



# Climate Justice & Christian Aid

## Heart for the Earth Secondary Assembly

(Optional SEEING ANEW set up: set out enough chairs for approximately 1/3 of the pupils. The rest of the chairs should be stacked at the side of the room near the pupils in chairs and clearly marked RESERVED. *The reserved chairs represent the availability of resources enough for everyone, but the reality that most wealth and resources is controlled by a small minority with many communities lacking the basic resources needed to live full and flourishing lives.* The goal of sitting some pupils on the floor is to disrupt the expectations/normal practice of assembly helping them to engage and see the assembly differently).

As pupils enter display the [climate justice artworks](#) on the projector/screen.

*If you have opted to do the SEEING ANEW set up: Invite the first pupils to sit on the chairs, the rest of the pupils should be instructed to sit on the floor.*

Once the pupils have settled, inform them that today's assembly is about Climate Justice and Christian Aid – a charity that works around the world alongside communities affected by poverty.

Stand Up/Sit Down statements. Explain that you will be reading a series of statements, if they think the statement is about **Climate Justice** they should **Stand up**. If they think the statement is about **Climate Change** they should **sit down**.

*People living in places with the highest levels of poverty experience the worst effects of climate change. (Answer: Climate Justice)*



*Often, climate change affects women and girls more than men and boys. (answer: climate justice)*

*Burning fossil fuels releases greenhouse gases into the air. This is causing the earth to heat up. (answer: climate change).*

*Many human activities cause climate change. These include transport, farming, and how we heat our homes (answer climate change).*

*Wealthier countries have burned more fossil fuels than countries with less wealth (answer: climate justice).*

*The countries responsible for the lowest carbon emissions unfairly experience the worst impacts of climate change (answer: climate justice)*

*Climate change is changing weather patterns – for example temperature and rainfall – in many different ways (answer: climate change)*

*Wealthier countries and people are able to better protect themselves against the effects of climate change than countries and people with less wealth (answer: climate justice).*

Ask pupils if there is anyone brave enough to explain the difference between climate change and climate justice.

Climate Change focuses on the scientific impacts of burning fossil fuels on the planet. While the impacts of climate change will be felt all over the world, the impacts will not be experienced in the same way everywhere and some places will be worse affected.

Climate Justice means recognising that the people most affected by climate change, are often the people who did the least to cause it. Many of the communities most affected by climate change also do not have the wealth and resources to adapt to climate change, unlike wealthier countries like the UK.

The impacts of Climate change look different in different parts of the world; which makes it especially important to listen to local communities about how they are being affected by climate change and what they need to adapt.

Watch: [Animated film about Climate Change in Rwanda](#) (2mins) & [Christian Aid Film: Pacific Islanders Haka in the river Thames](#) (1 min)

*[Both these short films highlight the inequity at the heart of climate change. From communities facing loss and damage and having to move from their homes, to the rising sea levels threatening small island communities in the Pacific Islands].*



Explain that the films highlight the reality that the most vulnerable communities have done the least to cause the problem of climate change but are often experiencing the worst effects.

At the heart of climate change lies an injustice that needs to be addressed. Christian Aid is a charity that works in countries around the world with a vision to see the world free of poverty and injustice. Climate Justice is an incredibly important issue for Christian Aid and the local partners and communities they work with.

*Invite everyone to close their eyes.* Ask them to imagine that they live in a small town. It has a vibrant community, there are green spaces, a market in the town center, and people enjoy sitting in cafes meeting their friends. Through the middle of the hustle and bustle of the town runs a river. One day one of the towns people notice that someone is in the river and struggling, so naturally the people of the town work together to rescue the person and get them out of the river and to safety. You might think nothing of this, until the next day when there is yet again another person in the river, so the town rescues them again and gets them to safety. Eventually a town meeting is called and the community is asking what can be done about this new problem?!

*Ask the pupils:* What ideas do you have? *Ask for volunteers to share one or two ideas...*

The people of the town came up with two solutions. One group decided that they would create a lifeguard station in the town center, with volunteers ready to pull people out of the river when they floated through the town.

The second group decided to set off up river to find out why people were in the river in the first place, this way they could try to learn how they might prevent people from needing to be rescued in the first place.

With a show of hands... who think that the first solution is the right one?  
Hands up if you think the second solution is the right one?

Like many of you have probably figured out, Christian Aid believes that both responses are important.

Christian Aid works with and alongside local partners to respond to the needs of people in times of crisis – this could be an extreme weather event like a cyclone – the communities most severely affected often do not have the resources required to respond in a time of crisis. This can be money being moved to where it is most needed by the local community and to repair the damage caused to peoples' homes and community spaces. It can look like food, access to drinking water, and medical supplies being provided. This kind of work is a bit like the towns people who worked to get people out of the river.



But Christian Aid also works to try and address the problems at their root cause. At a local level with the communities Christian Aid works with, this can look like sharing knowledge between communities, supporting farming practices and crops that are more resistant to climate change. In the UK Christian Aid campaigns to tackle the causes of poverty and climate change – Christian Aid brings supporters from churches, schools, and more together to help ordinary people to raise their voices to call for a fairer world for everyone!

One way Christian Aid does this is through a join initiative with Oxfam, Cafod, and Send My Friend. School pupils – just like you. Through the project pupils learn about climate justice, use their voice through art, and engage with local MPs as well as have the opportunity to have their art displayed in the Houses of Parliament!

[Watch the Creative for Climate Justice film](#) (2mins30seconds)

It is important to remember that everyone's voice matters, and that though we can sometimes feel small and insignificant, when we work together in our school, our local communities, and with our global neighbours we can make a profound difference in the world and make it a fairer and more sustainable place for everyone.

### **Closing prayer/reflective opportunity**

Christian Aid is working towards climate justice making it a fairer world for everyone to enjoy, seeking to help those most affected by climate change, seeking to help justice roll like a river. I'm going to read out a prayer that Christians who support Christian Aid have used. If you would like to make it to be your prayer too then join in with 'Amen' at the end:

**Holy Spirit fill us anew with your presence,  
so that we may burn brightly for God's glory.  
Help us to hate evil and love goodness,  
so that we may change the unfairness in our world. Amen.**

