palmer Lake, CO: Biblica. <https://www.biblegateway.com>.

² (*New International Version* 2011)

³ Roberts, Mark D. 2022. “Jesus and the Kingdom of God: What You Need to Know - De Pree Center.” Max De Pree Center for Leadership. <https://depree.org/jesus-and-the-kingdom-of-god-what-you-need-to-know/>.

limited to internal righteousness and an individual relationship.⁴ Think about how Paul was transformed by his interaction with God. This was the work of the kingdom of God within Paul, however, if Paul kept it to himself and did not go on to do good work and spread the message of the gospel, the transformation would have been a waste. While the church today often likes to act like we must choose righteousness or justice, as justice is a “political agenda,” that is not only untrue but, I would argue, anti-Biblical. In the kingdom of God, justice and righteousness are concurrent. Jesus did not just instruct on faith, nor did he just perform miracles and heal people, he did both together. Imagine if instead of stories of blind men being able to see, we found stories of Jesus approaching a blind man and saying, “It is truly a bummer you are blind, but the good news is God will let you go to Heaven.” That would be an awfully uninspiring story, but it tends to be how we as a church address the issues we see in the world. The promise of Heaven should not be a band aid we use to put on issues we do not want to deal with. Christians should seek to honor God and bring his kingdom to every realm through action and service, just like Jesus did.

WEEK 2: Climate Care

The second week I will introduce the issue of climate care. I believe this will be a powerful transition from the introduction week focused on the kingdom of God and the issue next week of climate migration. At this point, I would not be surprised if some people are still hesitant to get on board with how political climate change and climate migration are. So, this second week we will still have a heavy emphasis on faith and scripture, with introducing the idea of taking care of the planet. I chose to start off with a game that would be fun for all ages, since my focus is the whole congregation.

⁴ (Roberts 2022)

We are going to start off by playing Simon-Says. I will be Simon. The instructions will start out normal like, “Simon says put your hand on your hip,” but will progressively get more strange or aggressive and end with commands like, “Simon says text your boss that you quit your job,” or, “Simon says to hit the person next to you.” This will be dramatic for effect and not intended for anyone to follow. I then ask what everyone’s thoughts are on the game and what about it bothered them. It was a situation where I was obviously abusing my authority to do things that were harmful to them. While in the game, and in real life, abuse of power is sometimes intentional, it can also happen accidentally if we are not keeping ourselves aware of what we are doing. Authority can be a difficult thing to hold well.

We will read Genesis 1:26-28, which is the story of God creating humans and giving them dominion over the Earth and its creatures.⁵ How many of you are parents? I do not have a child, but I do have a dog, and while my role is clearly more difficult (they laugh ha-ha), I will try to explain the relationship in a way you could understand as parents. My dog provides me with happiness, companionship, and protection. In return, it is my job to feed him, walk him, take him to the vet, and everything else that comes with making sure he is taken care of. This is not always fun, and I end up sacrificing a lot of time and money to make sure he is happy and healthy. This does not seem fair as I am the one who is in charge, so should he not be catering to me? Same with your kids. It must feel so unfair to have to be held responsible for feeding them, making sure they are doing well in school, that they generally turn out to be a good person and contribute to society, and that their feelings are protected, and they know they are loved. While they are not technically your property, they are your dependent so why should you be serving them and not the other way around? Clearly, I am being ironic, and any good parent or pet owner

⁵(*New International Version* 2011)

wants to treat their child with dignity, respect, and love. Not only is it critical in maintaining our relationship with them, and therefore receiving any benefits like love, it is also our job as we are responsible for them.

Our relationship with the Earth works the same way. To harm the Earth is to harm ourselves and fail at our job. The Earth has a finite set of resources and ignoring that fact will not alter the result of us running wells dry or polluting them so much that we can no longer drink from them. If we want humankind to be able to survive, we cannot unplug our lifeline by treating the Earth with such negligence. Personal benefits aside, the Earth was a gift entrusted to us from God. He could have let us dwell in Heaven with Him, but He created for us a place to live and gave us dominion over, responsibility for, nature and animals. To abuse that authority is to abuse creation and the relationship granted to us from God. To honor God is to be good stewards of the Earth. It is not enough to post pictures of yourself at a beach on Earth Day, we must have a respectful and harmonious relationship with the Earth and its resources, neither exploiting it nor contributing to its harm.

WEEK 3: Climate Migration

The third week will be a big moment as I am introducing to them the concept of climate migration, what causes it and what it is. I think this is necessary for my group because the average person is likely unfamiliar with climate migration, and especially what the implications are for us. I will be attempting to tackle both the issues of prejudice against migrants but also the prejudice or general disinterest in migration. This week will be unique from the first two as there is much more information than analogy or scripture.

I would like to make a list of what comes to mind when we hear the words sustainability, environmentalism, and climate change. I predict things like single use versus reusable plastics,

composting, recycling, straws, and emissions or gas will be brought up. This is great because as a society we tend to focus on the minute aspects of an issue. To an individual, it might seem much more tangible to tackle single-use plastic usage than to reign in carbon emissions, so I think what we have tended to put as our front-runner environmental issues makes sense. However, the sustainable movement runs much deeper and wider than buying a set of reusable straws and making compost. Natural disaster, pollution, and sea-level rise are real issues tied to the climate crises, which is already affecting people daily. In Malibu, we have witnessed effects of a damaged climate; wildfire is a devastating reality that will only become more frequent in the future. Other things like drought, unlivable heavy, and flooding will be issues for a huge percentage of the population in the next 30 years.⁶ A significant side-effect of this is an imminent mass migration.

Humans were much far more nomadic and familiar with group migration than in the last few hundred years. Even in just about the last century it seems national borders became set. During the time of the Bible, it was not uncommon for groups to move around. While settlements and cities also existed back then, it seemed migration was also more frequent and has dwindled over time. Even the nation of America, though first inhabited by indigenous peoples, was colonized, and eventually settled by groups of immigrants, first from England and then many other places. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century still many were coming over to America. Also, countries were still fighting over land all over the globe in the 20th century. While war still obviously happens now, conquest and regime-change are not common today as it once was. The concept of concrete national borders is so recent, and yet so pervasive in how we view ourselves as people.

⁶ Vince, Gaia. 2022. *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World*. N.p.: Flatiron Books.

This is detrimental, not only because it fuels xenophobia, prejudice, or hatred towards migrants, but also because it makes us feel resistant to the necessary of migration in the face of climate change. Estimations go all the way up to 1.2 billion migrants before 2050. A population almost the size of India will be displaced from where they are currently living, within the next 30 years.⁷ This large-scale migration is not a looming threat, but rather a legitimate adaptation strategy to addressing the climate crisis. However, our current fear of immigrants and displacement is currently standing as an obstacle to the world successfully planning to thrive as a global community.

This does not have to be the case, and Christians can help set the precedent for hope and change. We hold it true that our identity first and foremost is found in Christ. We should have never allowed one's location within a national border to have any authority over what we think about said person. Immigrants are people just like you, just like Christ, and they just happen to have been born or resided in a different place. You, one day, might be a migrant. While this might currently be a horrifying thought, we can change the narrative about where we find community and identity and start changing the way we treat those of different nationalities. Jesus did not come to save America, nor did He come to save Israel- He came to save everyone.

WEEK 4: Death, Burial, and Resurrection

Week 4 is somewhat of a break from the two climate focused weeks, and a revisit on the more faith-emphasized content. I think it is important to sprinkle this throughout because Christians love to come to church, hear a lesson, and forget it two minutes after they leave. For a message to be driven home, it must be repeated multiple times in different ways. That is why I

⁷ "There could be 1.2 billion climate refugees by 2050. Here's what you need to know." 2022. Zurich Insurance. <https://www.zurich.com/en/media/magazine/2022/there-could-be-1-2-billion-climate-refugees-by-2050-here-s-what-you-need-to-know>.

am continuing to reiterate the connection between faith and climate justice. This week is different from the other two faith-focused weeks as it is more than just why you should care.

Death, burial, and resurrection is a theme not only important throughout the Bible, but through Christianity overtime. It is central to the story, with Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection being the very cornerstone of faith. The importance of Jesus' death is not just that he died, but the circumstances around His death. He was not randomly struck by lightning; Jesus was murdered by hanging on a cross. While it was a political scheme by the people in power to retain their power, the Jews were ultimately given the option to let Jesus go free or a convicted criminal, Barabbas. The Jews chose Jesus, a man who had loved and served them, and commanded Pilate that He should be crucified.⁸

Earth too, was betrayed by people it only did good to. While much of this was unintentional, and then still not with the intention of harming the Earth but rather the valuing of our own productivity over the ecosystem, it was still a cause and effect. Actions have consequences and because of the damage that has been done, we will have to feel the effects of climate change. More people will experience natural disasters, we will lose plenty of livable land, people will lose their homes, and there will be lots of displacement and suffering. We will lose life the way we currently know it, and we must know that with that grief, must ultimately come responsibility.

Jesus' burial is often overlooked; however, it continues to be referenced other times in the Bible and makes Jesus' resurrection that much more incredible.⁹ After His crucifixion, Jesus had to lay to rest, subject to death for three days. He was not immediately revived post-mortem,

⁸ (New International Version 2011)

⁹ Gaffin, Richard B. n.d. "Redemption and Resurrection: An Exercise in Biblical-Systematic Theology." The Gospel Coalition. <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/redemption-and-resurrection-an-exercise-in-biblical-systematic-theology/>.

so no one could claim a false death, and in that time, he experienced the suffering of death before overcoming it. It also shows that while He was able to rise again, there are consequences to actions, and he had to serve time for the Jews decision to murder him. Unlike his murder, which was that used for criminals, Jesus was given a proper burial in which His friends anointed Him with oils.¹⁰ This was not necessary for His body, as He is God, but it was symbolic that, not only did they believe He would not rise, but that He was granted dignity in His burial and given a proper tomb. Before He was raised, he was respected.

The goal of taking responsibility for Jesus' death, and then climate change, is not to shame but to bring change. We need a burial of our old ways. The Earth will take a while to heal from the damage that has already been done, but we can still act to prevent further loss and there is actually science being released that we might be able to reverse some damage.¹¹ We can also put to rest our ideas of "us" and "them"; the concept that somehow we gain status by a piece of land or by our skin tone. Rather we could see ourselves as a global kingdom, not people who can only thrive in one culture, but who can blend and coexist in love. But we need to take the steps of burial, and change our approach, if we want to be resurrected.

Death does not have the final word, and on the third day, Jesus rose. Just as Jesus was resurrected, and we have been spiritually resurrected with him, we as a world can be resurrected. When we are resurrected in Christ, we cannot revert to how we were— Jesus himself was resurrected with holes in His hands. Actions have results, but God can overcome death. Nature can heal. Migrants can have redemption and find new life where they relocate. We will adjust to

¹⁰ Jackson, Wayne. n.d. "The Burial of Christ's Body." Christian Courier. Accessed 2022. <https://christiancourier.com/articles/the-burial-of-christs-body>.

¹¹ (Vince 2022, xv)

the influx of people in new regions. But we first must acknowledge the death, pursue burial, and then we will be naturally resurrected.

WEEK 5: Intersectionality in Climate Migration

After last week's message of hope and a call to action, under the theme of death, burial, and resurrection, we will move to a more nuanced issue found in climate migration- intersectionality. Intersectionality impacts any social issue but the way it manifests in climate migration is particularly interesting. I hope to make this issue familiar to anyone in my group that has not heard of it, and for those who have, to get a better understanding. I think it is more impactful to teach them about the idea of intersectionality as a whole, rather than just specific examples in climate migration. This way, when they encounter something related to climate migration and intersectionality outside of this lesson plan, they will have the eyes to see it themselves.

I want to introduce you to two friends: Dave and Nick. They go to school together in a small rural community in Oregon. Dave is an only child to two parents who co-own a fortune 500 company. They vacation at their second home in Colorado in the summers and winters. Nick is the oldest of 4 siblings who live with a single mother. She makes her money by being a seasonal outdoor worker and working odd jobs for wealthier families in the off seasons. When their community is hit by a devastating wildfire, do you think Nick and Dave will have the same or equal experience?

Nick and his family would have a more difficult time adjusting, as they come from a lower, less reliable income and have more people to account for in their adjustment. Wherever they relocated to would have to fit and feed a family of 6 at whatever income Nick's mother could make. Additionally, his mother is a seasonal outdoor worker, which would make

overcoming climate disaster very difficult. While Dave and his family would still obviously suffer a great loss if they had to abandon their home, they already have a property that belongs to them, a steady stream of significant income, and only three heads to account for.

While Dave and Nick and their situation are of course hypothetical, these are real issues that people have been facing for a while. There was a small island village, called Nuatambu, that faced detrimental sea-level rise spanning from 1947-2014. Nuatambu lost just over half of its inhabitable land mass, including 11 houses. This gave the 133 people that lived there no other choice but to relocate. However, this was done completely on their own time with their own means. This meant some families were able to plan ahead and plant gardens a year in advance to have food when they got there, while others settled on unstable ground prone to landslides. Circumstances varied greatly by each family's ability to move certain distances and the resources to set up a satisfactory home wherever they could end up.¹²

This brings up the issue of intersectionality, which is that issues people face do not occur isolated from one another, but they overlap and affect each other. When you are set up with obstacles built into one aspect of your life, those obstacles will come with you and build upon other challenges you face. I will draw a Venn diagram to make it simpler to understand. Someone who is a woman and an immigrant who does not speak the native language does not face 3 areas of issues, she faces 7 (shown in Venn diagram) because the challenges that come with those identities, combine to form new challenges.

Intersectionality may seem not as important as some of the things we have tackled, but it is a critical aspect of climate migration that should be addressed. Treating every person displaced

¹²Simon Albert et al., "Interactions between Sea-Level Rise and Wave Exposure on Reef Island Dynamics in the Solomon Islands," *Environmental Research Letters* 11, no. 5 (May 1, 2016): 054011, <https://doi.org/10.1088/1748-9326/11/5/054011>.

by climate change as if their situations are equal or the same, not only discounts the individual experience but it is ineffective in making a lasting impact. Climate change disproportionately affects women, groups of lower income, and other marginalized identities. Marginalized communities, the societies' "others," were who Jesus constantly looked out for and worked through. James 1:27 says that pure religion is to "visit widows and orphans in their affliction."¹³ This clearly should not be limited to those social groups but taken as an implication of who Christians should look after: the powerless.

WEEK 6: Conclusion/Call to Action

Finally, my lesson plan must come to an end, and this last week is going to drive home the importance of taking action one last time. Eric advised us against going too political or giving literal calls to action throughout the plan, but rather driving them to action by appealing to their hearts. That is what I attempt to do in this plan, explaining not only why they should care about climate migrants, but what it means to care for them. I think starting with a question helps them get engaged in the lesson and makes the lesson easier to digest.

Talk to the person next to you about two things that commonly occur in public spaces that really bother you. Mine would be traffic and a child throwing a tantrum, does that bother anyone else? When we are busy going throughout our day, it is easy to view annoyances like these as just that: annoyances. Sometimes we even take it a step further and suggest to ourselves it is a personal attack from the universe, because of course you would hit traffic on the day you are running late or of course there is a kid screaming in the airport when you already have a migraine. What we tend to not notice or think about, is what might spark this annoyance. That traffic that made me believe I was the world's #1 victim- caused by a motorcyclist getting hit and

¹³(*New International Version* 2011)

killed. That kid who is screaming and crying as I wait to board my flight- he's having a rough go because his parents are splitting up. There is almost always a deeper story behind what bothers us, but we often fail to look far enough past ourselves to see it. This is not just about traffic; we also do this with people. Not just kids screaming in the airport, but homeless people and immigrants. So much prejudice against immigrants is fueled by people perceiving them as the inconvenience they are causing to them. They might not be familiar with English? Well great, they are anti-American. This line of thinking is completely dehumanizing and not what I think Jesus meant when He said to love our neighbor.

We will read Luke 10:25-37, the parable of the good Samaritan. In this story Jesus says the neighbor of the man is not a priest, not a Levite, but the Samaritan who helped him.¹⁴ This gives two significant takeaways: 1) someone's nationality is not reason to consider them an enemy and 2) to be a neighbor is to look out for one another. In the cultural context of Jesus giving this parable, Samaritans were considered the Jews enemy going back 500 years to the Babylonian exile. This was not a balanced opposition, the Jews were racist/prejudiced against Samaritans.¹⁵ So for Jesus to make the Samaritan the hero of this story, was to spit in the face of their hatred and tell them that the people across the border were still their neighbors.

Additionally, this story shows us that simply claiming someone as your neighbor is not enough to truly show them love. Love requires action. It is not enough to say that what happens to marginalized people is sad, you must do everything in your power to set people free.¹⁶ Multitudes of people are going to move all over the place, and the world is going to have a lot of different reactions. Do you want to be on the side of welcome, acceptance, and hospitality? Or

¹⁴ (*New International Version* 2011)

¹⁵ (Roberts 2022)

¹⁶ Sims, Andre. 2020. "The Good Samaritan as a roadmap toward racial justice." World Vision. <https://www.worldvision.org/christian-faith-news-stories/good-samaritan-roadmap-toward-racial-justice>.

are you going to be a priest who crosses the street when a man is bleeding out? To truly love God is to love people. True love does not stop when they are from another region or when they need financial assistance or government given housing. People are still people when they are fleeing war or natural disaster and when it means their arrival will inconvenience your life. Jesus has laid the groundwork that not only is every person deserving of respect and acceptance, but that to truly love people you must go out of your way to help. Even when it might seem inconvenient or counterintuitive, it is not enough to just sit back and shake your head at how sad suffering is. We cannot wait for His kingdom in heaven, we must bring it on Earth.

Kathryn Horvath

Climate Migration Final Project

Dr. Doran

December 14, 2022

Six Week Lesson Plan on Climate Migration

This lesson plan is written for the adult congregation of the Pepperdine University Church of Christ. My advisor was Shannon Warwar. I will cover Creation Care, climate change and climate migration, the disproportional effects of climate migration, and how Christians should respond to this global problem.

Lesson 1: Creation Care

This first lesson will be focused on Creation Care. I aim to not use a lot of language about climate change or migration which may be politically charged and might make my audience disengage. I want to establish ethos for myself and my argument encompassing climate migration's connection to the Bible and why Christians should care about climate migration. By giving Biblical context and explaining passages that are often misunderstood, I can address the core reasons of why Christians should care for nature. Caring for climate migrants is certainly a goal, but my other message is that we are destroying God's creation, and this itself is a sin.

I want to start by helping the congregation connect nature to God. I will ask if anyone has ever felt as though they have experienced God or felt closer to Him while in nature. Personally, I am often in awe of his creativity when seeing a beautiful landscape or amazed by his power when looking at the ocean. I will then ask if anyone has ever heard of Creation Care. I am expecting that very few people, if any, would say yes. Creation Care is simply that—caring for

creation. To explore what the Bible says about creation, let's begin with Genesis when God created the Earth and everything in it.

I will read Genesis 1:11-13 and 1:24-25. I will ask, "what was the Earth's role in these verses?" In these verses, we see that the land is a co-creator with God! Though God spoke creation into existence, He appears to be working in conjunction with the land: "Let the land produce vegetation...and living creatures."¹ The land has a responsibility and a role in this creation story. When God finished His creation, He declared that "It was very good."² God sees His creation as good, and He loves it. If we are to love God, we should love what he loves—which is His creation!

The gospel is proclaimed to every part of creation, which includes all people *and* *creatures* under heaven.³ Creation has a unique relationship with God, which is also evident in the story of Noah. After the flood, who did God make a covenant with? If we read Genesis 9:8-17, it is clear that God made His covenant with people *and* with every living thing on Earth. Clearly, the scriptures show that God has a significant relationship with His creation. So why would we harm something which he clearly cares for?

This calls into question our responsibility to creation. I will read Genesis 1:26, both in the King James Version and the New International Version. God instructed us to work and take care of nature, and he gave us dominion over it. While many people often use this term "dominion" to justify controlling and abusing nature, this is not an accurate interpretation. In Hebrew, we are commanded to "Avad and Shamar" the earth. This is translated to preserving and protecting the

¹ Genesis 1:11, 24 (New International Version).

² Genesis 1:31 (NIV).

³ Mark 16:15 (NIV).

earth, not dominating it.⁴ We are charged to take care of nature and to work it responsibly. Just as God has a relationship with His creation, we too have a unique relationship with nature. In order to continue gaining from its resources (such as food and energy), we must treat it responsibly.

To conclude, creation care points to scripture to show that God deeply loves His creation, and He expects us to protect and preserve it—not abuse our power over it. The Earth has finite resources which we rely on, so it is important to be intentional in how we take from the Earth. To disrespect God’s Word is a sin, so isn’t it then a sin to abuse nature? I will end this lesson by suggesting that each member find a time within the next week to connect with nature and identify one aspect of God within His creation.

