

KAIROS

PowerDown Day

As a group, commit to going without using fossil fuels or fossil fuel powered electricity for one 12 hour day.

Why?

- To discover and raise awareness of our dependence on fossil fuels and non-renewable resources for transportation, shelter, food and entertainment.
- To understand the impacts of fossil fuel use on the environment, the economy, conflict and human rights.
- To discover and commit to alternatives - personal, communal, regional, national and global — to our oil-addicted culture.

Want a bigger challenge? More fun? Make it a 24-hour overnight event.

The Challenge

Your challenge is to PowerDown: to take a complete Sabbath from carbon (or fossil fuels) by reducing your use of or abstaining from fossil fuels or fossil fuel powered electricity for a specified period of time, and practicing restorative, community-building alternatives.

OR

to significantly reduce your use of these carbon-based energy sources. While a complete fast from carbon can be both difficult and insightful, limiting fossil fuel usage can also allow your group to push its comfort levels and have a similar experience.

How you will PowerDown and **what** you will be able to do depends in part on where you live and the time of year that you plan to PowerDown.

This Guide assumes that a group that will gather at a particular place, away from its ordinary routines for education and fun. If this is not feasible, consider how these suggestions could work for your Sunday church service, half a day at your school, university or workplace, a day at a summer camp, a mealtime at home with your family or a full weekend with young adults.

Step 1

Preparatory Event with the Group: Figuring It Out

PURPOSE: This exercise allows you to use your “fossil fuel free” imaginations and helps you plan your specific PowerDown experiments.

WHEN: You will need to have this preparatory event in a group session prior to your actual PowerDown event — one week would be minimal preparation time, earlier would give you time to invite more friends or let others in the congregation know about your plans.

LOCATION: Any place large enough to have full group discussion and small break-out groups.

SUPPLIES: Flip chart and markers (or chalkboard and chalk) for large group • Paper and pens for 4 small groups • One copy of this guide

TIME FRAME: 2.5 hours plus break (Could be done in an evening or half-day.)

In the Large Group

15 minutes

OPENING:

Challenge your group to participate in a PowerDown Day. Tell them what it is and why it is done. You may want to use the Re-energize campaign workshop case studies found on www.re-energize.org to give your group an idea of the impact of fossil fuels around the world. Have a time of prayer to invite God into your discussion.

20 minutes

Brainstorm and record on flipchart paper the variety of ways we use fossil fuels in our everyday lives. You can review the past 24 hours as a reference point. Take a look at these categories: FOOD & COOKING, SHELTER & UTILITIES, RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT and TRANSPORTATION.

20 minutes

DISCUSSION:

Were you surprised by your findings? Did you find goods or services where you were unsure of the energy source?

20 minutes

BREAK INTO FOUR GROUPS:

Assign one of the above categories to each of the groups to focus on.

Brainstorm and propose specific ways to eliminate or cut down on fossil fuel energy use in your particular category for the duration of your PowerDown time.

NOTE TO LEADER:

Circulate among the groups and help facilitate discussion with any group that is stuck. Here are some examples you can offer to get groups thinking.

- TRANSPORTATION (e.g. drive less, use less fuel — everyone who can should bicycle or walk to church hall)
- SHELTER & UTILITIES (e.g. group will conserve all non-vital energy — no cd player, no computer, no electric fans)
- RETAIL & ENTERTAINMENT (e.g. reduce waste — nothing in a plastic or non-recyclable packaging can come into building; alternative entertainment — no videos, instead have group skits)
- FOOD & COOKING (e.g. eat no meat- one kg. of beef produces more carbon emissions than a three hour drive- or buy as much local food as possible)

BREAK — this is a good time for a stretch or snack break.

20 minutes

Return to the larger group, share your proposals and together establish your group's objectives for the PowerDown Day in each category. Take some time to explore how you will create a PowerDown zone and what activities you will and will not do (e.g. will eat locally, will not use the DVD player). Are there any aspects of your energy use that don't fall into these four categories? Can you make any additional changes to these areas for your PowerDown Day?

If you find that your group cannot go totally "fossil fuel free," your challenge could be to go "fossil fuel neutral." For your event to be fossil fuel neutral, any fossil fuels used must be "offset" by an exchange. What can your group do to balance your consumption of non-renewable resources? Make an exploration of carbon offsets a part of your PowerDown Days. Is purchasing carbon offsets the answer? See the KAIROS factsheet "Fast Facts on Fossil Fuels" for more information on carbon offsets.

