

Climate Justice - Youth Session

This session was created by Justin Thacker and delivered to a group of seven 14-18 year old on Sunday 6 June 2022

Opening game: Climate Justice Hangman ((Largely the same activity could be played in the form of Pictionary rather than Hangman, but I played it with Hangman to point out the association with climate related deaths in the global south)

I split the group into two teams and we played hangman with the following words.

- Drought
- Flood
- Mudslide
- Crop failures
- Dirty water
- Heatwaves
- Wildfires
- Tornado
- Malnutrition
- Malaria
- Conflict

Discussion:

What links these words?

How does climate change cause these issues? (Resist the temptation to turn this into a geography lesson, but they need to know enough to know that climate change causes extreme weather events which causes these kinds of problems).

What causes climate change and which regions of the world are most responsible? (In terms of cumulative CO2 emissions, Europe and North America are by far the biggest culprit. The cumulative point may be important here if one of your young people points out that currently China / India are the biggest emitters)

Where are these impacts felt the most? (Stress that though the West has caused climate change, it is the global south which suffers the consequences. Approx 25 million people a year displaced due to climate related events; 250 million a year dying due to climate change – mostly in the global south)

In all of this, how much you need to speak depends hugely on the prior knowledge levels of your group.

Discussion Activity: Your Morning Routine

Point out that folks in the UK put approximately 25 times more carbon in the atmosphere than those who live in Nigeria. We're going to think about why that is the case comparing your morning routine with a relatively poor teenager who lives in rural Nigeria.

I then got the YP to think about their morning routine from the moment they woke up and asked at each stage how they used more energy (from fossil fuels) than a teenager living in rural Nigeria. Points that emerged were:

- Phone been charging overnight
- Switched on lights
- Hair straighteners / dryer used
- New, imported clothes put on
- Use of flush toilet
- Brushing teeth (clean water requires energy to filter etc and to pump to our homes)
- Shower
- Driven to school

You could discuss all of these points (and others) using images of rural Nigerian life. The important point is to try and help them think through the things they do each day that use energy that are not done, or not necessarily done in the same way by people in poorer parts of the world. This is why we in the West use 25 times more energy than a teenager in rural Nigeria who is relatively poor.

Reflective Activity: Emotions Wheel:

Each young person was then given a copy of an emotions wheel - <https://feelingswheel.com/>

They were asked to mark off how all of this made them feel? The reality of climate change; the impact of climate change on the global south; the fact that we in the West were largely responsible.

I then went round the group and asked each person to share one of the emotions they had marked and to expand on why it made them feel that way.

Bible Study:

Read Matthew 22:35 – 39

Questions:

Who is our neighbour? Is the teenager we have been imagining in Nigeria our neighbour?

What would it mean to love him / her in regard to climate change?

Final Activity: Ecobingo

An incredibly simple, but highly effective game that was a lot of fun. We simply amended some of the categories to refer to the UK instead of Canada. The instructions can be found here:

https://www.devp.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/19-thinkfast_ecobingo.pdf

Close by pointing out that lots we can do to begin to live a lifestyle that truly loves our neighbour