Lesson 2: Foundations of Climate Change and Climate Migration

This week's lesson will dive into the science and statistics behind climate change and climate migration. It is crucial to understand what climate change is, since this is ultimately what is causing people to migrate. Even though some people will already understand the science of climate change, it is important to make sure that everyone has a shared foundation of knowledge. I also use visual aids to show how significant these numbers are. Then, I will explain what climate migration is, share statistics, and give real world examples for people to relate to. Finally, I will address why Christians should care about this topic.

⁴ Sarah Seibert, “Creation Care Theology & Ethics,” Lecture, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, August 1, 2022, Video of lecture, 2:37:41, https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/bD9C0M-w7dGhj-spqzpMTzFtAI-1NPeuHeeYHCtfJQegudfm7Fa8tIBb7UaoIOIS5hnaQFbrfzK7Au8E.zi_m42XEODTdeLWs?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=IbHGzpZQSoWZoebuAIweJg.1670719670532.e077663ff686a0582513cb7e2cdc7ecf&_x_zm_rtaid=0.

I will start by addressing the sensitivity of this topic. Even though climate change is a field of science, the topics of climate change and climate migration have become highly politicized. I ask that my audience try to approach this topic with an open mindset and trust that I rely on scientifically proven information. To understand the topic of climate migration, we must first understand what climate change is.

To explain the fundamentals of climate change, I will show a graphic of a timeline of Earth's average temperature.⁵ I should point out how quickly our temperature has risen since the Industrial Revolution in comparison to the rest of the Earth's history.

Now I will explain the basic facts of climate science. Firstly, burning fossil fuels releases carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. If CO₂ is in the atmosphere, the atmospheric temperature rises. This is due to the Greenhouse Effect, which is simply a characteristic of our atmosphere. I will give an analogy of a blanket around the earth as our atmosphere and show this graph to help them visualize how much CO₂ is now in the atmosphere.⁶ It is also important to explain why a few degrees of warming is so significant. When the Earth was 5 degrees Celsius cooler, New York was under 800 meters of ice. But if we rise by 6-10 degrees, New York would be under 150 meters of water!⁷ I will ask the congregation if anyone has any remaining questions about the basics of climate change that I can address.

⁵ Randall Munroe, "A Timeline of Earth's Average Temperature," xkcd.com, <https://xkcd.com/1732/>.

⁶ *Changing Our Atmosphere*, graph, Climate Central, https://ccimags-2020.s3.amazonaws.com/2020CO2Peak/2020CO2Peak_Longterm_en_title_lg.jpg.

⁷ Matthew Groves, "Climate Science," Lecture, Young Evangelicals for Climate Action, August 1, 2022, Video of lecture, 2:37:41, https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/play/bD9C0M-w7dGhj-spqzpMTzFtAI-1NPeuHeeYHCtJQegudfm7Fa8tIBb7UaoIOIS5hnaQFbrfzK7Au8E.zi_m42XEODTdeLWs?continueMode=true&_x_zm_rtaid=IbHGzpZQSoWZoebuAIweJg.1670719670532.e077663ff686a0582513cb7e2cdc7ecf&_x_zm_rhtaid=0.

The world is on a trajectory for a rise in global average temperatures by 3-4 degrees Celsius by 2100.⁸ But what does this mean? It means that the increase in heat will trigger extreme weather events and change global rainfall patterns. Sea levels could rise by 2 meters, there will be an expanding belt of intolerable heat around the equator, and the land available for agriculture will decline. All of this will force millions—even billions—of people to move. While there are already millions of climate migrants around the world today, it is estimated that there will be 2 billion refugees around the world by 2100.⁹ These are what we call climate migrants: people who are displaced from their homes because of climactic events, such as hurricanes, floods, landslides, fires, and droughts. Internally displaced migrants refer to those who move within their national borders, while externally displaced migrants are those who move to a new country. It is important to understand that climate change is not causing new events to occur, but instead it is increasing the frequency and intensity of pre-existing natural weather events. For example, droughts are normal in many places, including Guatemala. But as the droughts get longer and the rain seasons diminish, this heavily impacts agricultural yield. It can also create societal strife, increase poverty, and can exacerbate sanitary and health conditions like malnutrition and dehydration. These extreme droughts are forcing Guatemalans to migrate.

I want to end by addressing why Christians should care about this. By referencing the previous lesson on Creation Care, we know that God loves the Earth and wants us to protect and preserve it. Our actions—primarily those which emit greenhouse gases—are directly harming the planet and everything living on it. We are called to love our neighbors, and we should be aware of how climate change is directly harming people. In future lessons I will address exactly how

⁸ Gaia Vince, *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World* (New York: Flatiron Books, 2022), 3.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

this is causing people harm.

Lesson 3: How Might UCC Members Relate to Climate Migrants?

This week's lesson will explore the ways in which the UCC members can relate to the topic of climate migration. It is important that this follows the lessons on creation care and the foundation of climate change and climate migration because I want to make sure that the congregation understands how they can personally connect to these topics. It is important that they understand that they probably have been and certainly will be impacted by climate migration. We will also focus on the four Horsemen—fire, heat, floods, and drought—in order to simplify the scale of climactic events and tie in the California wildfires.

I will begin by talking about the importance of understanding these communities through a non-judgmental lens. We should remember our shared humanity when trying to relate to climate migrants. We frequently forget this, especially in such a politically divisive world. But the Bible says that we have *all* been created equal in the image of God, we have all sinned, and we are supposed to love our neighbor as ourselves.¹⁰ We are all one in Christ, even if we have different experiences and opinions. Therefore, it is important to remember that these climate migrants are our brothers in sisters in Christ. I will ask that the congregation approaches this topic based on our shared humanity first instead of our different nationalities.

Next, we will discuss the Four Horsemen: fire, heat, floods, and drought¹. Climate change is a threat multiplier, which means that it exacerbates preexisting environmental, social, and economic problems.¹¹ These “Four horsemen” are the dominant environmental problems that

¹⁰ Gen. 1:27; Rom. 3:23; Mark 12:31.

¹¹ Vince, *Nomad Century*, 10.

climate change is exacerbating and thus pushing more people to migrate.

Living in Southern California, I expect that most UCC members have experienced a wildfire before. But before connecting the “horsemen” to their experiences, I will give a disclaimer explaining that if they have experienced a wildfire, some of these topics may trigger past fear, trauma, or anxiety. I would ask that they use these feelings to try to relate to their neighbors around the world who are experiencing similar devastations. In a discussion format, here are some questions I will ask: What were some of your primary concerns during that time (i.e. during the Woolsey fire)? Would you consider yourself as having been displaced during that time? What resources did you rely on in the aftermath of the fire? Have you ever considered moving due to the fires and droughts in California? Some responses I might expect are that people were concerned for their family, home, and possessions. Examples of resources might be insurance, financial social safety nets, or nearby family. I do not expect many people to have considered themselves as being displaced or as fitting the criteria of a climate migrant. If anyone has considered moving, this would be an example of an internally displaced climate migrant. It is estimated that climate change could force more than 216 million people to migrate within their own countries by 2050!¹² To conclude the discussion, I will ask them to imagine what it would be like if they did not have those resources which helped them and their community to recover. While some people are able to choose to move to escape climate disasters, others have no choice, and furthermore do not have the stability or access to resources as many people have in a developed country.

I also want to briefly show the congregation that the church has already been exposed to

¹² Viviane Clement et al., “Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration,” *World Bank*, (2021). <http://hdl.handle.net/10986/36248>.

people likely experiencing climate migration. I will talk about the Malibu Labor Exchange, which the congregation has a history of supporting financially. Many of the people looking for work there have come up from Mexico and Central or South America. While there are many reasons for migrating to California, climate change is an increasingly dominant reason.

For example, Guatemalans are being forced to migrate to California as climate change increases the frequency of extreme El Niño events.¹³ Longer droughts mean that Guatemalans cannot grow food, and the catastrophic floods and hurricanes destroy communities with already limited resources. If their community has not been able to grow food, both their health and job status are impacted. In migrating, these families are searching for stability.

Overall, my goal has been to connect climate migration to the people in our community and the experiences of the UCC members themselves.

Lesson 4: How Should We Treat Climate Migrants?

This week's lesson will discuss how Jesus expects us to treat others. I will give details of how climate migration affects people, and then connect those migrants and immigrants to the neighbors whom the Bible calls us to love. I will discuss the Biblical understanding of foreigners and explore the ways in which Jesus treated those marginalized in his community. This subject is important to discuss with the congregation, because political and personal biases should not be held above the ways in which Jesus wants us to love others. As Christians, we need to be reminded of our shared humanity in Christ.

¹³ "Climate change is Making El Niños More Intense, Study Finds," *Yale Environment 360*, *Yale School of the Environment*, October 23, 2019, <https://e360.yale.edu/digest/climate-change-is-making-el-ninos-more-intense-study-finds#:~:text=Climate%20change%20is%20increasing%20the,the%20National%20Academy%20of%20Sciences>.

I will begin by reading Deuteronomy 10:17-19, which is about God loving the fatherless, the widows, and the foreigners. My question for the congregation is: “What does the Bible mean by foreigners?” I will explain that references to foreigners and strangers in the Bible allude to someone who has been displaced from their land. It is also important to be reminded of the Israelites in the Old Testament, who were often moving around and looking for a place to settle. We know that in their displacement, God loved and provided for them. Throughout most of human civilization, migration was normal among people. Only relatively recently has it become more common for people to be settled in one area. I think it is important to be reminded of the natural migration of humans, which is evident in scripture and in general human history.

Then I will read Proverbs 14:21 and remind them that throughout the Old and New Testaments, God continually speaks on his love for the poor and vulnerable, and He specifically tells us to care for these neighbors. Poor and marginalized populations are the most vulnerable to climate change. This is due to the fact that they have the least amount of resources and infrastructure in place to withstand something like a hurricane or a longer drought. Many developing nations are also situated close to the equator and thus are experiencing the more severe impacts of the rising temperatures as compared to a more Northern country like Canada. Climate change is also a threat multiplier, so it worsens pre-existing issues in vulnerable communities.

To transition, I will ask the congregation how Jesus treated those who were marginalized in community. I expect to hear responses referencing when Jesus met with the tax collector, healed the lepers, interacted with the Samaritan woman at the well, and extended compassion to the woman caught in adultery. These people were all outcasts in their society, and yet what did Jesus do? He showed them the same compassion and love that he showed everyone else. I think

that it is especially important to reflect on how Jesus treated others as we try to navigate our world today. Concurrent with human history, in our modern day we create in- and out-groups that differentiate people, and we perceive the world through generalizations which can easily turn into stereotypes. Even Jesus faced this in his lifetime, which is evident in his interaction with the Samaritan woman at the well. However, he overcame and looked past these characteristics to encounter an individual made in the image of God. It is not enough to pretend that prejudice does not exist; as Christians, we must work to look past these worldly characteristics and connect with others as our brothers and sisters in Christ. In terms of climate migration, we must try to connect to immigrants in our shared humanity and try to understand them as holistic individuals. Is this not what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves?

The Parable of the Good Samaritan further shows how Jesus wants us to love our neighbors, despite our worldly disputes. Those who are the most vulnerable and who are in the most pain should be the first people whom we invite into our homes. Even Jesus said, “whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”¹⁴ We should aim to treat each other how we would expect to treat Jesus—with the upmost respect, care, and love.

Lesson 5: How Women Are Disproportionately Impacted

While I previously explored the ways in which ways climate migration is affecting people, in this lesson I will focus on how it disproportionately affects women. Assuming women make up half of the congregation, spending time discussing the gender-based violence and difficulties that are faced during climate migration would help much of the congregation relate to

¹⁴ Matthew 25:40 (NIV).

the struggles of climate migrants and better understand the complexities. It is important to help them understand this piece of climate migration because it is an important aspect of environmental justice, and God is a God of justice. Furthermore, since Christian men and women are trying to live according to Jesus' example, I think it is also wise to include examples of how Jesus treated women during a time when they were disregarded by society.

While we have already learned that climate migration does not affect everyone the same way, we must also understand how women are disproportionately vulnerable to climate migration. I will share this quote: "Systemic gender inequalities in leadership and decision-making limits their access to resources and inhibits their ability to withstand the impacts of climate change, to access basic services and to recover from climate-related disasters."¹⁵ This relates to the concept of intersectionality (coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw), which explains that multiple aspects of identity overlap and influence each other.

When extreme climactic events occur, women are 14 times more likely to die than men.¹⁶ Many factors play into this shocking statistic. Women are less likely to have access to education and information (especially regarding emergency responses), they have little decision making at the familial and societal levels, and they are more likely to have to care for children and elderly while migrating. Imagine a woman is trying to flee after a flood devastated her home in

¹⁵ "Evicted By Climate Change: Confronting the Gendered Impacts of Climate-Induced Displacement," *CARE Climate Change and Resilience Platform*, (July 2020), https://courses.pepperdine.edu/access/content/group/sust415.01_2226/Evicted%20by%20Climate%20Change.pdf.

¹⁶ Martina Castiglioni, "3 Ways in Which Gender Equality Interlinks With Climate Migration as an Adaptation Strategy—Exploring the Links Between Migration, the Environment, and SDG 5," Environmental Migration portal, <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/3-ways-which-gender-equality-interlinks-climate-migration-adaptation-strategy-exploring-links-between-migration-environment-and-sdg-5>.

Afghanistan. How do you think the responsibility of traveling with two young children and her elderly mother may impact her migration? This caretaking responsibility is typically placed on women, and it can significantly slow them down and make them more vulnerable to violence while migrating. Many studies have shown that for women, displacement increases the risk of abuse and domestic violence, and it makes them more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and human trafficking.¹⁷ Even in the US, after the 2005 Hurricane Katrina hit, the rate of gender-based violence women experience more than tripled.¹⁸ This shows that even in a developed country like the US, women experience climate disasters differently.

There is a clear increase in sex slavery following climactic disasters, which specifically targets women. Kianna, an 11-year-old girl in the Philippines, was sold into sex work by her mother after Typhoon Haiyan hit as "the strongest storm ever to make landfall."¹⁹ Within the month following the typhoon, it's estimated that 5,000 women were victims of sexual violence.²⁰ Families become desperate after the loss of their homes and livelihoods, and climate change also makes it easier for human traffickers to operate as infrastructure breaks down and people become more vulnerable and desperate.

Many of the places experiencing climate migration are patriarchal societies and cultures that disregard women and do not grant them equal rights. Let's remember the stories of Jesus interacting with women in a time when women were disregarded by society. In John 4, Jesus goes to a well in Samaria where he meets a Samaritan woman. In this story, Jesus reaches out to

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Justine Calma, "Sex Trafficking in the Philippines: How Typhoons and Desperation Make Women and Children Vulnerable," The Groundtruth Project, April 21, 2017, <https://thegroundtruthproject.org/philippines-sex-trafficking-climate-change/>.

²⁰ Ibid.

this woman despite the societal expectations bound by their difference in gender and religiosity/ethnicity. In that time, Jews and Samaritans did not associate with each other. It is even more shocking that Jesus, a righteous Jewish man, asked to share a cup of water with her let alone interact with her. Even Mary Magdalene, who had been possessed by many demons, was included among Jesus' male disciples as they traveled with him. I will end by asking the congregation how they think Jesus would respond to the problem of women being disproportionately harmed by climate migration, and how we might be able to mimic his acts of love towards migrant women.

Lesson 6: Christian Virtues and a Call to Action

This final lesson will serve as a conclusion and a broad call to action for the UCC congregation. The lesson is focused on addressing some Christian virtues which directly relate to climate migration. It is important to give the audience some tangible goals and guidance so that they do not feel overwhelmed by all this new information. Exploring Christian values help to connect climate migration with the Bible. I will also address the unique responsibility we have in taking accountability for our actions, since our actions in the United States are directly causing climate change which is harming both nature and people.

To begin, I will ask the congregation to list some Christian values which they think might connect to this topic of climate migration. While there could be many possible answers, the ones I will highlight are justice, generosity, and solidarity.

Justice is incredibly pertinent to the topic of climate migration. As we previously learned, the consequences of climate change are not distributed equally across the planet, and most often they fall on poorest and most vulnerable communities. It is the nations which emit the least

amount of greenhouse gases that tend to be on the frontline of climate change, which forces people to migrate. We also discussed how women experience this process differently than men. While it is clear that we should advocate for equal rights for women, it is also important to understand the more intricate aspects like the associated increase in gender-based violence.

The Bible also calls us to be generous with our resources. I will read 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, which says that “God loves a cheerful giver.”²¹ We should also not be boastful in our generosity or expect to gain some reward from it.²² Instead, we should be open and generous with what we have, since all that we have is a gift from God. Therefore, if we have been blessed with abundant resources, isn’t it wise for us to share those with others? I would argue that climate migrants are some of the most needy, vulnerable, and hurting people in our world today. They are being forced to leave their homes and communities as they try to survive our changing climate. While it is good to give financially, I think it is important to look to Jesus’ example once again. In the Bible, He was seen *interacting* with the people who needed help. Jesus was a hands-on guy! He showed how we should be in interacting with the world, serving others and sharing in our humanity. The Bible also calls Christians to be the hands and feet of Jesus, doing His good works and spreading His gospel. We can share the love and gospel of Jesus Christ by showing these virtues to our neighbors who are experiencing the effects of climate migration.

Next, solidarity involves recognizing that we are all part of the same human family and that we can be united toward a common goal. What should our shared goal be in the subject of climate migration? I have a few to suggest. Firstly, on the individual level it is important to remember that we are all deserving of dignity and respect as children of God, despite our flawed

²¹ 2 Cor. 9:7 (NIV).

²² Matt. 6:1-4 (NIV).

humanity. Secondly, it is easy to say that our common goal should be limiting the extent to which we are harming God's creation and people.

This relates to our actions which are causing climate change and are thus contributing to the devastating circumstances which people are experiencing all around the world. While it is unhelpful to place the blame on any one individual, it is also important to take responsibility for our actions. Has anyone heard of a sin of omission? Even though I do not wake up every day and purposefully contribute emissions to spite the environment and climate migrants, remaining in ignorance and not taking responsibility for my actions is still a sin. Thinking back to our lesson on creation care, we have also discussed how harming and disrespecting God's creation is a sin against God. We are not fulfilling His instructions to preserve and protect the Earth. Therefore, we cannot shy away from that fact that our individual and shared standards of living—especially in the US, which is the top emitter historically—are consequentially causing harm for all aspects of God's creation.²³

With all this information, my hope is that the congregation is better equipped to respond to climate migration in an informed, compassionate, and Christ-like way.

²³ Hannah Ritchie, "Who Has Contributed Most to Global CO2 Emissions?" Our World in Data, October 1, 2019, <https://ourworldindata.org/contributed-most-global-co2>.

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Dr. Doran

SUST 415: Climate Migration

14 December 2022

Final Project

Structure

Lesson #1: What is climate migration?

Lesson #2: Love your neighbor

Lesson #3: Love God's creation

Lesson #4: The Beatitudes

Lesson #5: A Biblical Perspective on Immigration

Lesson#6: Recommendations

Lesson #1

Topic: What is climate migration?

Learning Objectives: To educate the University Church of Christ (UCC) which meets on Pepperdine's campus and is led by Eric Wilson on climate change and climate migration

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: The focus of this lesson plan is to familiarize the UCC with climate change and how one of its consequences is climate migration. I think establishing a good foundation of knowledge will be beneficial when we dive into more specific topics in other weeks. Eric described his congregation as a very loving group of people. However, he did express they are more loving towards one another than leadership within the

church. I want to use this lesson to hopefully come across as purely an educator and not that I am telling people how to feel about or act on climate change.

Materials Needed: Pens and paper

Content:

Over the course of six weeks, I will be going over the important topic of climate change more specifically climate migration. I will talk about climate migration in terms of loving your neighbor, loving God's creation, the Beatitudes, immigration, and finally recommendations to help combat climate change and help climate migrants.

I think most of us are aware of climate change and the consequences that are happening because of the rise of global emissions. One of these consequences is climate migration, which is something I was aware of until a couple of years ago. Climate migration is “the act of moving away from areas that are prone to extreme weather or weather events and seeking refuge in areas with more moderate climates”.¹ Climate migrants often flee their home regions due to repeated environmental disasters that are only becoming harsher and more frequent as climate change gets worse. Many natural disasters happen as a result of climate change but there are four that are the main drivers of climate migration. (Ask the audience) Does anyone know or have any guesses on what the four natural disasters are? They are fire, drought, heat, and flooding. If anyone is interested in this topic I recommend a book called “Nomad century” which is written by Gaia Vince. She calls these four natural disasters the four horsemen and explains how dangerous they are. They are progressively getting more extreme and frequent and in turn, putting more lives in jeopardy. People have no choice but to leave their homes to have a chance at survival.