45 minutes

DETAILED PLANNING:

Now that you've decided what to focus on for your PowerDown Day, set a time and location. Review the sample schedule provided in Appendix 1. You may want to again divide into small groups for about 20 minutes to plan each area in the 4 categories above and each activity in your PowerDown Day. Then come back together to see how plans match and work out any missing details. The more preparations participants take responsibility for, the more they will get out of the PowerDown Day.

The activities in this guide include a lot of thinking and talking. Be sure to work in your favourite carbon-free physical activities: a walk to the park, tossing the ball around, or some other activity you enjoy.

Use this resource as a guide and make the PowerDown Day your own. Activities 3-6 are all about learning; feel free to substitute other learning exercises, change the order, or skip something if you run out of time. Activities 7-10 are about analysis, "owning" the learning, and action; they are very important. You and the group should take lots of creative license, but be sure you get to the analysis and action steps in some fashion.

10 minutes

CLOSING:

Be sure everyone knows what their responsibilities are for the PowerDown Day.

Come up with your own cheer that you can use in the face of this challenge. (Think of how a sports huddle ends with 1,2,3, GO TEAM!) Say it loudly, now and whenever the spirit moves.

Wrap up the preparatory event with some words of encouragement and a prayer that will offer your efforts to God.

Step 2 In Between ...

- Advertise for the greatest possible participation.
- Let your congregation know what you plan to do.
- Work with your group to make the necessary arrangements to meet your particular challenge (transportation, location, energy source, food, and entertainment).
- Work with your group to prepare the activities, especially Activity 6, where you will need to start early to arrange appointments (or generate a scavenger hunt).
- Remind participants to calculate their carbon footprint; this will be crucial to the success of Activity 3.
- Use the sample schedule in Appendix 1 as a guide to establish a basic plan for the day.

Power Down Day

15 minutes

ARRIVAL AND OPENING:

Arrival: As each person arrives, have them list on a flip chart how they traveled to your meeting place and how far they had to come. Use this as a way to start people thinking about energy and to “break the ice.” If the group doesn’t know each other well, you could have them make name tags for themselves that include the same information.

Opening: Remind the group of the purpose of the PowerDown Day and the particular challenge you have set for yourselves. Go over any general guidelines that are necessary to meet your challenge and to have a good time together. Then start with the following prayer to frame what your day is all about (the lines in bold can be read by all or a separate reader).

Beneath our toes
Beneath our shoes
Beneath floors
Beneath basement and cement and foundation
We are still standing on holy ground

Amidst cheerful chatter
TV drones and telephones
Planes and trains
Sirens, horns, and the squeal of tires
We listen for the call of the Earth

As square, grey scenery is photographed
Amidst trash, contamination, pits, pollution
Waste, seen and unseen
We are a tired people, grasping for energy
We are still standing on holy ground

Bike riders and gardeners whisper alternatives
As creation groans beneath the weight of waste and excess
Beneath even that sits holy ground
Firmly rooting all in the moving, shaping,
Cleansing powers of creation,
We listen for the call of the Earth

Step 3

Power

Awareness: Comparing Footprints

“Imagine you are first in line at a potluck buffet. The spread includes not just food and water, but all the materials needed for shelter, clothing, healthcare, and education. How do you know how much to take? How much is enough to leave for your neighbors behind you?”

Jim Merkel, *Radical Simplicity*

1 hour

****Advance Preparation**

The amount of resources that we consume in order to live is called our ecological footprint. Some footprints measure our complete ecological impact, others our use of fossil fuels (our carbon footprint). As a leader or preparation group, choose one of the online footprint calculators listed below and ask each person in the group to determine their carbon footprint at home. (It's best if everyone uses the same calculator.) Have everyone bring those results, in writing, to the PowerDown Days.

For a group that includes younger children, try www.zerofootprintkids.com/kids_home.aspx. For a group with older youth and adults, try www.myfootprint.org.

20 minutes

SHARING THE RESULTS:

Ask people to get into small groups of 2-3 and share what they learned about their carbon footprint. In addition, have them discuss the following questions: Were there any surprises for you? What are the choices that you and your family make that have the greatest impact on your footprint?

Have them come back together in the large group and allow a few minutes for sharing highlights of their findings.