¹ Backman, Maurie. “What Are Climate Migrants and Where Are They Moving?” U.S. News, August 31, 2022. <https://realestate.usnews.com/real-estate/articles/what-are-climate-migrants-and-where-are-they-moving>.

When I was first learning about climate migrants the problem seemed to have an easy solution. If their homeland is putting their lives in jeopardy all they need to do is move. I can now acknowledge how naive and ignorant my thinking was. In the United States, the idea of moving is much more common. It's important to understand the differences between the United States and other countries. Moving is expensive, dangerous, and causes a loss of culture for many people in these difficult situations. When people have to move they leave behind their homes, work, and many of their belongings. They are forced to make many sacrifices to just try and save their life and the lives of their families.

Women are disproportionately affected by climate change. The Environmental Migration Portal has found that women are facing deep-rooted gender inequality and face more risks from events such as hurricanes, storms, floods, land degradation, rising temperatures, and sea-level rise.² The responsibilities associated with women put them in a more vulnerable position. IOM Global found that when extreme weather events occur women are 14 times more likely to die than men due to factors including higher responsibilities at home, little decision-making power within the family, and lack of education or access to information.³

Living in the United States I have often felt a false sense of security when it came to climate change. I have always heard about how bad it is and the consequences of it. However, for the most part, I have not experienced many of the consequences. Although we are not being directly affected yet, I think the United States needs to be more educated on what is happening to

² “3 Ways in Which Gender Equality Interlinks with Climate Migration: Environmental Migration Portal.” *3 Ways in Which Gender Equality Interlinks with Climate Migration* | *Environmental Migration Portal*, <https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/3-ways-which-gender-equality-interlinks-climate-migration-adaptation-strategy-exploring-links-between-migration-environment-and-sdg-5>.

³Ibid.

people across the world. It is just as important that we are aware of the different circumstances and consequences in other places.

Journaling portion

We will be passing around pens and paper and I want you to use the next ten minutes to write down any questions you have about climate change or climate migration. You can also write on any topics you want me to try and mention during the remaining five weeks of this series.

Lesson #2

Topic: Love your neighbor

Learning Objectives: To explain how climate change is not only a political issue but a human rights issue while making the connection to loving your neighbor

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: It's important to make the audience realize that this is more than just a political topic. Eric knows his congregation well and emphasized making sure not to relate climate change to politics because it would turn certain people off and that "politicizing climate change is counterintuitive." This is because people have different views on climate change. Eric said that 20% of people are in denial, 20% are educated advocates, and 60% are somewhere in the middle being ill-informed and/or do not know how to mobilize. By depoliticizing this issue and focusing on human rights I think more people would be advocates of climate change.

Materials Needed: Pens and paper

Content:

It's easy to associate climate change with power and politics. Climate change is heavily debated in the United States and this is problematic. People often feel like they have to take the

stance on climate change that coincides with their other political beliefs. However, this is not the case. It's important to think about climate change as a human rights issue as opposed to a political one. Climate change is already putting people's lives in danger. A Cornell study found that an estimated 2 billion people will be forced to relocate due to rising sea levels alone.⁴ If we can save lives we should do so.

As Christians, we are supposed to care for one another. We are supposed to care for people both alike and different from us. We know this from the commandment to love your neighbor as well as the many other passages. A passage I think serves as a good reminder to love your neighbor is Luke 10:27 which says "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself." Our neighbors extend to climate migrants who are living in very difficult situations. I think it's important to think about how we would feel in their situation. Would you want help migrating to other nations or receiving aid and resources? God's children are suffering and we should extend our love to them. We are not just called to love our neighbor but to love "orphans, strangers, and foreigners." We are expected and supposed to help climate migrants, especially because they are all of these things. To have a good relationship with God we need to have a good relationship with his people. This means caring for climate migrants.

Our individual decisions and actions will always affect others. I like to think about us all living in a collected web and everyone's actions end up impacting others. Our carbon footprint also impacts others. The global emissions we contribute as the United States impact other nations and an unproportionate level. The United States is the main contributor to climate change yet

⁴ Blaine Friedlander and 2017 June 19, "Rising Seas Could Result in 2 Billion Refugees by 2100," Cornell Chronicle, June 19, 2017, <https://news.cornell.edu/stories/2017/06/rising-seas-could-result-2-billion-refugees-2100>.

they are one of the countries least affected by it.⁵ The United States is very fortunate to not experience the intenseness of the consequences of climate change as much as other countries. In a research study conducted by the carbon brief, they found that the United States accounts for 20% of the total global carbon emissions.⁶ I think the United States should be helping climate migrants not just because we as a country have the means to do so or because we are the most responsible. I think we should help climate migrants as a way to show love to our neighbors.

Journaling portion

We will be passing around pens and paper and I want to use the next ten minutes for you guys to reflect on climate migration and loving your neighbor. Think about your beliefs on climate change and whether or not they align with your other political views. You can also think about what kind of support you would want if you were in a climate migrant situation.

Lesson #3

Topic: Love God's creation

Learning Objectives: To explain how we are meant to love and care for God's creation and be stewards of the earth

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: This lesson is important because it will serve as a good reminder that we are responsible for caring for God's creation. Being in Malibu it is easy to appreciate the beauty of God's creation. While climate change is not hitting Malibu as drastically as in other parts of the world I think this demographic of people will still acknowledge some of the changes that have taken place in our local environment. Such as fires,

⁵ Evans, Simon. "Analysis: Which Countries Are Historically Responsible for Climate Change?" *Carbon Brief*, 12 May 2022, <https://www.carbonbrief.org/analysis-which-countries-are-historically-responsible-for-climate-change/>.

⁶ Ibid.

erosion, animal and plant species, and sea level rise. I think by mentioning these changes people will have more sympathy for people facing more intense differences around the world. I will also make sure to highlight that no city is safe from climate change. Even wealthy communities like Malibu will continue to face the consequences of climate change.

Materials Needed: None

Content:

Just as it is important to remind people about loving your neighbor and connecting it to loving climate migrants it is also important to remind people about caring for the earth. Many passages in the Bible demonstrate the importance of caring for the environment. Genesis 2:15 says “The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.” It is our responsibility to care for the earth. Another powerful passage is Genesis 1:28 which says “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” We need to be more intentional with the way we are living. Our actions have consequences on the environment. Our actions have consequences on plants, animals, and people. To have a healthy relationship with God we need to take care of his creation.

Reflection portion

I want everyone to imagine their favorite scenery. Whether that is a beach, park, lake, meadow, or mountain, I want you to picture it. Now picture it repeatedly being affected by natural disasters. With climate change getting worse the landscape has no time to recover before the next one. The beautiful place you love will become unlivable just like many people’s homelands around the world. If we could prevent your favorite place from being destroyed would you want everyone to do anything they could? I know I would. Taking care of the

environment is more than just the land around you; it means being responsible with your living practices to care for the environment globally.

We are very fortunate to live where we do. Malibu is one of the most beautiful cities. We are surrounded by beautiful landscapes. Although we are not experiencing the consequences of climate change as badly as other parts of the world we are experiencing them. For example, the Pepperdine community has experienced more frequent and intense fires due to heat and drought. Since 1993, Pepperdine has experienced 6 fires including the most recent being the Woolsey fire in 2018.⁷ We are very fortunate the damages were not nearly as severe as other weather events in other places. We can also see the consequences of climate change on the coast with sea level rise and erosion which will only continue to get worse. We need to start taking action to prevent climate change from getting worse and causing irreversible damage to God's creation.

Lesson #4

Topic: The Beatitudes

Learning Objectives: To go over the Beatitudes and apply them to the topic of climate migrants

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: I think this lesson will be beneficial to this demographic because the Beatitudes are something they are probably very familiar with. It will allow me to make a connection between something they know well with climate migration, a topic they are less familiar with. The Beatitudes are good reminders for everyone but I think they are easily applicable to the topic of climate change and climate migration. I think all of the Beatitudes can be taught in a way that can be connected to climate, however, since the lesson

⁷ "Brush Fires." *Pepperdine Emergency Information*, 4 Feb. 2021, <https://emergency.pepperdine.edu/brush-fires/>.

plan is only for one hour I will be selective and choose the ones I think to send the strongest message.

Materials Needed: The Beatitudes printed out

Content:

One Beatitude that sticks out to me is Matthew 5:6 which says “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.” We live in a world where many people tend to believe that their ways are right in their own eyes so it can be hard for many to accept the absolute standard of righteousness. It is easy for people to believe that whatever they think or feel is right. Righteousness is defined as “the quality of being morally true or justifiable.”⁸ Spiritually, righteousness is the quality of being right in the eyes of God. I think most of us know to stand up for what we think is right. We must advocate for righteousness. Advocating for the help of climate migrants is the right thing. Similarly, Matthew 5:10-12 is also about righteousness. It says “Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I think this passage gives hope to those worried about advocating for a controversial and political topic. This Beatitude reassures us that there are no consequences for doing the right thing. God will provide those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness with the kingdom of heaven. This Beatitude is a helpful reminder because the right choice is not always the easy choice. Sometimes doing the right thing for your beliefs is not the right thing for other people. It reminds us that the only opinion we should care about is God’s. If we do what he would do we will make it to heaven. God would want us to help his children whose lives are at risk due to climate change.

⁸ Wijaya, Philip. “What Is Righteousness?” *Christianity.com*, Christianity.com, 16 Dec. 2019, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-is-righteousness.html>.

Another applicable Beatitude is Matthew 5:7 which says “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.” We should give mercy to climate migrants. Their situation is not their fault and they should receive help and compassion. Although many of us can not relate to or understand first-hand what their situation is, we can still show them compassion. Voting for politicians and bills that help climate change, sending money to organizations helping with climate migrants, or even advocating and educating others on what is happening as a result of climate change helps climate migrants and shows compassion. Just because the United States is not experiencing the consequences of climate change as severely, does not mean this will always be the case. As climate change worsens, so will the consequences in the United States. We should show mercy to climate migrants because we will want mercy if and when we are in a similar situation.

Reflection portion

Look at the printed list of the Beatitudes. Think about how the other could be connected to climate change or climate migration.

Lesson #5

Topic: A Biblical Perspective on Immigration

Learning Objectives: Demonstrate how the Bible encourages migration

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: I think it is easy for people to get swept up in the political aspect of immigration. I think this demographic will benefit from looking at immigration from a biblical perspective. I also think this will be a good opportunity to address stereotypes of immigrants, especially in the United States. By looking at certain stories in the Old Testament the audience will think about how Jesus was a migrant himself. We should treat

immigrants the same way we should treat Jesus if he showed up at our door asking for food and shelter. The audience will have the opportunity to reflect on how Christians are supposed to accept migrants with open arms.

Materials Needed: None

Content:

There is a lot we can learn about how we should treat immigrants from the Old Testament. A common theme is loving the least of these. This includes orphans, strangers, and foreigners. Immigrants are all of these things. In Leviticus 19:34 God tells Moses “The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.” God directly tells Moses to care for the alien because he too was an alien at one point. Jesus himself was also an immigrant. After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph fled to Egypt because they were scared King Herod was going to kill Jesus. They were traveling somewhere they were not wanted. They were headed into a land with a history of treating them as less than human, but they had nowhere else to go. There is only one other option? To stay and pray for things to get better in their homeland. This was chosen to die.

Mary, Joseph, and Jesus had a very similar experiences to those of climate migrants. However, they should not have to feel this way. Society as a whole needs to practice acceptance. We need to treat others like how we would want Jesus to be treated. Climate migrations have no choice but to move to survive. Food and resources are becoming more scarce and weather events are becoming more frequent and dangerous.

There are a lot of stereotypes that come with immigrants that I think prevent people from being more accepting. One misconception is that immigrants take jobs away from people already

living in the United States. However, they often work the jobs that people already living in the United States do not want such as in slaughterhouses or field picking jobs. Another incorrect stereotype is that immigrants incite crime. However, in reality, the FBI has reported an increase in immigration yet a decrease in nationwide crime. “Since 1990, the percentage of immigrants in the United States has grown from 7.9 percent to 13.1 percent, including a tripling in undocumented immigrants from 3.5 million to 11.2 million.”⁹ Violent crime has also decreased by 48 percent and property crime rates have decreased by 41 percent. Many of the “reasons” why people are reluctant to accept immigrants are due to inaccurate stereotypes. We should be treating immigrants how we would treat Jesus when he was an immigrant himself.

Lesson #6

Topic: Recommendations

Learning Objectives: To give an abundance of suggestions and ways for the audience to be more environmentally friendly and hopefully inspire them to choose one or two to implement into their lives

Why is this lesson important to this demographic: I think this is one of the most important lessons because it will hopefully inspire action. This message is important to the Christian demographic because they are uniquely designed to change behavior. The goal is to remind the church that people can change and this gives people hope. When people have hope their character can change. When people’s character changes their behavior. When people’s behavior changes, climate issues can then change. Finally, I will end this lesson with a feeling of hope. I do not want people to feel discouraged and that their efforts will have no impact. I will stress the

⁹ Page, Erin, and Erin Page. “Four Stereotypes about Local Immigrants.” *MetroFamily Magazine*, 29 May 2019, <https://www.metrofamilymagazine.com/four-stereotypes-about-local-immigrants/>.

importance of participating in sustainable practices with intentionality whether or not you see the direct impact of your actions.

Materials Needed: None

Content:

For the last lesson plan of this series, I wanted to share with you some ways that you can be more environmentally friendly. Even though we do not typically have climate migrants showing up at our doors asking for help we can still all take care of the environment. Our efforts might seem small but together they add up and can help climate change from getting worse and threatening the lives of more people. I will be giving a lot of examples of ways to be more sustainable. However, this list is not meant to be overwhelming or make you feel like you should be doing all these things. My goal is to give you enough options so that you can each feel comfortable and confident enough to pick one or two practices to implement in your lives.

Being more conscious of electricity use, investing in eco-friendly technology, or switching to renewable energy are good ways that limit global emissions and lower your carbon footprint. By reducing food waste, eating less meat, or composting you help reduce the amount of food that goes into landfills, which then generates CO₂. All of these things can be implemented gradually. You do not have to cut out meat completely. Just skipping eating meat for a couple of meals a week helps the environment. Recycling is something that most of us do. However, it is an aspect that can easily be improved upon. Almost anything can be recycled if you look up how to do so. Cutting out plastic is something that most of us hear to do, however, it can be difficult to practice. This can seem overwhelming but if you start small it is much more manageable and sustainable long-term. Transportation and personal care are things we use daily

and can make a big impact on our global impact. Limiting our transportation and switching to less harmful personal care allows us to have a more sustainable life every day.

By making our lifestyles more sustainable we are indirectly helping people in other parts of the world who are more susceptible to the impacts of climate change. People's lives across the world are already in danger due to climate change. While we are fortunate to live in an area that has yet to experience severe consequences, that will not always be true. God wants us to love our neighbors, love his creation, act righteously, and treat aliens as citizens. All of these things encourage us to advocate for and help climate migrants.

Climate Migration Lesson Plans

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Sustainability 415: Climate Migration

December 14, 2022

Introductory Note

These lessons are an introduction to the discussion of climate migration. Each lesson will incorporate one Christian virtue—love, courage, solidarity, hospitality, justice, temperance, and prudence—and connect this virtue to both a Biblical passage and an aspect of climate migration. Each lesson will loosely follow Joel Foster’s “hook, book, look, took” method of teaching.

The “hook” is what initially engages the students and is presented as a current climate change story in the form of a video or article. The “book” portion of each lesson is a Biblical passage that focuses on a virtue connected to the “hook” story. The “look” aspect of the lesson draws attention to the nuances of both the climate story and the Biblical passage. Finally, each “took” portion of the lesson reviews takeaways from the lesson. This final portion may be completed as either a group discussion or an individual journaling time of the questions at the end of each lesson.

The lessons are geared toward students in the youth ministry of the University Church of Christ. Each lesson has two primary resources associated with the topic as well as some additional resources that the instructor may reference during the lesson. The resources are directly linked and cited but can also be found in the supplementary document titled “Appendix – Lesson Plan Primary Resources.” The resources in the Appendix are organized in the order that they are referenced in each lesson plan.

Lesson 1 – Love

The first lesson begins with the virtue of love. The lesson series is built on the foundational teaching of “neighborly love,” which is why love appears as the first lesson. Contributions to the discussion about climate migration are most productive when they are based on empathy—addressing love as the first lesson sets a precedent for future lessons about how the topic of climate migration should be approached.

For the “hook” portion of the lesson, the instructor begins with the video titled “Climate Migration May Lead to the Next Great Housing Crisis” by NBCLX.¹ This video introduces how climate-change-induced migration might reshape the United States and Los Angeles. After watching this video, the instructor can reference several points from the *Los Angeles Times* article by Celina Tebor about the drought if time permits.² Interesting points are listed in Section 2 of the Appendix. Students are then asked about their experiences with heatwaves, drought, and wildfires in Malibu. It is likely that most students have not had to move from the Malibu area because of climate disasters permanently; however, they are asked to think about how disasters like drought and wildfires have disrupted their lives. These disasters affect populations differently depending on a range of social factors, including socioeconomic status. The instructor draws attention to the privileges inherent in living in a place like Malibu. The people that live here are financially better off than most of the world, and because of their socioeconomic status, they do not have to rely as heavily on a stable climate. For example, if students grew all their own food at their homes and they could not water their plants properly, they might need to move

¹ “Climate Migration May Lead to the Next Great Housing Crisis,” NBC LX News, April 23, 2021, video, 9:14, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GE3N1f2XgGQ>.

² Celine Tebor, “Here are some things to know about the extreme drought in the Western U.S.,” *Los Angeles Times* (Los Angeles, CA), Jun. 19, 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2021-06-19/western-united-states-drought>.

somewhere with better rainfall. If students lost their homes to wildfire and did not have the money to rebuild or afford home insurance, they might at least need to move somewhere with less fire danger.

Students are then guided to consider how they might better care for underprivileged communities that do not have the same resources to respond to climate disasters. For the “book” portion of this lesson, students read the story of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:25–37.³ Students are asked to consider which character and traits in the story Jesus is praising. In connection to climate migration, how might someone like the Good Samaritan act toward climate migrants? The instructor emphasizes that the wounded man and the Samaritan are complete strangers in the same way that the people suffering from and being displaced by climate disasters are strangers to these students; however, this does not negate the duty to help a stranger in need.⁴

The following lessons will explain how students might be able to express a Christian love toward climate migrants through exhibiting solidarity, courage, hospitality, temperance, prudence, and justice. The lesson concludes by involving students in a group brainstorming session about what actions they can take in their own lives to help climate migrants and encourage discussion with their friends and family. The instructor documents this brainstorm (e.g., a photo) to be referenced at the end of the six lessons.

This first lesson is crucial for setting up the following five lessons. The “took” portion of this lesson begins with the discussion questions below but develops over the course of the following five topics as students engage with how they can express Christian love toward climate migrants. Though this is a challenging discussion to have with any age group, it is important to

³ All Bible references are from the New International Version (NIV).

⁴ Lk 10:37 (NIV)

cultivate thoughtful, servant-hearted leaders to be aware of the injustices that are emerging around climate change and migration. Often, young members of a church are thought of as “the church of tomorrow,” but by challenging them to think through and discuss these difficult and complex issues, they can participate in “the church of today.” Engaging this age group in a discussion about what neighborly love looks like in society today sets them up to engage in similar discussions with peers, family, and friends, giving them agency in influencing the world around them.

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- What stands out to you from the video about climate change and migration in the U.S.?
- What sorts of natural disasters have you experienced in your own life (e.g., droughts, floods, sea level rise, wildfires, heatwaves, hurricanes, etc.)?
 - How have these disasters affected you? How did you and your family respond to these disasters?
- Who is the hero in the story of the Good Samaritan? What character traits does the parable want us to emulate?
 - How might someone like the Good Samaritan act toward climate migrants?
- What actions can you take in your own life to help climate migrants and encourage discussion with your friends and family on this topic? (Brainstorm)

<p>Primary Resources:</p> <p>Climate Migration May Lead to the Next Great Housing Crisis (NBCLX)</p> <p>Here are some things to know about the extreme drought in the Western U.S. (LA Times)</p> <p>Luke 10:25–37 (The Good Samaritan)</p>	<p>Additional Resources:</p> <p>Mark 12:28–31 (Love Your Neighbor)</p>
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Lesson 2 – Solidarity

This week’s lesson explores the virtue of solidarity. The lesson will begin by assessing the group’s preexisting knowledge about climate change and migration. Though a preliminary introduction was given about climate migration in the previous lesson, this lesson goes more in-

depth about climate migration on a global scale. Students will be asked about what they understand climate migration to be, whom it affects, and how it affects them.

For the “hook” portion of the lesson, the instructor reads an excerpt from the *New York Times* article titled, “The Great Climate Migration Has Begun” by Abrahm Lustgarten from July 23, 2020.⁵ The excerpt details general information about climate change and migration and its effects on global society. It highlights the destabilization that may occur if nations fail to prepare and plan for geographically shifting populations and political forces. It also explains how migration will be toward cities where people seek economic stability. Students are asked to consider how this might affect major U.S. cities, such as Los Angeles, that already struggle with a lack of infrastructure to address the growing populations dealing with food and housing insecurity. The instructor emphasizes that the students living here in Malibu were born to their families completely by chance; in a sense, they won a genetic lottery to be in the place of privilege that they are. The instructor challenges the students’ ideas about what they do and do not “deserve” from society by asking questions about how to treat others that “lost” the genetic lottery by being born in a place and to a family that must respond to climate disasters. Students can be asked questions such as: do people fleeing climate disasters have the right to migrate, and to where do they have the right to migrate? They can also be asked about whether nations should limit migration and increase the struggle of migrants by building walls to keep people out rather than infrastructure to support letting them in.

The instructor then reads the parable from Matthew 25:31–46 about the sheep and the goats. Students are asked what stands out to them in the parable and what the parable is teaching.

⁵ Abrahm Lustgarten, “The Great Climate Migration Has Begun,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), Jul. 23, 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>.

The instructor highlights that what was done for “the least of these brothers and sisters” was done for the Lord.⁶ The students are challenged with the idea that caring for those that are suffering is a Christian obligation. In the parable, the King recognizes the humanity’s solidarity and the equal dignity of each individual. Even the least in society are equal in dignity to a king. Additionally, the triumphant example of Christian solidarity is God becoming human alongside His creation. The birth of Jesus and His Passion represents the pinnacle of solidarity: God chose to suffer with humanity to redeem them. As humans, we are unlikely to achieve this same level of self-sacrifice, but Christians are called to strive for this goal. A starting point for this level of solidarity is the recognition that all people are part of the same human family and can all be pointed toward the same goal of loving and treating each other with dignity. There will always be differences in privilege in society but recognizing that all humanity is made in the image of God is a starting point for working toward the virtue of love from the first lesson and the virtue of justice highlighted in the last lesson.

This lesson is critical to developing the idea of the previous lesson. There needs to be a recognition of the solidarity of humankind to show Christian love. The instructor emphasizes the idea that “in-groups” and “out-groups” conflict with the solidarity of humanity. The in-group and out-group tribalism in the United States today has polarized society to the degree that groups cannot work together toward common goals. Political parties, social groups, and economic classes have created barriers to the dignity of every human being that influences the discussion of climate migration. By engaging students in discussions like this and creating an awareness of the disparity between Christian solidarity and worldly in-groups and out-groups, they will better recognize their own biases as they interact with others and reach voting age.

⁶ Mt 25:40 (NIV)

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- What stands out from the article that you didn't know before?
- How might climate change and migration reshape Malibu? How might they reshape Los Angeles?
- To what degree are wealthy nations obligated to help those that are suffering the immediate impacts of climate change?
- Do people fleeing climate disasters have the right to migrate? Where do they have the right to migrate to?
- Is caring for “the least of these” a Christian moral obligation? What might this care look like in society today? What might this care look like in the context of climate migration?
- How might social, cultural, or economic in-groups and out-groups affect our ability to “love our neighbor?”
 - What kinds of in-groups and out-groups do you see in your own life?

Primary Resources: The Great Climate Migration Has Begun (NY Times) Matthew 25:31-46 (The Sheep and the Goats)	Additional Resources: Galatians 3:28 1 Corinthians 12:13
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Lesson 3 – Courage

This lesson centers around the virtue of courage. The courage to advocate for those that cannot advocate for themselves is crucial to the discussion about climate migration because climate migrants are often from underrepresented communities around the world. They are frequently marginalized in the places they migrate to and do not have the social, economic, or cultural influence to shape the discussion about their futures.

The lesson begins with the story of Jorge A. from Guatemala, whose story is published in the *New York Times*. His story is an excerpt from the article from the previous lesson, “The Great Climate Migration Has Begun,” by Abrahm Lustgarten.⁷ Without the ability to grow food because of severe drought and subsequent flooding, Jorge could not feed his family, so he and his 7-year-old son fled Guatemala in 2019. The instructor emphasizes that Jorge and his son left

⁷ Abrahm Lustgarten, “The Great Climate Migration Has Begun.”

their home with only a pair of pants, three t-shirts, underwear, and a toothbrush.⁸ Students are asked if they think they could leave home with no intention of returning with the same few items. Those that plan to leave for college may be able to relate to Jorge and his son on at least a minimal level. They are choosing to willingly move to a new location and leave their homes behind, but can they imagine not being able to return to their homes and only bringing a backpack of essential items with them? Those leaving for college are likely not being forced out of their homes due to uncontrollable factors like climate and food insecurity.

After discussing this story, the instructor refers to the Book of Esther for the book. The instructor focuses on Esther 4:14–16 to emphasize Esther’s bravery in exposing a conspiracy in order to save her people. The students are asked what character traits both Esther and Jorge have in common—the intention is to highlight that both showed extreme courage by facing life-threatening obstacles to save the people that they care about. Students are asked about the additional challenges that Esther faces because of her gender. The social context of Esther’s story is that women were treated as property, and she was likely taken by the king against her will. Esther had very little, if any, agency in her situation, and yet she is the hero of the story. Students can be asked about the degree of responsibility Esther had to “save her people” when she was not recognized as an equal in society—she had little to no individual rights.

All Christians are called to show courage. Jorge and Esther show courage from an exceptionally vulnerable position, but one does not need to be vulnerable to be courageous. Courage is the middle ground between cowardice and recklessness; it is action in the face of paralyzing fear. The courage of teenage students living in Malibu likely looks much different than the courage exhibited by Jorge and Esther. However, courage is still necessary to stand up

⁸ Lustgarten, “The Great Climate Migration Has Begun.”

for what they believe in and for those who cannot stand up for themselves. Students are asked what it looks like to courageously love people in the way Jesus commands His followers. What would it look like for them to courageously advocate for people like Jorge and his son? Students are reminded that Esther was willing to save the people that culturally oppressed her, so what does it look like for them in society today to courageously love those that are not family or friends? These questions conclude the lesson on courage.

The story of Jorge and his 7-year-old son is used to link the experience of migration to the students' own lives. The courage required to pack up one's entire life and leave a familiar home for an unknown future. Though the students likely do not have experiences that compare to this extreme situation of Jorge, it is through this disparity that they may be able to understand the challenges of migration better. The story of Esther incorporates "courage as advocacy" for those that cannot advocate for themselves. Being an advocate is a tangible way that students can participate in the discussion of climate migration by teaching others about these issues and showing love to vulnerable populations. Additionally, the story of Esther can be used to broach a more extensive discussion about gender in the context of climate migration.

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- Do you think you could leave home and never return with one pair of pants, three shirts, underwear, and a toothbrush?
- How might Esther's female identity influence her role in this story? What additional challenges does she face?
- What responsibility does Esther have to save her people?
- What character traits do both Esther and Jorge exhibit in their stories?
- What does it look like to advocate courageously for migrants like Jorge and his son?
- What does it look like for you to courageously love those that are not family or friends?

<p>Primary Resources: Jorge A. from Guatemala (NY Times) Esther 4:14–16 (Esther Facing Death to Save Her People)</p>	<p>Additional Resources: Psalm 82:3–4 Proverbs 31:8–9</p>
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Lesson 4 – Hospitality

This lesson centers on the virtue of hospitality. Hospitality is another facet of Christian love discussed in the first lesson. It also further develops the in-group and out-group discussion from the second lesson and the courage to advocate from the third lesson. The Greek word for hospitality, *xenophilia*, translates to the “love of stranger” or “friend of the stranger.” This type of love is crucial for the discussion about climate migration because the people deeply impacted by climate change’s effects are generally outside of the Malibu community.

For the “hook” portion of this lesson, the instructor begins by showing the video about the island nation of Kiribati to view the effects of sea level rise.⁹ As the video notes, Kiribati is at the front lines of climate change and is acutely experiencing the effects of climate change as the ocean engulfs its landmass. Students are asked about what stands out to them in this video. The instructor also emphasizes that the students interviewed in the video are not much older than those participating in this lesson. The people of places like Kiribati or other island nations contribute very little, if anything, to carbon emissions, yet they feel the effects of climate change more intensely than the nations that contribute heavily. In 2014, Kiribati purchased land in Fiji for 9.3 million Australian dollars as an adaptation strategy for the land they are losing to sea level rise.¹⁰ The land will ensure that Kiribati’s people will have a home when the ocean engulfs their country because of climate change. One of the women in the video also mentions that countries like the United States are contributing to the climate change crisis. Students are asked

⁹ “The world’s first climate change refugees,” CBS News, August 21, 2017, video, 6:51, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=46yvAKge3qQ>.

¹⁰ Laurence Caramel, “Besieged by the rising tides of climate change, Kiribati buys land in Fiji,” *The Guardian* (London, UK), Jun. 30, 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2014/jul/01/kiribati-climate-change-fiji-vanua-levu>.

whether these heavily contributing nations have any political, social, or moral obligations to the countries suffering from climate change the most. Should wealthier nations like the United States with unsustainable consumerism be willing to welcome those being forcibly displaced from their land? In reference to lesson two about in-groups and out-groups, the instructor challenges students to think about why there may be a reluctance to extend hospitality to those that are culturally different from the host nation and whether this reluctance is justified.

The lesson then focuses on the story of Elijah and the widow from 1 Kings 17:7–24. After reading the story, the students are asked whom they think the “hero” of the story is—Elijah or the widow. Connecting to lesson three about Esther’s situation, the instructor challenges the students to think about what risks the widow takes by showing hospitality in this story. Hospitality requires a degree of risk because it could be rejected. However, the widow also takes additional risks by letting a strange man into her home in the context of a society where she is less than a second-class citizen. The widow is unable to own property, and without a male counterpart, it would be challenging to provide for herself and her son. Students are encouraged to consider how the widow might have felt pressured to behave in a certain way because of her gender. The gendered aspect of the story of Elijah and the widow connects to the gendered aspect of climate migration. Female migrants are an exceptionally vulnerable population. Outside of the perils of migration, they are also more vulnerable to mental health problems, domestic violence, and sexual violence and trafficking.¹¹ Students are challenged to consider whether additional efforts should be made to care for this especially vulnerable population of migrants.

¹¹ Amali Tower, “The Gendered Impacts of Climate Displacement,” *Climate Refugees*, published May 19, 2020, <https://www.climate-refugees.org/perspectives/genderedimpactsofclimatechange>.

This lesson seeks to tie together the ideas of what hospitality looks like on both a national and individual scale. Though it is a risk for a wealthy nation to be hospitable toward climate migrants, the story of the widow teaches that, for Christians, hospitality should be extended despite the risks. This lesson is important to impart on the youth ministry because of the current level of xenophobia present worldwide. As global demographics change and cultures mix, it is necessary to diminish xenophobic sentiments to minimize conflict. The youth ministry is in a particularly unique position as young Christians to advocate for an end to xenophobia through cultivating hospitality toward strangers, the courage to advocate, the solidarity of humanity, and the love of neighbor.

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- What stands out to you about the video?
- Do nations that contribute more to global carbon emissions have more of a responsibility to help other nations mitigate and adapt to climate change?
 - Should wealthier nations be more willing to welcome populations that are being forcibly displaced by climate change?
- Who is the hero of the story about Elijah and the widow?
- What additional challenges does the widow face in being hospitable because of her gender?
- Should additional efforts be made to care for female climate migrants? What challenges might they face?

<p>Primary Resources:</p> <p>The world's first climate change refugees (CBS News)</p> <p>1 Kings 17:7–24 (Elijah and the Widow)</p>	<p>Additional Resources:</p> <p>Besieged by the rising tides of climate change, Kiribati buys land in Fiji (The Guardian)</p> <p>The Gendered Impacts of Climate Displacement (Climate Refugees)</p>
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Lesson 5 – Temperance

This lesson links the virtue of temperance to climate change and migration. Temperance refers to the idea that humanity should be temperate and mindful of how the earth and its resources are used. Climate change is an issue that affects many different areas of life; it has economic, social, political, and cultural impacts. Climate migration is just one manifestation of climate change. This lesson leads with the “book” portion to highlight the Christian duty to care for the earth before presenting methods of this care. In other words, the reason for caring for the earth is presented prior to the means of doing so.

The lesson begins by reading Genesis 2:15 and Leviticus 25:23–24. Both passages emphasize that the earth does not belong to humanity but to God. In Genesis 2:15, Adam was placed in the Garden of Eden “to work it and take care of it.” Adam’s role is that of a gardener rather than a property owner. Adam is not meant to exploit the Garden but rather allow it to grow to its full potential. Leviticus 25 explicitly states that the land belongs to the Lord and that the Israelites reside in the land as foreigners and strangers.¹² Additionally, the Israelites are commanded to “provide for the redemption of the land,” meaning that whatever they take from it is meant to be restored.¹³ The instructor challenges the students to think about whether people are obeying this command and what obeying this command might look like today.

The instructor then reads an excerpt from an article titled, “Who Is the Steward of Eden? Genesis and Environmental Stewardship,” by Dr. Sandra Richter.¹⁴ This article relates back to human dignity through the image of God from lesson two. The article highlights the idea that the

¹² Lev 25:23

¹³ Lev 25:24

¹⁴ Sandra Richter, “Who Is the Steward of Eden? Genesis and Environmental Stewardship,” *The Biblical Mind*, Center for Hebraic Thought at The King’s College, published Jul. 30, 2020, <https://hebraicthought.org/environmental-stewardship-genesis/>.

earth was created for humankind's dominion, not domination. God loves all His creation, and as Richter explains, humanity was designed to love what God loves. Caring for the earth and its resources expresses love for God's creation. Today, consumeristic culture has overexploited, misused, and wasted countless global resources such as minerals, vegetation, and wildlife. Migrants from rural areas affected by the climate destabilization seek refuge and economic stability in cities. Therefore, implementing infrastructure designs that contribute less to climate change will be critical for preventing the emergence and growth of slums, thereby preserving the dignity of individuals.

According to MIT professor, John Fernández, cities consume between one-half to two-thirds of global energy and contribute between half to 80% of global greenhouse gas emissions.¹⁵ Fernández estimates that by 2050, two-thirds of humanity may be living in cities.¹⁶ Adapting cities with a climate-conscious approach could drastically reduce these numbers. Buildings can be made more energy efficient, mass public transit could be more accessible, and city power grids could focus on implementing renewable resources. Implementing more green spaces, rain-absorbing surfaces, and heat-reflecting materials in city planning could increase cities' resilience to climate change.¹⁷ Additionally, incentivizing communities, businesses, and individuals to consume less and reuse and recycle more could lower carbon emissions from cities and increase their population potential. The instructor challenges students to think about what types of

¹⁵ John Fernández, "Cities and Climate Change," Climate Portal, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published Mar. 11, 2021. <https://climate.mit.edu/explainers/cities-and-climate-change>.

¹⁶ Fernández, "Cities and Climate Change."

¹⁷ Fernández, "Cities and Climate Change."

adaptations their own community of Malibu could implement to reduce carbon emissions, limit energy consumption, and increase resilience.

This lesson focuses on caring for the earth to both mitigate climate change's effects and adapt existing infrastructure to better accommodate migrants. The instructor emphasizes that though this age group is not quite old enough to participate in the voting process, they are not far from this age. Additionally, they can initiate and encourage discussion about the changes they wish to see within their own community. This lesson reminds students of their agency to inspire and influence others toward enacting positive change. Having discussions with students about the future they want to see prepares them to be activists in their community that exhibit and inspire the Christian virtues of love, solidarity, courage, hospitality, and temperance in others.

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- Genesis 2:15 says that humanity was placed in the Garden “to work it and take care of it.” Has humanity been filling its role as caretaker of nature?
 - What does caring for nature look like today? What *should* it look like?
- What types of adaptations could be implemented in your home? In the Malibu community?
 - How might you encourage discussion about sustainable building and infrastructure?

<p>Primary Resources: Who is the Steward of Eden? Genesis and Environmental Stewardship (The Biblical Mind) Leviticus 25:23–24 (God the Landowner) Genesis 2:15 (Earth Care)</p>	<p>Additional Resources: Cities and Climate Change (MIT)</p>
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Lesson 6 – Justice

This final lesson focuses on the virtue of justice. Justice is another critical manifestation of the “love of neighbor” from the first lesson. The virtue of justice links all of the previous virtues of love, solidarity, courage, hospitality, and temperance because the just treatment of an

individual involves the consideration of all of these factors. Complete justice requires the love of neighbor, the recognition of human dignity, the courage to advocate, the acceptance of strangers, and the care for the earth and its resources.

This lesson begins with the video by the Global Landscape Forum titled “What is Climate Justice?”¹⁸ Students are asked what stands out to them about the video and how climate justice is tied to social justice. The social inequalities today contribute to the unequal experiences of climate change. This idea of unequal suffering connects to lesson four about hospitality and the “genetic lottery” of birthplace. Students are challenged to think about how their lives in the United States place them in a place of climate privilege; they do not feel the effects of climate change in the same way someone from Kenya would feel the effects of climate change. The living standards and mentality about climate change and climate justice in the United States reflect the privileges of wealth and location. The instructor challenges students to consider how they likely do not give taking a twenty-minute shower a second thought. In contrast, Kenya is experiencing one of the longest droughts in decades that has killed hundreds of its wildlife.¹⁹

The instructor then shows the video by The Bible Project titled “Justice.”²⁰ This video explores the Biblical understanding of justice and connects to the second lesson about solidarity. Exhibiting justice requires recognizing that all humans are made in the image and likeness of

¹⁸ Landscape TV, “What is Climate Justice?” Global Landscape Forum, January 24, 2022, video, 8:09, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y3s58Ang5qI>.

¹⁹ Idris Mukhtar, “Hundreds of elephants, wildebeests and zebras dead in Kenya amid prolonged drought,” CNN World, Nov. 5, 2022, <https://www.cnn.com/2022/11/05/africa/elephants-dead-kenya-intl/index.html>.

²⁰ Timothy Mackie and Jonathan Collins, “Justice,” The Bible Project, accessed November 14, 2022, video, 6:18, https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/justice/?utm_source=web_social_share&medium=shared_video.

God. The instructor challenges students to think about how society redefines good and evil in the context of climate migration. How are climate migrants being treated unjustly by society? The idea of righteousness is also closely related to the discussion of climate migration. The instructor asks students to consider whether living “righteously” requires internalizing and practicing all the virtues from these six lessons. The video also illustrates several Bible verses about how justice is shown toward others. The instructor encourages students to think about how the virtues from previous lessons are integral to acting justly. Students should also think about how the story and teachings of Jesus call us to act toward the vulnerable and oppressed. The instructor asks whether those suffering the effects of climate change, such as Guatemala, Kiribati, or Kenya, are suffering injustices that Christians should work to remedy.

The instructor then asks students to brainstorm practical steps to limit wasteful living in their own lives and increase awareness about climate change and migration. Examples include using reusable cutlery and containers, turning off lights, decreasing the use of heaters and A/C units, biking or walking instead of driving, cutting food waste, reading about climate change and migration issues, reducing plastic, unplugging unused electronics, and saving water. Students then are asked about what they can do to encourage the discussion about climate migration. This activity ties back to the first lesson of the series. This final brainstorm can be compared to the first one to demonstrate what students learned and their growth throughout the series. Despite the challenging topics discussed, it is critical that students do not feel hopeless because they have the agency to make a difference. Societal changes begin as individual people influence other individuals. These students can influence their peers, family, and friends to better respond to climate change by reducing carbon emissions and increasing the just treatment of climate migrants. Emulating the Christian virtues of love for neighbor, solidarity of the human family,

courage to advocate, hospitality to strangers, and temperance in resource use will equip these students to pursue climate justice.

Discussion/Journal Questions:

- What stands out to you in the video about climate and social justice?
- How might your location in the United States be a form of climate privilege?
- Are climate migrants being treated justly by society?
- Can someone be righteous or live justly without exhibiting love, solidarity, courage, hospitality, and temperance?
- What does restorative justice look like in the context of climate migration?
- How might you take steps to advocate for climate migrants and take steps to change social structures to prevent injustice?
- Should Christians be working to remedy climate injustices such as those experienced in climate migration?
- What practical steps can you take to limit wasteful living?
- What practical steps can you take to encourage discussion about climate migration?