20 minutes

LETTING IT SINK IN:

Read the Jim Merkel quote (above) to the group.

DISCUSS:

What do you think is an acceptable footprint for your household? How does this compare to the resources you are consuming now? What do you know about how the Earth's available resources are distributed among the different continents? What do you think would happen if all people consumed resources at the level most of us do in North America? How do you think this should be changed? What about wildlife? (Once again, you may find that the Re-energize campaign workshop case studies found on www.re-energize.org will strengthen this exercise by giving your group an idea of the impact of fossil fuels around the world.)

Step 4 Power Awareness: Petroleum Products in our Homes

1 hour

PREPARATION:

On a flipchart or blackboard, ask someone to draw a large, simple picture of a person, an open house (doll-house style so you can see furniture), and a community with a few streets and buildings.

40 minutes

ACTIVITY:

Brainstorm the various ways we use petroleum: on our bodies, in our houses, communities, and world. Ask participants to draw or label where petroleum products would be on the body, house, or community. When people have run out of ideas, pass around one copy of the “Did You Know?” sheet (Appendix 2). Have each person read one point and ask others to continue labelling the drawings. Skip the “A Few Alternatives” boxes for now.

20 minutes

DISCUSSION:

Were you surprised by the presence of petroleum in house materials or beauty supplies? What alternatives can you suggest? If you are stuck, refer back to the “A Few Alternatives” boxes to get you started.



Step 5 PowerDown: Deconstruct (and Reconstruct) Your Dinner!

2 hours (with lunch)

What’s in your lunchbox? How many miles did your bacon, lettuce, and tomato (or PB&J) sandwich travel before it landed on your table? Figure out the real cost (beyond the sticker price) of commercial foods, and the alternatives.

**Advance Preparation:

Bring a world map, a North American atlas with mileage charts, and a range of grocery store flyers to your event.

Write out a typical menu for a gathering meal. List all the ingredients. Then, using knowledge you already have or information gleaned from the flyers, figure out where the ingredients come from. Add up the distance each item would travel to get to your table. Can you guess how many different hands/levels each one has passed through before yours? Can you estimate how much fossil fuel was required to grow (most commercial fertilizers and pesticides are petroleum based), harvest, store (refrigeration), transport, sort, manufacture, package, and sell this food? This is the true cost of your dinner!

Now try to think of ways you can eat food that uses less fossil fuel (and ends up being healthier and tastier). Check out local farms, farmers markets, cooperatives, and alternative stores. Try to prepare a “100 Mile Dinner” — one that uses only foods produced within a hundred miles of your location, or as close to that as possible — as part of your PowerDown Day. Want to get really creative? Build a solar oven to cook your dinner (see <http://solarcooking.org>), or make ice cream by hand.

WHILE YOU’RE THERE:

Prepare and clean up your meal using as little carbon energy as possible. (Do you have a “green” energy source, such as water or solar power, for your kitchen appliances? Can you make an entire meal without turning on the stove or oven? Do your chopping, whipping, and dishwashing by hand.)

Talk about your findings as you eat. Discuss the difficulties, as well as the great new discoveries. See what suggestions other people have for eating carbon-free.

After-dinner entertainment? Think about creating a map collage or doing some body sculpture activities that tell about the journey of your food or that can bring to life the varieties of people & fuel involved in getting this meal to your table.

Step 6 Power

Alternatives: Get
out and about!
Explore Just &
Alternative
Energy

3 hours

****Advance preparation:**

Arrange to visit, meet and explore the issue of environmental responsibility with community stakeholders. You could meet with farmers who work on large and smaller farms, or compare organic farming with conventional methods; visit a Community Shared Agriculture (CSA) program (a network of households that buy their produce from a local organic farmer); meet with an employee from the Ministry of the Environment, Ministry of Transportation or Ministry of Energy or meet with your local MP to share what you are doing and hear how they are involved in policy change; visit an energy industry site or call on a local non-profit environmental group. Consider how you will travel to the meeting using as little fossil fuel use as possible.

BEFORE YOU ARRIVE:

Come up with a list of questions you would like to have answered. Designate several spokespeople or have everyone remember one question they will ask, so the leader does not do all the talking. Designate people who will make introductions and offer words of thanks at the end.

WHILE YOU ARE THERE:

Keep your minds active and learn as much as you can. Stray from your list of questions if something else interesting comes up. Be respectful of the person, their knowledge and their time. See if you can develop a relationship of allies around finding solutions to our addiction to fossil fuel.