<p>Primary Resources: What is Climate Justice? (GLF) Justice (The Bible Project)</p>	<p>Additional Resources: Proverbs 29:7 James 1:24–27 James 2:5–8,14–17 Leviticus 19:33–34 Exodus 23:9</p>
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Natalia Lovejoy

Professor Doran

SUST 415

December 14, 2022

UCC Climate Migration Lesson Plan

Group Leader: Shannon Warwar

Week 1- Climate and Migrants in the Bible

For the first week, this first lesson plan aims to establish a connection between scriptures of immigration and climate issues in the Bible, to the reality of climate migration in our world today. The goal is to create a safe learning environment by tying some things that may be “foreign” or confusing with something that is more familiar to the group by introducing these topics to the group in a way that unites them with lessons from the Bible.

To begin the lesson, those in the pastoral care and oversight group should be asked to read the story of Noah’s Ark, specifically Genesis 7:21-24. The story of Noah’s ark is a perfect example of a natural disaster that displaces people in the Bible; it is also one of the most well-known stories in the Bible as well. Verses 21-24 perfectly describe how every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out, both humans and animals. To relate this story to real-life events, members of this group should be asked what events in the world or in their lives, recently or in the past, they have witnessed that reflect a similar kind of destruction, as seen in the story of Noah’s ark. If there are those who have had personal experiences with natural disasters firsthand, the instructor should prompt them to share how they felt during that experience. Feelings of fear, anxiety and worry should be highlighted and referenced later on in the lesson. After discussing the ways in which they have personally experienced climate events, the group should be asked to watch a short video called [‘Climate migrants: who are they and where will they go?’](#) This video will give a simple introduction to the group about what climate migrants are and what is causing them to have to move. The instructor should then facilitate a conversation referencing the different experiences that the group has had with climate change versus those shown in the video. The instructor should then circle back to comments made about fear felt during natural disasters and relate that to the fear that climate migrants face when they experience climate

disasters that displace them from their homes. It is important to draw attention to the fact that no one in the group has had to move countries to escape natural disasters caused by climate change.

To end this first lesson, the instructor should allot about ten minutes for anyone to ask questions about concepts they are struggling with. In the end, the group should be instructed to find one recent article or video that is about climate change or climate migrants and bring it to share with the class the following week. Members should also be asked to prepare one shocking fact that they learned from their article with the group as this will lead the conversation for week two's lesson plan.

This first lesson is critical for my group because it is the foundation upon which everything else will be built. As this lesson targets a group of people who typically hold strong political beliefs, it is crucial to reassociate the conversation of immigration and climate change (topics that are usually politically controversial) with something that unites the entire group and is their "universal truth," the Bible. When starting a conversation about subjects such as these, especially when they have been avoided to avoid controversy among church members, it is essential to find common ground for the group. By relating immigration and climate change to stories that members of my group have ingrained in their heads, the hope is to start the conversation about climate migrants in a way that leaves the group open to learning more and not closed off to expanding their knowledge. It is important to also provoke thinking among the group that allows them to start relating to climate migrants as well to build upon their empathy for immigrants, and to better humanize migrants for the group.

Homework: Find one recent article or video about climate change or climate migration to share with the group next week. Prepare at least one shocking fact you learned in your found article or video.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- Genesis 7
 - 7:21-24
- <https://youtu.be/pO18pM9ZLj4>

Week 2- The Issues

For the second week, this lesson plan aims to dive deeper into the reasons why climate migrants are leaving their home countries and moving around the world. The instructor will relate present-day climate migration to the story of Exodus in the Bible, to continue to build upon making the concept of migration more familiar and relatable to the group. The goal for this week is to get the group thinking about the cause and effect of climate migration and to build upon empathy for climate migrants.

To begin this lesson the instructor should ask each member of the group to share their found article or video on climate change and migration and share at least one shocking fact they learned from it. The instructor should then facilitate a conversation about the potential reasons for migration or climate events from the shared articles. This discussion will prepare the group to further associate climate change and migration with the Bible, as the instructor will then ask the group to read Exodus 7:14 - 11:9. This excerpt from Exodus outlines ten different plagues that God afflicted the Egyptians with, and these plagues happen to reflect a lot of the issues that different countries are faced with due to climate change. Things like dead livestock and intense weather events that ruin harvest are events that are happening today that end up forcing people to have to leave their countries because they can no longer live healthy lives there. After reading from this passage, the instructor should begin a conversation about each of the plagues and ask the group to think about what each plague did to the environment and how it affected the lives of the people living in Egypt. For example, the plague of blood restricted access to fresh water for those living in Egypt, and the plague on livestock and the plague of hail destroyed agricultural farms which would lead to a famine in the country. While doing this exercise, the instructor

should make a list of each of these plagues and the consequences they had on a whiteboard to prepare for the next part of the lesson plan.

Following this exercise, the group should be asked to watch a video called '[Extreme Weather Events Fueling 'Climate Refugee' Crisis](#).' After watching the video, the instructor should once again begin a conversation with the group and ask them to list any similarities heard in the video that is causing climate migrants to leave their countries in comparison to the plagues listed in the book of Exodus. After making the list, it is important for the instructor to get the group thinking about the statement in the video that "anyone could be a climate migrant" and that soon it will be important for "neighbors to help neighbors." To end this session, the instructor should allot about ten minutes for anyone to ask questions about concepts they are struggling with. At the end of the class, the group should be asked to choose one plague from the excerpt read from the exodus and write down three reasons why they think that plague would cause someone to need to leave their home country. This will be shared at the beginning of the following week's class.

This second lesson is critical for my group because it continues to force the group to begin thinking about climate migrants and climate change in a way that will allow them to relate to and understand it on a deeper level and in a way that is less politically charged. Since it is unlikely that anyone in the group will have to move to a different country due to climate change, making connections and building an understanding of what causes migration is a large step for the group to empathize with climate migrants. Using scriptures from the Bible to introduce new concepts about climate change and immigration allows the group to explore the windows and mirrors they see when learning about climate migration. They get a glimpse into the experience that the people who are affected by climate have when they have to leave their homes. At the

same time, they explore what reflections they can see in their own life that resemble the experiences of climate migrants.

Homework: Choose one plague from the excerpt read from Exodus today and write down three reasons why you think that plague would cause someone to need to leave their home country.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- Exodus 7:14-11
- <https://youtu.be/Q0xy9HdDWEU>

Week 3: The Migrant

For the third week, this lesson plan aims to teach the group about the scope of the issue of climate migration by introducing statistics and cold hard facts about how many people in the world are affected by climate change. These statistics and facts will be paired with more scriptures from the Bible that the instructor should use to aid in helping the group to further understand and relate to the reality of climate migration and climate change.

To begin this week's lesson the group should read from the New York Times article called '[The Great Climate Migration](#)' written by Abrahm Lustgarten. This article gives a very in depth description of how many people are being affected by climate change, what specific problems are causing people to move, and the various places that they are moving to. After reading this article the instructor should implore the group to share a few facts each that they were most shocked by in the reading. The instructor should then reference the homework given from week 3 and ask the group to share if the plague they wrote about was found in the article as well, and allow them to share what similarities they found from the article and what they wrote down. Following this discussion, the group should then read together from Genesis 20:1-16 and 1 Kings 17:17-24. The story in Genesis outlines the fear of traveling to a new place and also explains the different experiences that men and women face when they are forced to migrate. After reading these passages, the instructor should ask the group to give some reasons as to why they think that Abraham lied about his relationship with Sarah, and think about if his actions were justified or not. The group should be implored to think about that story from the perspective of Sarah as well, with help from the instructor to think about the gender dynamics and power dynamics being played out in this story. The story in Kings further outlines the power dynamics that differ between men and women when it comes to migrating. After the readings, the

instructor should begin a conversation about how the experience of a man and a woman may differ when it comes to their experience migrating.

To end this lesson, the instructor should allot about ten minutes for anyone to ask questions about concepts they are struggling with. The instructor should then ask the group to prepare for the following week's lesson by thinking about what challenges may arise for a woman when migrating compared to a man when they migrate. They should come prepared for the following week's lesson with 2-3 differences prepared to share with the group.

This third lesson is critical for my group because it presents the group with inarguable facts that show that climate change is real and climate migration is a real problem that they should be concerned about, and want to help with. By bringing statistics into the lessons, the goal is to bring a "shock factor" that will hopefully resonate with the group and further build on their empathy. It will also provide the group with scientific facts that provide proof of climate change and the damage it causes to millions of people's lives across the world. This week's lesson will lay the foundation for the following week's plan by bringing the "migrant" to life in the group's minds, preparing them to dive more into the experience of the journey that millions of climate refugees have to face. By looking at biblical stories that display the different experiences that men and women face while migrating, the group will also begin to have a more nuanced understanding of the realities of climate migration.

Homework: Think about what challenges may arise for a woman when migrating compared to a man when they migrate. Prepare 2-3 differences to share with the group next week.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/23/magazine/climate-migration.html>
- Genesis 20:1–16

- 1 Kings 17:17-24

Week 4: The Journey

For the fourth week, this lesson plan aims to expose the group to the experiences that many climate migrants have to experience when they begin their journey to find a new home for both themselves and their families. The goal is to get the group to start really understanding what all happens when a person makes the decision to leave their home and flee to a new country in hopes for a better and safer life. This lesson will help paint the full picture of what climate migration all entails.

To begin this lesson, the group will read from Exodus 12:31-42, Exodus 13:17- 14, and finally Exodus 16-17. These passages demonstrate a story of forced migration where the migrants suffer from similar issues as climate migrants do when they leave their home countries. It depicts the fear and scurried desperation as the people in the story must suddenly pick up their lives, grabbing whatever they can bring with them, and begin a journey, on foot, in search of a new homeland. Then in chapters 16 and 17, the struggles of a lack of food and water are depicted in Exodus, once again paralleling another problem that many climate migrants face when they run out of food and water during their journeys. The instructor should make it a point to point out these problems that the Israelites faced during the Exodus. The instructor should also begin a conversation and prompt the group to think about what other problems the Israelites might have faced during the Exodus that may be unlisted in the Bible. Examples of this may include difficulties that could arise when traveling with children or the elderly, or weather conditions that could impede the group's progress in their journey. After this discussion the group should be asked to read from pages 20-26 in Sonia Shah's book 'The Next Great Migration.' These pages describe real life experiences from climate migrants during their journey. It is a great opportunity to begin a discussion with the group about what they found most interesting or upsetting when

reading about these different migration stories. The instructor should then ask the group to share what different challenges they came up with from the homework from last week's lesson that a woman might have that a man may not have when migrating.

To end this week's lesson, the instructor should allot about ten minutes for anyone to ask questions about concepts they are struggling with. Afterwards, the instructor should facilitate a discussion about what similarities they found in the problems the Israelites faced versus what problems climate migrants today are facing. There will be no homework assigned for this week.

This fourth lesson is critical for my group because it is the first time that the group will be exposed to personal experiences that climate migrants have had when they leave their home countries in search of a safer land to live. The stories are from the experiences of both men and women of varying ages, which will help the group to get a fuller understanding of who is being affected by climate change and being forced to make the decision to leave their home countries. By having stories from various people, it allows for everyone in the group to have a chance to relate to a different perspective, whether they are a man or woman, a mother or father, which will allow for a larger opportunity for the group to feel empathy for those in the stories.

Homework: There is no assignment for this week.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- 'The Next Great Migration,' Sonia Shah, pages 20-26
- Exodus 12:31-42, 13:17-14, Exodus 16-17

Week 5- Relating to ‘the Migrant’

For the fifth week, this lesson plan aims to build upon the empathy and understanding that the group has for climate migrants by connecting the group’s own experiences with climate disasters to the experience of a climate migrant. The goal is to open the eyes of the group to realize that it is possible for them to have empathy and sympathy for the experience of climate refugees. It will also push the group to see themselves as a climate migrant either now or in the future.

To begin this week’s lesson the instructor should circle back to the conversation started in the first week when the group was asked to think about their own first hand experiences with climate disasters and possible experiences of having to leave their homes due to natural disasters. As residents of California, especially living in the Malibu area, this group has likely had multiple encounters with wildfires. They have experience in witnessing firsthand the fear that comes from having to evacuate and not knowing if you will be able to return home, or if everything will be burned when you return. The instructor should begin a conversation imploring the group to unpack what all they may have gone through when experiencing a wildfire, and how that made them feel and what the outcome of that was. After sharing, the instructor should reference the reading from the previous week’s lesson from Sonia Shah’s book, ‘The Next Great Migration.’ The instructor should then open up a discussion for the group to share ways that they can see themselves and their experiences with climate disasters, such as wildfire, in the experiences that the climate migrants from the book faced during their migration. This conversation should help the group to continue understanding the vulnerability that climate migrants are faced with, and will further humanize the climate migrants, especially for those in the group who may still have some political hold-ups that prevent them from having empathy and understanding for the

experience of climate migrants. The instructor should then ask the group to think about different ways that they could help climate refugees, either in their own individual lives, or as a congregation. To end this lesson, the group should come up with a list together of all the ideas they thought of that would help climate migrants, and this list should be saved to reference for the final lesson plan the following week.

This fifth lesson is critical for my group because it is the final step for the group to place themselves in the shoes of climate refugees. By pushing the group to think about their own connection to natural disasters it also allows for them to have a better understanding of the fear and sadness that climate refugees face when they have to deal with natural disasters and flee from their homes to try and survive. This lesson plan will lay the foundation for the final week's lesson by getting the group to imagine the experience of a climate migrant and understanding the importance of helping those who are fleeing their homelands. It will allow for the group to begin thinking about what kind of help their church could provide for climate migrants.

Homework: There is no homework for this week.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- 'The Next Great Migration,' Sonia Shah, pages 20-26

Week 6- Being Jesus's Feet and Hands

The goal of this final lesson plan is to wrap up the previous five lessons and focus the conversation on what the pastoral care and oversight council can do to stand in solidarity with climate migrants and how they can contribute to the conversation within the whole congregation. This group is responsible for deciding what foundations and charities the whole of the church will support, so it is fitting to have the final conversation be centered around how each person can help climate refugees individually, and as a whole.

Those in the pastoral care and oversight council group are heads of the church and are, therefore, in a position to be the “hands and feet” of God. To start off this final lesson plan, the group should be asked to read the scripture from 2 Corinthians 5:20-21. This scripture highlights the command that as followers of Christ, we are called to be Christ’s ambassadors as though we were carrying our God’s will through ourselves. After reading this, the instructor should begin a conversation by asking the group how they think they could be the hands and feet of Jesus when helping climate migrants. It should be emphasized that as heads of the church, the group has a duty to put Jesus’s will above their own and remain impartial to their political ties and ideologies. Following this discussion, the group should read scriptures from Genesis 2:15, Psalms 24:1-2, and Jeremiah 2:7 in this order. The instructor should emphasize the importance of Adam’s role in the excerpt from Genesis and how God instructed him to care for the land he made. In Psalms, the instructor should emphasize the importance of this earth being made by God and that it belongs to him. Finally, from the excerpt in Jeremiah, the instructor should emphasize God’s anger at his gift of fertile, healthy land being defiled by those in the excerpt. The instructor should then connect all the scriptures together and begin a conversation about the importance of taking care of the land that God provided us with and that by caring for the earth

and being good stewards of it, like Adam in the Garden of Eden, we are respecting the gifts given to us from God. To end the session, the last excerpt that the group should read is Matthew 25:40-45. This scripture will remind the group that God calls Christians to care for the least of these, and that by serving those in need, you serve God by carrying out his will. The instructor should remind the group that climate migrants are “the least of these” and that regardless of their political standing, they have a duty to help them and do their part to support them.

This final lesson is critical for my group because it is the final step towards implementing action after learning about climate migrants and why they are moving. The goal is to remind the group of their innate duty as heads of the church and to get them directly involved in making changes within their congregation. The goal is also to leave them with the complete understanding that as heads of a church, they have a responsibility from God to care about matters such as climate migrants and environmental care. It is also critical for them to connect climate action with their benevolence committee since the group is already familiar with taking philanthropic action. By connecting climate action to an act of benevolence, the group is presented with an easy opportunity to do God’s will and be the “hands and feet” of Jesus.

Homework: Find one organization or charity that helps climate migrants or fights against climate change to introduce to the congregation that they could donate to during Benevolence month in November.

Reading and Sources Needed for this Lesson:

- 2 Corinthians 5:20-21
- Genesis 2:15
- Jeremiah 2:7
- Psalms 24:1-2

- Matthew 25:40, 45

Noelle Alderton

SUST 415.01

Dr. Doran

14 December 2022

Lesson Plans, Joel Foster

Introduction

Climate change is currently assaulting our planet; it is no longer a far-off threat in the distant future. Minute changes in climatic conditions have led to a cascading series of disastrous weather events across the globe such as drought, flooding, heat, and wildfire. Humans, like other plant and animal life on Earth, are being directly affected by this phenomenon; climate change is generating the migration of people in communities that are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters. Environmental degradation does not exist in a vacuum—it acts as a threat multiplier to exacerbate a variety of humanitarian issues and political conflicts, especially related to immigration. In response to this information, every human being should be concerned for the wellbeing of those migrating due to climate change; however, it is especially important for Christians to have a vested interest in the safety of climate refugees. The following lesson plans are an attempt to explain why Christians should care about climate migration—specifically the youth congregation of the University Church of Christ at Pepperdine. Each plan follows the same structure which includes a theme, leading question, textual evidence, and take away points. The following lesson plans are designed to inspire young Christians within the UCC to embody the heart of Christ in response to the suffering of climate migrants.

Lesson 1

To begin, each lesson plan will introduce a thematic word and question to guide the conversation about climate migration. Next, the lessons will analyze scripture and other sources to begin connecting the dots between faith and climate migration. Then, it will be necessary to summarize the implications of this textual evidence in a way that is easy for the youth group to understand. Afterwards, I will outline the biggest takeaways to cement the main ideas of the lesson. Finally, I will explain why the themes I explore in the lesson are particularly relevant to my focus group, the UCC youth group.

To open the first lesson of a six-week series about climate migration, I selected the word “nomad,” followed by the leading question “what does it mean to be a nomad, especially in a biblical context?” My intention behind this theme is to normalize the idea of migration before we enter a conversation about the injustices of climate migration. It is essential that the youth can take a step back and recognize that the systems that govern our world aren’t necessarily set in stone. Today, we live in a civilization that is bound by arbitrary borders and complicated international laws that restrict the movement of people, especially between developing and developed nations. However, this was not always the case.

Now with an established theme to guide the lesson, it is necessary to capture the attention of the students. One way to prime their minds to learn about climate migrants is to break into small groups with discussion questions. These questions may include: “Right now, if you could pack your bags and move to any place around the world, where would you go? Who would you bring with you? Have you ever traveled before? If so, was it difficult to get there? When have you felt like a stranger?” Hopefully, these questions spark food for thought about what it feels like to be on the move, priming the students to feel empathy for refugees.

After asking the students to reflect on their experience with travel and experiencing new places, the concept of migration can be introduced. One of the first points to emphasize is that animals and humans have been migrating throughout history. While animals tend to migrate based on weather patterns and geographical components, the paths taken by human migrants are shaped by abstractions.¹ In order to understand human migration in a compassionate way, students must consider that our world is divided by political lines and treaties that make movement easy for some people and extremely difficult for others.

Scriptures are helpful to understand the concept of migration. In fact, many characters in the Bible were distinctly nomadic. The advent story is one of many that explains that Jesus himself was a migrant born in Egypt to escape persecution in his homeland.² Later, Jesus goes from place to place doing miracles and requests that his disciples follow in his footsteps.³ Encouraging the students to consider Jesus's character as a nomad creates a parallel to those who are moving across the world right now.

Wrapping up, it is important to note that despite migration being a normal trend throughout human history, the movement of people around the world is extremely regulated. The goal of this lesson is to highlight Jesus's story as a nomad and a displaced person.

The theme of being a nomad is critical for UCC students to understand because it plays a huge role in who Jesus is and creates a bridge of understanding between scriptures and modern problems. Although it is possible that many of these students have traveled abroad or even lived abroad as faculty family members in one of Pepperdine's international programs, they may not have reflected on the difficulties of being displaced due to climate change. The intent is for

¹ Sonia Shah, *The Next Great Migration* (New York: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 10.

² Matthew 2 (NIV).

³ Matthew 10:1-42 (NIV).

students to reflect deeply on how they feel when they are in new environments and times in their lives that they have felt like strangers.

Lesson 2

Following the same structure as the previous plan, this lesson will focus on the theme of “change” and investigate the question “what is climate migration and how is it caused?” This theme will guide the students to consider how environmental stressors are causing people to leave their homes. One way to open this lesson could be to begin with a journaling prompt asking the students to reflect on their experience with climate change. This could open the door for the youth group to think about their experience with the Woolsey fire or other ways they have felt climate change impact their life. The hope of this exercise would be for the students to realize that climate change affects the Malibu community deeply and apply that understanding to a global scale.

Moving on to the “book” portion of the lesson plan, I will dive into an explanation of climate migration. As middle school and high school students, most of the kids should have some knowledge of what climate change is and recognize how it affects natural phenomena like drought, fire, and flooding. However, they may have never heard of climate migration, so this lesson plan must carefully lay out how increasing temperatures around the globe are forcing people to leave their homes. Rather than explaining how climate change is caused by an increase in human-caused greenhouse gas emissions, for an hour lesson it could be sufficient to explain that climate change is causing more intense heat, drought, flooding, and fires. These four factors are working together to cause 26 million people to flee their homes because their climate has become too inhospitable over time.⁴ After sharing this statistic, it is important to note that

⁴ Shah, *The Next Great Migration*, 10.

visualizing the sheer number of migrants is difficult for any person, child or adult. This information could be supplemented by an analogy; for example, the students may be able to picture the reality of climate migration by imagining what our world would look like if every person in Florida was forced to flee the state following a climate disaster.

During this lesson, it would also be important to explain how environmental factors can combine with war and conflicts to heighten already dangerous situations. Perhaps the most important point to drive home is that people often have little to no protections once they are on the move. For students to understand this concept, it is helpful to focus on the stories of specific families who have been forced to leave their homes; some of the most compelling stories about climate migration follow the stories of young teenagers who are the same age as the students in the youth group. For example, *The Next Great Migration* shares the story of Mariam, a fourteen-year-old girl who left her family behind to flee her hometown; Mariam walked over twenty-four hours in the wilderness to reach the border to Ethiopia, avoiding armed soldiers along the way.⁵ Stories like these paint climate migrants for who they are: humans who are just like us.

Because climate change is such a divisive, complicated, and traumatic issue, some wonder—rightfully so—how much information should be shared with the youth group. However, these difficult stories are crucial to share with this group of students. Not only is it important to educate the youth who will someday become our leaders, these students are at a foundational point in their faith journeys and must reconcile the existence of suffering in a world with a loving God. Speaking about difficult topics reveals the evil that exists in the world; it is only natural for the youth group to question how their God could allow for such atrocities to occur. We must lean into our Christian hope while hearing these stories to understand that God’s love is still present

⁵ Shah, *The Next Great Migration*, 22.

even in the worst situations. Every lesson must end in hope. Perhaps some can be found in the ability of Christians to make Earth more like His kingdom in heaven.

Lesson 3

When speaking about climate migration, one of the most important facets to highlight is the inequality woven into the movement of people around the planet. This lesson plan will focus on the word “unequal” and question how climate migration disproportionately affects minority groups.

First, diving into textual evidence can provide a good foundation for understanding climate migration as a social justice issue. Most of the world’s population is distributed near the equator on lands that have traditionally enjoyed stable climates and fertile lands. However, due to climate change, the habitable parts of the world are shifting to the north and causing the mass migration of people towards the poles. It is predicted that over the next fifty years, 3.5 billion people will move due to hotter temperatures and more intense humidity near the equator.⁶ It is essential to connect the dots between the groups of people who will be most impacted by this trend; the global south tends to be populated by developing countries that experience some of the most severe poverty rates. As a result, the people who are moving are groups that are already marginalized and contribute the least to climate change. The most important point to emphasize to the youth group is that no one wants to leave their home due to environmental stressors; people move as a last-resort option. The concept of how climate migration is connected to social justice is quite complicated; however, one point that is simple to explain is that climate disasters everywhere have the greatest impact on the people who are already left behind by society.

⁶ Gaia Vince, *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape our World*, (United States: Flatiron Books, 2022), 49.

All this information about climate injustice may be quite confusing for a young teenager to comprehend in an hour-long lesson plan. To zoom out and summarize the most crucial point, we can look to scripture to draw parallels between biblical stories and the type of people who are moving across the globe. To check in, we must affirm that people are being driven from their homes due to drought, heat, flooding, and fires. Then, we can recap that many people who are moving are the poorest and most desperate people. When they attempt to cross borders to the safety of another country, they are often turned around for no reason other than humans are not allowed to freely cross borders. Countries that are relatively safe from the impacts of climate change are reluctant to reach out a hand to assist people on the move. We must put ourselves in the shoes of a migrant and wonder what it would feel like to be forced away from our home and travel far distances only to be refused entry to a safe place.

It is useful to visualize the experience of a migrant by looking to scripture. The Old Testament, especially, is guided by themes of migration. One of the most powerful stories follows Abraham and Sarah's journey from their home; they were called by God to travel to Canaan, where they experienced a harsh famine and moved on to Egypt. Along the way, they were vulnerable to the powerful people surrounding them and lied about their relationship to spare their lives.⁷ There are countless parallels that can be drawn between Abraham and Sarah's story in Genesis and the modern migrant. Like in the biblical story, thousands of people impacted by climate change are driven away from their homes as a result of famine. Once on the move, they are vulnerable to the authorities around them and face difficulties navigating political and legal challenges.

⁷ Genesis 12:11-13 (NIV).

Many students within the UCC community are familiar with racial injustice; Joel Foster, the youth pastor, explained that many of his students have witnessed or been subjected to various forms of prejudice at school in Malibu. Many students come to Joel for advice about how to support their friends when they experience discrimination. Despite the makeup of the group being predominantly white and the children of professors, they are more than capable of engaging with stories of injustice related to climate migration. Supporting the discussion of these topics in a church setting allows these teenagers to better understand how they can love strangers just like Jesus did.

Lesson 4

One of the most important things to focus on when learning about climate migration is how females face disproportionate risks when moving as a result of climate change. This lesson plan will focus on the word “gendered” and address the question of how climate migration specifically impacts women.

Diving into the texts, the youth group must consider how natural disasters might impact women differently than men. Most people have never stopped to consider the tiny challenges that add up to create difficulties for women on the move. First, it is necessary to remind the students that women in other parts of the world don’t enjoy the same rights that women have in the United States. Social conventions mean that it is uncommon for women to leave home without their husbands—when reacting to environmental stressors, this proves to be a major problem. Many women in developing nations lack access to education and rights which complicates every social challenge; they are less likely than men to be literate, which sometimes prevents them from using devices like smartphones and digital communication platforms.⁸ In addition to

⁸ CARE Climate Change and Resilience Platform (CCRP), “Evicted by Climate Change: Confronting the Gendered Impacts of Climate-Induced Displacement,” (Netherlands: 2020), 4.

difficulty accessing technology, their responsibility to care for children and elderly family members makes mobility difficult; in addition, women face more gender-based violence during times of crisis.⁹ Mental health issues are more prevalent for women impacted by climate change due to their disproportionate role as caretakers. These complex factors work in unison to make poor women and children more than 14 times more likely to die in climate-related disasters than their male counterparts.¹⁰

The young men and women in Joel's student ministry may struggle at first to understand how women could be impacted differently by climate change. Although they are likely aware of the gender inequality women have faced historically, applying this to a modern-day context is challenging for many students. Addressing the gendered aspect of climate change may require special attention to sharing stories about the experiences of specific women.

The Bible is full of stories that share the experiences of marginalized women. Looking to these scriptures provides a steppingstone to connect the current suffering of females to a Christian faith perspective. One of the clearest examples follows Ruth and Naomi, a pair of widows who have no male relatives to provide them safety and security. Despite the opportunity to find a new family, Ruth pledges to support her mother-in-law, Naomi, for the rest of her life and adopt her faith. As the two women navigate their life together, their vulnerability requires them to rely on the kindness of others for survival.¹¹ This story is significant for the youth group to think through because one of the central themes of the story is loving the stranger. In a biblical context, strangers are those who are landless and therefore have limited access to sustenance and rights; there is no group that better represents the stranger than today's climate migrants who

⁹ Evicted by Climate Change, 5.

¹⁰ Evicted by Climate Change, 8.

¹¹ Ruth 1-3 (NIV).

have been pushed from their homes.¹² In particular, the book of Ruth paints a picture of what it would look like to be a woman on the move faced with incredible fear and vulnerability.

Gendered issues are important for the UCC youth group specifically to understand. Although gendered issues can be complicated to speak about with younger audiences, it is possible to broach these problems without graphically describing the domestic abuse and gender-based violence many women experience while migrating. As young Christians who are considering what it means to love the world like Jesus did, the students must investigate the way certain groups of people are left behind more than others; in the context of climate migration, there are practical ways to think about how we as Christians can care for women specifically. Realizing that their lack of access to education, property, and legal rights hides their perspective will allow the students to honor their stories and think more critically about how to care for women on the move.

Lesson 5

While the previous four lesson plans have provided context about climate change, the last two lesson plans will focus on what students can practically do about climate migration. The theme for this lesson plan is hospitality; this word is meant to encourage students to question how Christians are called to interact with those who are displaced and strangers in our society.

This lesson plan will focus more deeply on scripture to inspire the students. One of the best examples of hospitality in the Bible appears in Matthew 10:1-42.¹³ Before Jesus is crucified and resurrected, he instructs his disciples to go out into the world and proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near. When he sends his followers to preach the gospel to Israelites who have lost their faith, he demands that they abandon their worldly possessions—their money, extra

¹² Chris Doran and Emily Tanaka, “Climate Change and ‘the Least of These,’” 3.

¹³ Matthew 10:1-42 (NIV).

clothes, and property—and rely on the good will of strangers to house, feed, and clothe them. Jesus warns his disciples that they will be betrayed, hated, and persecuted for their faith. Yet, Jesus tells them not to be afraid and to lean on God to give them the necessary strength and confidence. Some of the most crucial verses are when Jesus states that “freely you have received; freely give”¹⁴ and proclaims that “whoever loses their life for [his] sake will find it.”¹⁵

When sharing the story of Jesus sending out his twelve disciples, it is necessary to give the students space to visualize what it would be like to be a missionary relying solely on the hospitality of others to protect and provide for them. It would likely be terrifying; it would require leaving the comforts of the world behind to embark on a dangerous and difficult journey. This is the kind of experience thousands of climate migrants share around the globe. It is necessary for the youth ministry to put themselves in the shoes of those who require hospitality because they have the choice to provide freely for people who are suffering.

Hospitality doesn't always look like opening your home to accept those who are displaced. There are countless ways to practice hospitality, which is emphasized when Jesus explains the benefit of losing ourselves for the sake of others. When we perform acts of service and place the needs of others before ourselves, we mirror the unconditional love of God. If the students acknowledge that climate change causes the migration of people around the globe, they will understand that climate action is a practical way to care for the strangers among us. The story of Jesus sending out the twelve is applicable to the youth group in the way it explains that Christians freely receive the grace and love of God and are mandated to pass that love along to others.

¹⁴ Matthew 10:8 (NIV).

¹⁵ Matthew 10: 39 (NIV).

Jesus explains that there are benefits to practicing hospitality. A deterrent for serving others is that it takes great sacrifice and often requires significant physical and mental energy. However, Jesus says that whoever loses their life will find it in service; what he means by this statement is that when we put others before ourselves, the purpose we discover brings us Christ-like joy and fulfillment. The teenage years are often a time of insecurity and confusion which causes individuals to look inward rather than consider how they can be a vessel for love; as a result, the idea of finding purpose through service may be encouraging for the UCC youth ministry.

The hope of this lesson plan is that the students will be exposed to climate migration as a critical issue facing our world today and feel moved by the stories of people who have been displaced due to climate change. With this empathy transforming the hearts of the students, perhaps the love of Christ will empower them to act as the hands and feet of Jesus. The theme of hospitality is critical for the youth ministry because it is an application of the unconditional love Jesus displays for his creation. In addition, the Christian mandate to practice hospitality should inspire young believers to consider how they can change their own lives to welcome strangers near and far.

Lesson 6

In the final lesson plan about climate migration, the UCC youth will consider the themes of stewardship and care. This section will explore the question of what our duty is as Christians to care for the strangers among us and be good stewards of Creation. These questions and themes are inextricably linked as we consider what action students can take to embody the loving heart of Christ.

To begin, the Bible provides answers for why it is so important to love our neighbors as ourselves.¹⁶ The most fundamental reason appears in Genesis where it is stated that every human is made in the image of God and therefore has dignity.¹⁷ The conditions created by climate migration and other humanitarian crises reduce the wellbeing of individuals to levels that deny their humanity. The basic rights of climate migrants to sustenance, life, freedom, and safety are compromised by the conditions of their displacement. This is a problem for those who call themselves Christians; God cares for each of his children and is hurt by their suffering.

Next, we can consider the connection between loving our neighbors and being good stewards of the Earth. As we have discussed in previous lesson plans, climate change and climate migration are inextricably linked. Simply put, warming temperatures exacerbate heat, drought, flooding, and fires. When these stressors are prolonged, people have no choice except to seek safer conditions. The relationship between the health of nature and the wellbeing of humans is evident in the way the climate crisis is unfolding. It must be clear to the youth ministry that what harms nature harms people. And most important, what harms these two things harms God. This connection is evident in the story of God's covenant with Noah; not only is God's care given to all people, but it is also extended to all living things.¹⁸ This includes the entirety of Creation; God has called every aspect of the world he made good.

One of the core Christian missions is to make our Earth more like heaven by uplifting our neighbors. However, the students may wonder how it is possible for them to do so. Society tells them that they are not old enough, capable enough, or wise enough to make great change in the world. This prejudice holds no semblance of truth; youth are some of our most impactful change-

¹⁶ Leviticus 19:18 (NIV).

¹⁷ David Hollenbach, *Humanity in Crisis: Ethical and Religious Response to Refugees*, (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2019), 39.

¹⁸ Genesis 9:8-10 (NIV).

makers, especially when it comes to climate change. Some encouragement can be found in scripture when God chooses the powerless to be his vessels. This is evident in many Old Testament stories when God chooses the younger before the elder, which was revolutionary for the time. In addition, it is important to share that the youth are not expected to change the world on their own; their works and accomplishments are derived from God—not their strength alone. Most importantly, these students are not expected to solve the problem of climate migration on their own; rather, this lesson plan is meant to inspire and encourage small actions.

The most impactful way to end a six-week series on climate migration for the UCC youth would be to discuss concrete actions that the students can take to support their neighbors who are suffering as a result of climate change. The first step is for the students to meditate on the lessons and strike empathy within their hearts. With this empathy, they can build respect for those who are moving away from environmental stressors. Lastly, they can consider what personal steps they are willing to take to modify their lifestyles to reflect a greater care for climate change and how it impacts people. Perhaps certain students will be particularly moved by these lesson plans and want to give their time to volunteer to help climate migrants in the Malibu area. Others may change their diet and habits to lower their personal impact on the planet. Still others may be inspired to pursue an education in sustainability or policy. Regardless of the choices the students make following these lesson plans, they will be more aware of the unjust ways particular groups of people are impacted by climate change. With hope, these lesson plans will help equip the UCC students to become mature Christians with a mission to care for Creation and all of God's people, especially the strangers among them.

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UCC Youth Group Climate Migration Lesson Plan

Week 1:

The first week of a new lesson plan should introduce the topic and gradually explain the importance of the subject matter. After meeting with Joel and discussing how the youth group sessions go, we decided to follow the “Hook, Book, Look, Took” structure for presenting our lesson plans. This structure follows that, given the shorter attention span of eight grade-sophomore high schoolers, it’s important to grab their attention in the beginning of the lesson with a game, video, story, song, etc. After the kids become excited about what they are learning, Joel explained that it was very important for him to look at specific passages in the Bible. After reading them, the group will look into the verses, what the messages are, and how they should relate them to their own lives. Lastly, the youth group recaps what they have learned and take the information home with them. Each lesson will also end with a prompt to journal over the week and bring back the following session. This gives the members a chance to reflect on their personal lives and really chew on the messages they learned. Overall, I chose to present these lesson plans with Advent and Christmas in mind at the beginning, though some information could be tweaked to use during another season within the Church calendar, since it uses broad examples and repetitive themes from the Bible.

In the first week, the teens will be introduced to the idea of climate change. In order to begin a discussion on climate migration, the kids must understand why climate change should be

an important issue to the Christian community. They will share their own opinions, as Joel appreciates their inputs and inspires the students to express themselves. By opening up the conversation with sharing opinions, Joel can identify with his audience and adjust the presentation of the material accordingly. Joel can thus feel out their understanding of climate change and prepare for lessened or further information sharing if he thinks they need it.

To begin, I think it would be fun to start with a “game” to kick off the conversation. In this game the students will have to go up to 3 or 5 different people (depending on how many kids show up that day) and share one thing they think climate change will affect. This can be in their own lives or in the world in general, but they are not allowed to repeat between persons, and they can’t have matching answers with the person they are talking to. I would say give them around 10-15 minutes to share and find people before coming back together. Then spend around 5 minutes together sharing a couple of examples that they came up with. See if any students bring up the idea of migration and linger there and, if not, bring it up at the end. This will be a brief introduction to what climate migration is. For the focus of day one, though, the teens should focus on climate change before focusing on climate migration the second week.

After getting the kids warmed up, dive into the Word. I think that Genesis is a great place to start the discussion of climate change because it reminds us of the creation that we adore. I would read Genesis 1 and 2, and then 3 if time permits. Then, after reading, discuss what parts of the story stuck with each of them. Discuss what they think “creation care” means today and discuss what role they play in it. Lastly, send them away with ideas of how they can live sustainably at home and open the conversation of climate change or sustainability with their parents. They can also follow a prompt to journal about what they implemented throughout their week, and then have them bring their journals back the second session to discuss.

Week 2:

Week two will focus on what it means to be a climate migrant. This term may not be understood by the teens and/or could perhaps have a negative connotation in their minds, but it is important to start early in explaining in depth what it means. This week will have an emphasis on Joel giving an explanation, but discussion should not be left out. Additionally, kids get bored, so it is important to engage them in a fun way while still keeping the conversation serious. Since climate migration is a heavy topic, there should be an emphasis on how the kids are able to love climate migrants.

This day can start with a game of movement. I think the game, four corners, could be a fun way of practicing having to move around in a strategic manner to prevent an issue which in this case is “getting out.” In the game, four corners, one person is picked/volunteers to sit or stand with their eyes closed in the center of the group. As they count to ten, every other person walks around to a corner of their choosing. By listening in, the person in the middle can choose a corner at the end of the 10 seconds to eliminate. This is then repeated until only one person remains—when it gets down to four people, each person must pick a separate corner. Rounds of this game can be repeated with a new person in the middle each time. Let this game go on for about 10-15 minutes and then come back to discuss briefly the journaling the kids did from last week. Then remembering the game, discuss the kids’ fears and strategies to prevent them being caught. Lead this into how they might be tricky with noise when they walk or try to be totally silent. Relate this to how people migrating might have to make certain decisions or sacrifices.

Next introduce a story of migration in the Bible. I think that the story of Ruth is a good example. I was going to consider looking at Abraham’s migration story with Sarah, but I think that the story may be too confusing to follow or understand because of its layers. However, this

can still be used as a backup if Joel chooses to not use the story of Ruth. I think that looking at the full story could be good if Joel wants to spend more time in the Bible and less in discussion for this day, but for timing, I think that Ruth 1:6–2:23 should do. After reading, look into how Ruth adjusted to the situation and moved around based on necessity and how she made sacrifices for her extended family, Naomi, like giving up her own religion or looking at for her as they worked. Explain how climate migrants' location is subject to the changes in the climate. Then explain that we as Christians should be welcoming and caring to “the least of these.” Before the next session prompt them to journal about ways they think they can support climate migrants.

Week 3:

Lesson three introduces Jesus as a migrant. Over the span of weeks three, four, and five the youth group will discuss Jesus's different journeys throughout his life. To begin, week three will explain how Jesus was a migrant before He was even born. This week will be less heavy in Bible reading content, so there is more time for discussion from past weeks' journaling and on the topic of this week. I think it would be fitting to start the youth group meeting with the song away in the manger as it explains Jesus's birthplace. This could include a playing of the song along with handing out papers with the lyrics to the song, or the kids could just look up the lyrics on their phones and follow along. After intentional listening, the youth group can head into a discussion on Mary and Joseph's difficulties when faced with having to travel to Bethlehem. Through the lyrics, I think the kids will be able to identify Jesus's humble birth, and this can lead into a discussion of why the birth was such.

Luke gives a story and explanation of Mary and Joseph traveling to Bethlehem. The story is short, but I think it is important for the kids to read Luke 2: 1-7 to understand how Jesus's place of birth was chosen by the effects of migration. Joel likely knows more about the history of

Caesar Augustus's decree and the geography of the time, so I think he can go into explaining this part of the Bible before looking into how the story relates to climate migration. After reading and obtaining some background on the setting of the story, I think that group can discuss why Jesus's parents had to choose such a humble place for his birth. They did not have a choice to move or where they had to travel to, but Mary and Joseph set out even though she was pregnant and close to giving birth. Furthermore, when they arrived, Mary and Joseph had to quickly find a place to settle, so they had to choose a manger over the comfort of their own home, a stranger's home, or even an inn. Jesus's entrance into the world was decided by His parents' migration story.

To enter into discussion, have the teens think of how their Lord is humble. Have them understand that even the Messiah had to follow rules of variables His parents could not control. Ask the group why they think God chose for Jesus to enter into the world this way instead of in a grand celebration. Why is the humility of Jesus in this story so important in setting an example to our lives? The kids can then talk about how they can relate Jesus's story to people forced to move because of climate change, an uncontrollable force for them. Through comparison to Mary, this is an opportunity to introduce the topic of gendered climate migration and why it can be more difficult or dangerous for women to be on the move. Ask the kids to consider themselves or their sisters and mothers having to experience a dangerous move. Then, send the group home with a prompt to journal written prayers to Jesus about His humility and a protection for those in similar scenarios.

Week 4:

Shortly after Jesus's birth, He and His family were already on the move again. Because of King Herod's decree, they had no choice but to move to Egypt to hide Jesus. In the lesson four discussion, it is important to bring up that climate migration is a forced migration that is not of

choice. Like Jesus, climate migrants are subject to a move that is for their own safety and livelihood. For a more serious topic I think that it is important to start the meeting with something fun; however, I do think that it needs to be considerate of the topic. I think that it could be engaging yet respectful to do a version of speed dating. For this, the group is split in half and has 2-3 minutes one-on-one with each other in a row, and the person at the end of the row chosen to be the moving row will walk to the front of the row as everyone shifts a person over. The question for this speed dating round would be to find matching fears, worries, or anxieties shared between the person you are paired with. These could range from fear of spiders to climate anxiety. The point of this game is to introduce the idea of frightful moments that we would like to avoid. When the group joins back together, they can discuss some fears that are lighthearted to lessen the heaviness of the topic but then move into some more serious anxieties. Before going into the Bible verses, Joel can ask what worries are specific to climate change, maybe some about personal experiences with wildfires. (If this is too traumatic, though, they do not have to go in depth.) Begin to relate this to Jesus's parents' moving out of fear and wanting to protect their son.

Matthew 2:13-23 discusses the holy family's flee to Egypt and return to Nazareth. In reading these verses I think that Joel can explain more on Herod's decree and the backstory behind it. Then, the group can lead into discussion on what it means to move out of fear. My hope is that through the game, the teens can try and find some entrance to empathy for those moving out of fear and necessity. Discussion should compare the holy family's travel story to the story of families migrating due to fear of the effects of dangerous climate conditions. Some examples could be moving because of hurricanes, drought, flooding, or wildfires, which I think the group could easily relate to. I think that using Jesus's story can emphasize to the group that

many migrant families are moving for the same reasons that Mary and Joseph had in order to protect Jesus.

I think that the session could end by encouraging the kids to take the story home and ask their parents how they have felt living in Malibu. I think that the kids could journal about their own fears that they maybe did not want to share in the group publicly, but they could still keep it personal to themselves to encourage empathy and to make a connection to climate migrants.

Week 5:

Jesus traveled often throughout His journey with His disciples. I think that it is important to highlight how the disciples quickly chose to follow Jesus and how many people welcomed Jesus into their homes. These verses that I have chosen show how easily Jesus's disciples accepted the idea of migration and how quickly other followers accepted those on the move. I think an interactive way to start that challenges existing biases would be to show images, either printed or in a slide show on a laptop to project, that present different types of people. As the group flips through the pictures or slides, they should be answering the question, "Who would you trust to stay in your home with you?" The group might not speak honestly out loud, but I think the point would be to recognize immediate responses or biases to different people based on race or class. The group could then discuss reasons why they think these biases exist. Then they should be encouraged to enter into the readings imagining Jesus as a stranger, not knowing He is the Messiah.

The first two readings are Matthew 4:18-22 and Luke 18:28-30 They give examples of Jesus's disciples dropping everything for Him and what Jesus's opinion on it is. The reading from the Gospel of Matthew shows how quickly Jesus's disciples changed their lives for Him, giving up their jobs instantly to follow a stranger. The verse from Luke can be especially

challenging because it seems strange to drop family and friends completely. These verses can seem extreme or like hyperboles, but I think they can open our eyes to see that Jesus did not find migration to be a strange anomaly but to be a part of life. The next verses explain the story of Martha and Mary taking in Jesus. Luke 10:38-42 shows how Jesus appreciates just listening. I think that both sisters show hospitality well, but Mary shows the importance of paying attention to someone else. I think this can be related to letting in climate migrants, accepting them, and listening to their struggles.

The group should discuss why it is important to quickly accept others and to show them care and love. As they recap on the two stories, I think that the kids should voice whom they feel are in need of acceptance. I think that this is also a good time to bring up the homeless persons in Malibu and to consider some of their reasonings. Also to be considered, if they are old enough, could be the option to volunteer for the Malibu labor exchange. I think these are some suggestions to offer up, but I think that much of the discussion should be led by the kids to help them think for themselves about what importance they have in loving others. As this session is wrapped up, I think the kids should be reminded to consider the strangers that they see and how they can support them. They could also be encouraged to have healthy discussion with their parents about voting power to welcome climate migrants but only if they are comfortable. They can be sent home with a journal prompt to write about the people they considered throughout their week.

Week 6:

Wrapping up the lesson plan, I think that it is very important for the youth group to consider how they can turn their faith into action. I think that young people carry such a weight and anxiety because of climate change, but they are also very active and engaged in making a

difference. I believe that these kids will understand the importance of climate change and how it affects other people's lives, but I think that migration is a topic that they might not link to climate change. Many Christians, and I am sure this youth group as well, have a great understanding of love through their following of Jesus. Throughout our meetings with Joel, we discussed the importance of making teens feel like they can love themselves at the same time as loving others. We talked about how growing up is a very stressful time and that high school already throws so many things at students that adding guilt does not help. So, for the final lesson plan, I want to focus on love as a way to gain more love and to build community.

Beginning, I think it would be sweet to play a game of two truths and a lie, but they have to start with "I love..." I think this would be a fun way for the group to connect with each other about shared interests and communal love for family, friends, etc. This also opens up the discussion of the meaning of love/the types of love, i.e. "I love to surf" vs "I love my sister." After the game, the group can shift to discussing how we should be mirroring God's Agape love for us in the way that we love others. The group can also explain how Philia, or brotherly love, is important for knowing how to turn love into action.

The Bible verses I chose for this final lesson plan are the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes have always been something close to my heart, and I love that they lay out a list you can follow or look back at on how to love. I think that Matthew chapter 5 helps create a way to show climate migrants love by the way we can treat them that leads to grace from God or that God shows them that we can reflect. For example, if we are merciful to a climate migrant, God shows us mercy, and if a climate migrant is mourning, we should show them comfort. The Beatitudes give a structure for humility that I think we should follow that reminds us also that God is there for us. I

think that the students can discuss how the Beatitudes makes them feel empowered to help others.

Finally, our purpose in forming these lesson plans is to inspire the students. We do not want to scare them in any way but want to give them the encouragement that they can make a difference. We want to strengthen their faith with an understanding of how they can put their love into practice. Climate migration is a heavy topic and we do not want the youth group to feel the pressure to individually fix it themselves, but we want to remind them of the power that they have to change the world through their love of God, others, and themselves. That is the final “Took” we want them to bring home with them.

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SUST 415
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Final Project: Six-Week Lesson Plan

Week 1:

My first lesson plan will lay the foundation for the rest of my lesson plans. I will open by posing the question, "what is climate change?". I intend to dedicate the first five minutes of the course for the students to answer the question based on their inherent knowledge about climate change. After about five minutes, rather than directly answering the question, I will show a three-minute video by National Geographic that gives insight into the causes and effects of climate change¹. Following the video, I will present what Gaia Vince calls the "four horsemen of the climate apocalypse" (sea level rise, drought, flood, and fire)². In my explanation of the four horsemen, I will emphasize fire to connect the climate apocalypse to my next question.

I will then propose the question, "how has climate change impacted our own community here at Pepperdine?". After, I will give the students about five minutes to respond. I will then answer the question myself and say, "climate change directly impacted Pepperdine students in 2018 after a wildfire ignited on November 8th, 2018. The students were forced to evacuate and were fearful for their lives and their future at Pepperdine". I will then say, "put yourself in the position of those students and try to imagine how it would feel to drop everything and relocate because of factors that were completely out of your control?". After a quick two to three minute

¹ *Causes and Effects of Climate Change: National Geographic. YouTube.* YouTube, 2017.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4H1N_yXBjA.

² GAIA VINCE, "Chapter 2: The Four Horsemen of the Anthropocene," in *Nomad Century: How Climate Migration Will Reshape Our World* (S.I.: FLATIRON BOOKS, 2023).

discussion, I will begin to explain how evidently, the effects of climate change have a direct impact on our community.

I will then move on to explain how tropical and sub-tropical regions disproportionately bear the effects of climate change by describing the current circumstances of the island nation Tuvalu. I will read the quote of Tuvalu citizen Emma Sione that says, "One day we'll disappear." I will follow with a brief description of her story as a native Tuvalu citizen by gathering pieces of information from an article by Guardian³. I will then propose the question, "wouldn't you do anything to prevent your own country from gradually sinking, or at least wouldn't you do anything to prevent Pepperdine from bursting into flames?". After the students answer this, I will highlight how our actions affect our own communities and global communities, indicating that our actions have more of an impact than we may initially think. I will then quickly relay a list of specific things that they can do as an individual to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as recycling plastic, composting, using reusable silverware, being mindful of how long they take in the shower, etc.". At this point, the lesson should have lasted one hour.

My first-week lesson plan is critical to the particular group I am addressing because they are college students like me. I believe that as a student, the best way I have witnessed my professors provoking genuine contemplation and discussion on a topic is by posing a question. That being said, by incorporating questions throughout the lesson, I believe that it will not only cause the students to think deeply about the subject but it will also give the students the feeling that they are just as much a part of the learning process as I am. Additionally, I believe that having the students think about climate change in the context of Pepperdine will resonate with them and create a deeper

³ Roy, Eleanor. "One Day We'll Disappear: Tuvalu's Sinking Islands | ." The Guardian. Guardian News and Media, May 16, 2019. <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2019/may/16/one-day-disappear-tuvalu-sinking-islands-rising-seas-climate-change>.

understanding of how to empathize with a climate migrant. It is also essential for the students to know that we all have a carbon footprint and footprint in general, and it is up to us to take steps in our own lives.

Week 2:

For my second lesson plan, I will focus on creation care through scripture excerpts from Genesis. I will also highlight the concept of the Sabbath and how it intersects with the environment. For this lesson plan, I will have the students meet me outside, specifically at Alumni, to allow them to feel more connected with the environment while reading scripture about it. I will also have all students bring some version of the Bible so they can read along with me. I will begin the lesson plan by spending around five minutes summarizing the points we discussed the previous week (climate change, its effects on Pepperdine, and its effects on other places).

After, I will have the students open up the Bible to Genesis 1:20-23, which reads, "let the waters bring...God blessed them, saying be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth"⁴. I will then ask the students to take a moment of silence to reflect on what that last sentence means: "fill the waters in the seas and let birds multiply on the earth." I will then relay what it means to me: it is God's way of telling us to take care of the earth. I will then have them turn to Psalms 24:1-2 which reads, "the earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and for those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers." I will then follow by noting how the earth was created with such intricate detailing for

⁴ Morad, Phoebe. "Bible Verses on Nature and Care for Creation." Lutherans Restoring Creation, October 23, 2021. <https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/bible-verses-on-nature-and-care-for-creation/>.

us and tell the students to look at their surroundings. I will then focus the next portion of my lesson plan on the Christian obligation to take care of the earth. I will emphasize how God connects with us through nature and how we betray Him directly when we treat the earth poorly.

I will then tie it back to human-induced climate change and discuss how we have already destroyed the earth. I will follow by stating that it doesn't mean that we should give up and let it deteriorate, but we should instead focus on how we can do our jobs to mitigate the damage. I will incorporate at least five to ten minutes of discussion between each scripture reading.

At this point in the lesson plan, it should be around $\frac{3}{4}$ done. I will then explain why creation care is critical to understand when discussing climate migration: we are destroying our earth and the earth that other people rely on, which is against God's will. I will then ask the students to give an example of scripture that further emphasizes the importance of creation care.

I believe this lesson is critical to the particular group I am addressing because, at this point in our lives, we tend to forget the lessons that we learned earlier in life, one of those being our obligation as humans to take care of the environment per God's demand. Having the students revisit the story of creation care will remind them how important it is to do our part in taking care of the environment. We tend to get trapped in a perspective where we believe that because we are in college and attend a Christian university, stories such as Genesis are no longer necessary in our theoretical understanding of life. Bringing back the story of Genesis reminds us that we still have things to learn from the Bible; even if we have heard a story a million times, there is always another way to dig deeper. Furthermore, having the students find a story of their own will help them familiarize themselves with sections of the Bible that focus on nature and its significance in Christianity. Being outside allows students of this age group not only to regroup but causes them

to have further interest in the subject because college students are constantly sitting inside in a chair-table setting.

Week 3:

For my third lesson plan, I will alert the students to bring their Bible to the lesson beforehand. I will begin by proposing the question, "so it is evident that God gives us the duty and obligation to take care of our environment, but what about people? Did God give us the duty to take care of other people as well, even if they are someone that we don't know?". After about five minutes of discussion, I will tell the students to open up their Bible to Zechariah 7:9, reads "long ago I gave these commands to my people: You must see that justice is done, and must show kindness and mercy to one another. Do not oppress widows, orphans, foreigners who live among you, or anyone else in need". I will then follow with a five-minute discussion regarding what that verse means. After, I will have the students relay the story of the Good Samaritan to the best of their knowledge. I will then read the story of the Good Samaritan and talk about how the main principle of the story was to teach Christians how to put themselves in other people's shoes. I then will propose the question, "what does it mean to welcome a stranger, and what implicit bias do we have about foreigners?".

After the students respond, I will read excerpts from an article titled "Who are Climate Refugees."⁵ The report gives insight into the definition of a climate refugee, who they are, their lack of legal precedent, and how to help and talk about them effectively and respectfully. I estimate this article will take around 15 minutes to relay. Shortly after, I will have the students reflect on what they have learned by writing a short reflection on something they learned from the article that they didn't previously know. I will then have the students open up their Bible to Leviticus

⁵ "Who Are Climate Refugees?" Climate Refugee Stories. <https://www.climaterefugeestories.com/stories/climate-refugees-post/>.

19:33-34, which reads, "do not mistreat foreigners who are living in your land, treat them as you would an Israelite, and love them as you love yourselves⁶. Remember that you were once foreigners in Egypt". At this point in the lesson, there should be around 15-20 minutes left. I plan to spend the last 15 minutes of the class discussing what God says in the Bible about foreigners and how we can apply that to climate migrants globally.

I believe this week's lesson plan will be critical to the students because, often, as college students, we will learn about specific passages of the Bible without any indication of how they relate to today. I also believe that it is essential for the students to have a genuine understanding of the role of climate migrants because even though many people in my age group know about climate change, it is rare that they know what a climate migrant is. I also believe that having the students write a short reflection is an excellent way to engrave what they have just learned into their memory. Short reflections are also activities done in many college classes; therefore, writing a reflection will be familiar rather than uncomfortable.

Week 4:

I plan to focus my fourth lesson plan on psychological distance and the roles of climate migrants. I will alert the students beforehand to bring their notebooks for this lesson plan. I will explain to my students that psychological distance is essentially when something is out of sight, then it is out of mind. By definition, psychological distance is the degree to which people feel removed from a phenomenon. I will then ask, "how do we, as Americans, empathize with

⁶ "Bible Verses about Caring for Foreigners." Bible Society of Singapore. United Bible Societies. <https://www.bible.org.sg/bible-verses-about-caring-for-foreigners/>.

foreigners, and do we have a problem empathizing with them?". After granting the students about five minutes for discussion, I will relay the typical stereotypes, anti-migrant rhetoric, and assumptions we make about climate migrants. I will focus specifically on how Americans think of climate migrants in a negative light due to a sense of underlying nationalism and a lack of understanding of a migrant's position. I will also mention how some climate migrants take offense to the term "refugee," and students should be cautious in how they address climate migrants. I will then illustrate that climate migrants benefit society rather than take away from it. I will highlight how migrants expand the economy and how the more they are integrated and accepted into their new communities, the more significant their contribution to society will be.

Next, I plan to show a brief video titled *The Economic Benefits of Immigration*, created by the Yale School of Management.⁷ The video goes into depth about how immigrants and migrant workers are statistically beneficial to the economy while also debunking typical stereotypes. After the four-minute video, I will have the students take their notebooks and write one thing they learned from the video. I will then touch on how sometimes it is easier to believe our implicit bias about foreigners and to be ignorant about the circumstances that may have brought them here. I will then tell them that to combat this, we Americans must strive and go out of our way to be understanding and accepting of migrants rather than turning a blind eye. I will also emphasize the importance of being mindful in everyday life in everything we say or do to other people, especially those who appear out of place. I will end the session by stating that although this may be an uncomfortable topic, we must stay informed and think of their situation as if it were our own.

I believe this lesson plan is critical for my age group because we are beginning to form our own beliefs and judgments at this point in our lives. Because of this, I believe it is vital for the

⁷ *The Economic Benefits of Immigrants* . YouTube. Yale School of Management , 2017.
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6nCY2Ncvk-g>.

students to know the truth about migrants and their role in American society. Additionally, this lesson plan is important for my age group because we are often taught to suppress dealing with situations out of our comfort zone, such as going out of our way to combat implicit bias. I also believe that by allowing the students to write in their notebooks, they will be able to contemplate what they have learned. It is also crucial to dedicate an entire lesson plan to this topic because, as college students, we sometimes are inherently close-minded about things and people we don't know much about.

Week 5:

For my fifth lesson plan, I will focus on the concept of solidarity in the Bible. First, I will ask the students to define solidarity to the best of their knowledge. After about two minutes, I will explain that the definition of solidarity differs based on the person and the context. I will define what it means to be in solidarity with someone from the Collins dictionary definition: support for each other or another group. In the Christian moral sense, solidarity means that we are all part of the same human family⁸.

Furthermore, I will explain that solidarity is not just standing with people, but it is also how we participate and achieve common goals with people that are significantly different and far away from us. I will then spend approximately 20-30 minutes relaying the story of Ruth in this manner: Naomi and her family migrate to Moab from Bethlehem after a famine, where her sons find wives, Ruth and Oprah. After Naomi's sons die, she plans to move back to Bethlehem, but Ruth and Oprah

⁸ "Solidarity ." In *Collins English Dictionary* . HarperCollins , n.d.
<https://www.collinsdictionary.com/us/dictionary/english/solidarity#:~:text=uncountable%20noun,in%20political%20or%20international%20affairs.>

conclude that the prospects for life and marriage are better in Moab. Oprah plans to stay in Moab, but Ruth, with no obligation to her mother-in-law (Naomi), refuses to leave her side. I will then have the students open up their Bible to Ruth 1:16-17, which reads, "where you go, I will go, where you lodge, I will lodge, your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God."⁹ I will then explain that Ruth's commitment to Naomi is her way of practicing solidarity because even when Naomi was a foreigner in Ruth's town of Moab, she promised to stand with her no matter what. I then plan to ask the students to either highlight or underline a quote from the Book of Ruth that illustrates practicing solidarity. I will then ask the students if they can think of examples of solidarity they have witnessed in the Bible or in their day-to-day lives. I will conclude the lesson plan by asking the students why they believe the instance they thought of was an example of solidarity.

This lesson plan is important to my age group because college students generally do not understand the concept of solidarity well enough to apply it. Dedicating an entire lesson plan to an example of solidarity in the Bible helps them better understand the concept while tying it to Christianity. Although the students may have already heard of the story of Ruth in some way or another, connecting the story to solidarity gives them a more profound insight into the actual lesson of the story. Additionally, I believe that because the Book of Ruth is the story of migrants and refugees, it connects directly to climate migration. I also utilized this time period to introduce the idea of solidarity so the students could discuss practicing solidarity in understanding climate migration in the next lesson. I believe that my age group understands concepts thoroughly when they are gradually introduced.

⁹ "Ruth." Encyclopædia Britannica. Encyclopædia Britannica, inc. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ruth-biblical-figure>.

Week 6:

I will tie together all of my previous lesson plans for my sixth lesson plan while focusing on practicing solidarity in understanding climate migration. Because I introduced the concept of solidarity in the previous lesson, the students will be able to grapple with this idea. I will begin the lesson plan by summarizing everything that the students should have learned throughout the last five lesson plans. The topics I will spend ten minutes summarizing include climate change, creation care, treatment of foreigners in the Bible, climate migration rhetoric, and solidarity in the Bible. I will then relay how evidently, the complexities of climate change and migrant vulnerability are layered concepts that require lots of background information to comprehend. I will then ask, "how do you put yourself in a position to be in solidarity with someone even when you are far removed from the situation they are experiencing?". I will then give the students about five minutes to discuss their responses. I will explain how all the information they have gathered from these lesson plans has built the foundation to answer this question. I will start by stating that the Woolsey fires and the sea level rise in Tuvalu are examples of climate change and migration occurring outside and in the United States. Next, I will touch on how they can use the Book of Genesis as a reminder that God's demand for humans was to take care of the earth, not only for us but for those with whom we share the earth. I will then explain how the stories of Zachariah and Leviticus illustrate the covenantal obligation of Christians to treat others with kindness and respect, regardless of who they are. Following, I will highlight how they can use what they learned from the Yale video to combat the typical stereotypes and discrimination towards climate migrants. Then, I will talk about how the story of Ruth can be used as a reference for practicing solidarity with migrants. I will then repeat the same question and say, "now that all of the puzzle pieces are

falling into place, how would you answer the question?'. I will give the students about ten minutes for discussion.

There should be about 15-20 minutes left at this point in the lesson. I will conclude the lesson by explaining that our generation is the future. I will delineate how we do our part in practicing solidarity with climate migrants by using their preferred rhetoric, advocating for their protection and acceptance in our communities, taking care of our environment, and spreading awareness on how our actions directly affect the lives of others and referencing scripture as a reminder of our Christian obligation.

I believe this lesson plan is critical for my age group because, as a college student, it is sometimes difficult to tie together a series of lessons. Therefore, by giving the students exact ways to utilize specific parts of the lessons, they will have a more coherent understanding of the purpose of each lesson and how each lesson connects. Furthermore, asking how to practice solidarity in two separate instances will inscribe the question in their memory, causing them to think about it outside of the classroom.

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Skylar Enge

SUST 415

Dr. Doran

11 December 2022

Week 1

I will begin my lesson plan by posing the question: why should Christians care about the environment, animals, and other human beings? To explore this question, we will look to the book of Genesis where God created the earth and entrusted humans to care for the world that he created. On the first day, God created light in the darkness. On the second day, he created the sky. Then the land and plants. Next, he created the sun, moon, and stars. On the fifth day he made water and sky animals. Humans and land animals were not created until the sixth day: “Then the Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it.”¹ God made the beautiful world first, then created humans to tend to the world by watching over it, guarding it, protecting it, and preserving its beauty. Our duty as children of God is to care for the universe that God created. We are here to serve creation, not ourselves. We can embody God by being his hands and feet, which means acting in ways that respect and honor the earth.

In addition to teaching us to tend to the earth, God commands us to love one another. When a lawyer asked Jesus which of his 10 commandments was greatest, he said “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind with all your strength. The second is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these.”² Of all God’s commandments, Jesus declared these two commandments as

¹ Gen 2:15 (NKJV).

² Mark 12:29-31 (ESV).

the most important. These commandments are interconnected because to love your God is to love your neighbor. Caring for your neighbor is a way to show your love for your God. This phrase, “love thy neighbor,” is repeated all throughout the bible as it is foundational to Christianity.

Along with his words, Jesus teaches us to care for all of creation through his actions. In Mark 1, Jesus heals a man with leprosy through his touch. Leprosy is a contagious disease, and at the time lepers were excluded from society, and it was forbidden to touch them. Jesus saw a human being suffering and chose to physically touch the man and heal him. He cared for this person and chose to act with compassion.

I chose to start off slow by analyzing scripture found in the bible because Shannon, a church leader, suggested that I start from a bigger understanding of creation care and love for one's neighbors, and then go into climate change and migration specifics. As expressed by Shannon, this congregation relies heavily on the bible to guide their beliefs, values, and conversations. Because scripture is a common and comfortable way for them to learn, I decided to use this angle to explain climate migration. Even though the congregation has read and analyzed these bible verses many times, I wanted to remind them of these powerful words before I jump into the science and statistics behind climate migration. Caring for creation and loving your neighbor are crucial concepts to understand humans' duty in the climate crisis. These verses help us answer the question that I posed at the beginning: why should Christians care about the environment, animals, and other human beings? I needed the congregation to first understand their duty to creation and other human beings as Christians. To be willing to understand the complexity of climate migration, the congregation must feel emotionally and spiritually compelled to care. If someone has little concern for human beings and the earth, they will

struggle to empathize with climate migrants. This first week is essential in keeping the congregation's minds open and curious to learn more. As understood from Shannon, the congregation contains a handful of climate change deniers, so the slow introduction of climate migration through scripture will successfully help them to listen willingly.

Week 2

Last week we talked about our duty as Christians to care for creation and human beings. However, as a world, we have failed to imitate Jesus in this way. We have polluted and degraded the environment, while allowing fellow human beings to suffer. To start this week's lesson, I want to provide an overview of the current state of our environment as it experiences the effects of climate change. The video is titled "Causes and Effects of Climate Change."³ It is a three-minute overview of the causes of climate change, the greenhouse effect, and the impact of climate change on the earth. We have over consumed resources and polluted God's earth and as a result we are feeling the consequences. The four main impacts of climate change that we are going to focus on today are fire, heat, drought, and floods.

Fire. Climate change is increasing global temperatures which creates hot and dry environments. These conditions, combined with reduced rainfall, make places like California and Australia incredibly susceptible to fires. Fires destroy vegetation, raise global temperatures, pollute the air, and destroy infrastructure as well as homes. As fires become more common and intense, humans and animals will be forced to move away from these fire-risk areas.

³ "Causes and Effects of Climate Change," National Geographic, August 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G4H1N_yXBIA.

Heat. Heat is a major consequence of climate change. As temperatures rise to dangerous levels, deaths due to heat stroke are concerningly common. “Exposure to deadly urban heat has tripled since the 1980’s with a fifth of the world’s population already affected.”⁴ Additionally, global warming is causing oceans to heat up and expand which raises sea levels. Extreme heat melts ice which also contributes to sea level rise. As a result, coastal communities are significantly impacted through erosion, flooding, and infrastructure sinking.

Drought. Drought is another main effect of climate change. As precipitation decreases, our land is desertifying, meaning that the land is no longer suitable for agricultural production. Without ample arable land for agricultural usage, food production will diminish causing global food insecurity. “Before the end of the century, more than half of the world’s land surfaces will become classed as arid.”⁵ People’s livelihoods are tied to agricultural productivity and as a result will lose their main source of income.

Flooding. Lastly, flooding is an incredibly problematic result of climate change. As heat causes sea level rise, low-lying nations are incredibly vulnerable to flooding events. Small island nations like the Maldives and Tuvalu are currently experiencing flooding resulting in property damage, loss of human life, destruction of crops and infrastructure. As a result of this, these countries are likely to be uninhabitable as soon as 2050.⁶ Fire, heat, drought, and flooding are the four main drivers of climate migration as they are making parts of the world uninhabitable. As a result, people are led to consider migration.

I decided to provide the congregation with a simple background of climate change and its consequences for educational purposes. There are a group of climate change deniers in the

⁴ Gaia Vince, *Nomad Century* (Broadway: Flatiron Books, 2022), 37.

⁵ Vince, 45.

⁶ Vince, 47.

congregation that view recent storms, fires, and droughts as normal because they are natural occurrences that have happened in the past prior to global warming. This background is necessary to understand that these climate events are more frequent and intense than previous times. Climate change and migration are very complex issues, so I decided to focus solely on the four horsemen of climate migration. I narrowed the information down, so they are not overwhelmed by the complexity of the science.

Week 3

Of these four main climate change consequences, fire and flooding are the most prominent in our backyard right now. Today we are going to examine how climate change has increased the frequency of wildfires and caused sea level rise in our backyard of Malibu. While climate change is hitting other areas much harder than Malibu, we are still experiencing its impacts mainly through wildfires and sea level rise.

The most recent major fire event in Malibu was the Woolsey fire that many of you lived through. The Woolsey Fire started on November 8, 2018, in the Santa Susana mountains and spread to Los Angeles and Ventura County via strong winds.⁷ This was the most destructive fire that the Santa Monica Mountain range has experienced as a total of 100,000 acres of land were burned. Additionally, 1600 structures were destroyed, and property loss exceeded 6 billion, and 488 homes burned to the ground.⁸ The Woolsey fire displaced 295,000 people who were forced

⁷ “2008 Woolsey Fire,” National Park Service, June 2021, <https://www.nps.gov/samo/learn/management/2018-woolsey-fire.htm>.

⁸ “Lessons From The Woolsey Fire,” Climate Resolve, January 2021, https://climateresolve.org.dream.website/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/WoolseyReport_Final.pdf.

to seek emergency housing.⁹ While the fire caused suffering for many, laborers such as caretakers, day laborers, farm hands, landscape specialists, and housekeepers were left most vulnerable in the aftermath of the fire. Many lost their livelihoods as properties were destroyed.¹⁰ Many of these laborers had consistent jobs with stable incomes; however, the aftermath of the fire resulted in insufficient work opportunities. Without an income, many day laborers were forced to uproot their families and communities to relocate in search of work. These laborers forced to migrate might be your friend, your housekeeper, the person who watches your children, or takes care of your landscaping. But above all, they are human beings, and they deserve our care and attention. As climate change becomes more intense, California is left more vulnerable to wildfires. These fire events are occurring more frequently and are significantly more destructive than in the past. Increased fire events put vegetation, animals, infrastructure, and human beings at risk.

In addition to fire danger, Malibu is at risk of sea level rise due to its close proximity to the ocean. It is predicted that sea levels could rise such as 1 foot by 2050 in the Coastal Los Angeles area.¹¹ This sea level rise is increasing flooding, coastal erosion, and putting homes and infrastructure in danger. Malibu beaches are significantly more narrow than most beaches, exacerbating the consequences of sea level rise. A majority of you in this congregation reside in Malibu and have for several years. This is your home, yet it might not be a viable place to live in years to come due to wildfires and sea level rise. I want you to take a moment and think about

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Hayley Smith, "Rising Sea Levels," *Los Angeles Times*, February 2022, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2022-02-16/rising-sea-levels-pose-perilous-threat-to-california-coast-study-raises-new-alarms>.

what Malibu means to you. It is such a special place that most of us never want to leave; however, if the climate trends continue it may no longer be home for many of us.

While Malibu is not yet feeling the severity of climate change that other cities around the world are experiencing, I decided to use Malibu as an example because of its physical proximity. Because it is physically and emotionally closer to the congregation, they are more invested and able to understand the urgency of the problem and empathize with its humanitarian and environmental impacts. Everyone in the congregation has a neighbor, family member, or loved one, if not themselves, that has been impacted by fires or sea level rise. Rising sea levels, recent wildfires, and fear of future fire events have caused people in the Malibu community to leave the area already. This is something I really wanted to bring attention to because it conveys the reality and severity of climate change. This is not just a distant problem in the future. Climate change is occurring in the lives of their neighbors and in their immediate community as well as around the world.

Week 4

In the last few weeks, we have looked at the four main effects of climate change: fire, heat, droughts, and flooding. We specifically talked about how Malibu has been affected by climate and the impact it will have in the future. These consequences of climate change are making places in the world uninhabitable and, as a result, are fueling human migration. Extreme weather events and changing climates are pushing people out of their homes in an act of survival. Climate change compels people to move in order to protect their own physical safety or to sustain their capacity to be economically productive.

For today, let's use the example of the Philippines. As an island nation above the equator in Southeast Asia, the Philippines are incredibly vulnerable to climate change. Currently, the islands in the Philippines are experiencing severe effects of anthropogenic climate change such as increased cyclonic activity, flooding, and sea level rise. As a result of climate change, last year, the Philippines experienced 15 incredibly destructive typhoons.¹² These storm surges damaged homes, killed people, destroyed infrastructure, agriculture, and fisheries. This January, Typhoon Rai hit the Philippines devastating the nation by killing over 400 people and destroying 1.5 million homes.¹³ Because this cyclonic activity is so frequent, the Philippines does not have ample time to rebuild and recover, leaving them vulnerable to the next disaster. Sadly, the Philippines has become an unsafe collection of islands to live on as disaster can strike any minute ending hundreds of lives. Filipinos are forced to either risk their lives or flee to safety.

In addition to migrating out of safety, Filipinos must relocate in search of work. Climate change has a major impact on agriculture. The Philippines is economically dependent on agriculture for exports and employment. However, global warming, increased cyclonic activity, and flooding have created a difficult environment for agriculture to be productive. As climate change impacts gross amounts of agriculture, the Philippines' ability to grow food is a serious problem. As a result of climate change, Filipino farmers are unable to make an income from their crops and are forced to leave their homes and move to places viable for farming in order to evade poverty. Filipinos are migrating both internally and externally for safety and economic reasons. Migration is an incredibly difficult decision for people, but it is sometimes the necessary action for survival.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Typhoon Rai wrecked 1.5 million houses in the Philippines," *Al Jazeera*, January 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/1/25/typhoon-rai-wrecked-1-5-million-houses-in-the-philippines-report>.

The Philippines is not alone. According to Gaia Vince, as of 2022, 50 million people are displaced globally.¹⁴ Climate models forecast that climate change may lead to 3% of the population, equivalent to 143 million people, to move away from their country of origin by 2050.¹⁵ To put this number into perspective, 143 million is about equivalent to the population in Russia. Imagine every person in Russia on the move. That is a significant amount of people migrating. Climate change and climate migration are interrelated. As climate change consequences become more extreme, the number of climate migrants will increase.

This week's lesson is critical for the congregation because it connects climate change to climate migration. We spent the first few weeks discussing climate change and its consequences, and now we are transitioning to climate migration. This lesson is crucial for the congregation's understanding of what is happening in the world. I utilized statistics to convey the severity of climate migration and put this into context to really convey the seriousness. Using statistics to communicate evidence on climate migration helps to persuade the climate-change deniers in the congregation that this is a real problem. This information is important because I cannot effectively explain climate migration without an understanding of climate change fundamentals and how it is influencing migration. Knowledge about climate migration concepts is necessary in empathizing with migrants which we will go into in weeks to come.

Week 5

¹⁴ Vince, 102.

¹⁵ "Report on the Impact of Climate Change on Migration," The White House, October 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/Report-on-the-Impact-of-Climate-Change-on-Migration.pdf>.

In the last few weeks, we have looked at climate migration from a more local scale, but today we are going to examine climate migration on a global scale and how it affects people unequally. Here in Malibu, we have a social safety net that many other cities do not have due to location and lack of resources. The impact of climate change is often more extreme in developing nations, which disproportionately pushes poorer people towards migration. Most of the developing world is concentrated in regions of Africa, South America, West Asia, and South-Eastern Asia. Developing countries tend to have high levels of poverty and weak economies, making them less resilient to the impacts of climate change. Because they are highly dependent on their local natural resources and agriculture for their economy, it makes them significantly more vulnerable to climate change.¹⁶ As ecosystems and local weather patterns are changing, natural resource supplies are unstable and depleting rapidly in unpredictable ways. Additionally, these countries do not have the financial means to invest in mitigation strategies such as water-supply infrastructure, renewable energy, or a desalination plant. As a result, climate change is hitting developing nations hard, causing intense human suffering.

Vulnerable and poor communities are paying the price as they are forced to leave; meanwhile, people in wealthier countries are safe to remain where they are. Climate migration clearly reflects the injustices of climate change as large greenhouse gas emitters like the US are among the least affected. Climate change is a global problem, yet developing nations are the ones taking the hit for the world. Most developing countries contribute significantly less greenhouse gas emissions than developed countries who are heavily reliant on fossil fuels and high energy consumption. While poor countries are least responsible for global warming, they are bearing the brunt of its effects. Using the Philippines example again, they are the fifth most

¹⁶ Hilary Benn, "Poverty and Climate Change," OECD, <https://www.oecd.org/env/cc/2502872.pdf>.

affected country in the world by climate change; however, they only contribute to 0.3% of global emissions.¹⁷ As a result, Filipinos are forced to relocate internally and across borders out of survival. The Philippines is a low-income country that already struggles with poverty and inequality. Climate change and migration are contributing heavily to increased poverty. Their citizens, migrating internally or across borders, are financially vulnerable. When they migrate, it is difficult for them to find jobs, affordable housing, ample food, etc. As a result, these migrants often find themselves deeper in poverty. Because they are more vulnerable to climate change consequences, poor countries experience higher rates of displacement, further deepening global inequalities and exacerbating poverty.

We need to go back to the question I posed to you during the first week “why should we as Christians care?” Why should we care about protecting those most vulnerable to climate change and most likely to migrate? In Mark 2, people question Jesus’s choice to sit with sinners and tax collectors. He responds by saying “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”¹⁸ Jesus is always seeking out those in need and encouraging others to do so as well. Again, we see this theme in Psalm 82 where God encourages us to “give justice to the weak and the fatherless; maintain the rights of the afflicted and the destitute. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.”¹⁹ Protecting the weak and vulnerable is a common theme throughout the bible. We must protect and care for these developing nations who are bearing the brunt of climate change and are more likely to migrate. Defending the human rights of the poor and needy is a crucial concept to

¹⁷ Ana Santos, “Philippines spends billions to boost crisis-hit agriculture,” *DW*, August 2022, <https://www.dw.com/en/philippines-spends-billions-to-boost-crisis-hit-agriculture/a-62923509>.

¹⁸ Mark 2:17 (NIV).

¹⁹ Psalm 82:3-4 (ESV).

Christianity. Additionally, it is our special duty to do this because we as American citizens have created the problem.

For this week's lesson, I chose to expand to a more global view of climate migration. While it is easier to empathize when an issue is localized, it is important to understand what is happening on a global scale. If the congregation is able to empathize with those in California experiencing climate migration, it will be easier to then find compassion and understanding for people across the world experiencing climate migration in a more extreme way. Comprehending the injustices of climate migration is crucial because it allows people to fully empathize with those migrating. The congregation needs to acknowledge that migration is often not a choice. Again, in this week's lesson I utilized scripture to relate the information back to Christianity in hopes to reach more of the congregation. While this theme of caring for the vulnerable is often talked about in this church, it is not commonly used to relate to climate migration.

Week 6

In the past 5 weeks we have discussed why we should care, the background of climate change, how it relates to climate migration, and how it disproportionately impacts the vulnerable. Today we are going to wrap up this lesson on climate migration by exploring Christians' role in the humanitarian crisis of climate migration. As Christians educated on the topic of climate migration, it is now our responsibility to take this crisis seriously and find compassion and empathy for those forced to migrate. Climate migration is a complex problem and cannot be "fixed" easily. Instead, it is our duty to learn, understand, and empathize.

A powerful way to empathize is through awareness and knowledge of the situation. Empathy is the ability to understand and respect other people's positions. By learning about climate migration and listening to climate migrant stories, we can dignify their experiences and find compassion. All humans have contributed to the destruction of the planet, yet only some are being displaced. Our actions in Malibu have severe consequences for people across the world. When we degrade and pollute the earth, other human beings suffer the consequences. This is a great injustice. As a result of the world's choices, climate migrants' homes are no longer livable, their jobs no longer viable, and their safety is at risk. They are given no choice and must act out of survival. It should be easy to find compassion for climate migrants as they are bearing the brunt of the crisis while we remain relatively unaffected in Malibu.

Our responsibility as global citizens and Christians comes back to the biblical commandment to love one's neighbor. This affirms that self and neighbor should be cared for equally.²⁰ "The lack of empathy for vulnerable people outside our sphere of family and friends threatens the identity of our churches as explicitly Christian communities."²¹ If we can learn to truly love our neighbor and empathize with their struggles, we can engage in efforts for institutional change. Compassion has the power to inspire and stimulate people into action. Our love for one another can fuel our fight for justice for climate migrants. As used in the bible, agape love is a sacrificial love that unites us, heals us, and restores our humanity.²² Human beings are suffering immensely, and it is our duty as Christians to employ this sacrificial love to fight for justice for climate migrants.

²⁰ Rolf Bouma, "A Science & Religion Commentary," The Ministry Theorem, 2012, https://ministrytheorem.calvinseminary.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/Genesis_2_v15.pdf.

²¹ Mark W. Hamilton, *Jesus, King of Strangers* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2019), 3.

²² Alyssa Roat, "What Does Agape Love," Christianity, December 2020, <https://www.christianity.com/wiki/christian-terms/what-does-agape-love-really-mean-in-the-bible.html>.

I chose these particular values of empathy and compassion because they are Christian ideals central to the UCC congregation. These are virtues that the congregation explores frequently as they are core values in their faith. These are everyday virtues that they strive to embody. These values guide the everyday decisions of Christians of how to treat other human beings and all of creation. This is a critical lesson for the congregation because it connects their faith to their responsibility as citizens to take action in a hurting world. If they can learn to love their migrating neighbors and the only earth we have, they will be more aware of climate injustice, climate migrants' struggles, and how their own actions play a role in it all. As a result, the congregation will hopefully be more inclined to care for all of creation and act.