Without an Appointment: Field Trip or Scavenger Hunt

If you are unable to make the above arrangements or you want an additional activity you could still checkout some business places. Simply poke around a health food or organics store to get acquainted with environmentally-friendly supplies (such as biodegradable cleaning products), pay a visit to a fair trade coffee shop and ask about what makes them different; or shop at a local Farmers Market. Consider how you will get there. Be sure you know the exact location and hours. Before you arrive, discuss what you are trying to learn — give the group a list of things to find or questions to answer.

Just a little more planning can be a lot more fun, if you organize a scavenger hunt with tasks to discover information on local energy use, available alternatives as well as just and fair products or services.

Step 7

PowerDown: Analysis and Action

1 hour

PREPARATION:

Before your event, visit www.re-energize.org to download the KAIROS campaign action and other materials. Just prior to the activity, list the following levels or categories of action on four separate flipcharts or sections of a blackboard:

- personally
- as a group
- in your community
- nationally and internationally

30 minutes

ACTIVITY:

Recording on flip chart paper or a blackboard, brainstorm actions you can take to reduce your fossil fuel dependence and support a just energy future at each level.

30 minutes

DISCUSSION:

Choose two meaningful and creative actions from each level that you will commit to doing. Individually, choose personal actions. Together, select some actions you can tackle as a group to make your regular activities less dependent on fossil fuels. Decide on two actions you want to take to increase community awareness and decrease community dependence. Refer to the KAIROS Re-Energize campaign to choose meaningful actions at a national and international level. Consider how to mobilize friends and family to help with actions on a larger scale.

Step 8

Re-Energize: Reflection

30 minutes

Gather in a large circle and review the activities and challenges of your PowerDown Day. Take a few moments of silence for everyone to consider the following questions:

- What has been the most empowering part of this time?
- Most challenging?
- Most frustrating?

After 2-3 minutes, go around the circle and ask people to briefly answer at least one of the questions.

Other questions you might consider in a group discussion are:

- Is it easier for some people to PowerDown than others? Why?
- What is the amount of energy that you need vs. what you want?
- Are we wasteful? If so, why do we do what we do?
- Think about different Canadian contexts. What are the different challenges to being environmentally responsible?
- Does access to wealth make it easier or more difficult to PowerDown? Why? What are the challenges to choosing just energy if you are low-income?

Step 9
Re-Energize:
Worship
Together

30 minutes to 2 hours

The next time you get together, set aside a half hour or the full meeting to decide where you will go from here.

Designate someone to share your experience with us. Send an e-mail with the experiences and results of your PowerDown Day to the KAIROS Campaigns Coordinator, Sara Stratton, at sstratton@kairoscanada.org.

Share your experience with others. Think about creative ways you can educate your school, church, and community, for example, street or sermon theatre, handmade awareness-raising posters.

Issue a challenge within your community. Briefly write out what you did for your PowerDown Day, what you have committed to for the future and offer this as a challenge to another school, church, youth group, city council and/or your local MP. Ask them what they will do for a just and healthy energy future. Make your challenge public through community newspapers or church listserves, to see how many groups will pick up your challenge.

Appendix 1: Sample PowerDown Schedule

1. Preparation Event

Two or more weeks in advance of the main event. (2.5 hours plus a break.)

2. In Between...

(make appointments, measure carbon footprint, purchase local food, find alternative energy sources, etc.)

12-HOUR POWERDOWN DAY

9:30	Arrival and Opening
9:45-10:45	3. Power Awareness: Comparing Footprints <i>1 hour</i>
10:45-11:00	Break/Active Game
11:00-12:00	4. Power Awareness: Petroleum Products in our Homes <i>1 hour</i>
12:00-2:00	5. PowerDown: Deconstruct (and Reconstruct) your Dinner! <i>2 hours</i> Lunch Preparation/Free time Lunch and discussion Clean-up/Free time
2:00-5:00	6. Power Alternatives: Get out and about! Explore Just & Alternative Energy <i>3 hours</i> with break and snack
5:00-7:00	Supper Preparation/Free Time Supper and continued food discussion Clean Up/Free time
7:00-8:00	7. PowerDown: Analysis and Action <i>1 hour</i>
8:00-8:30	Active Game
8:30-9:00	8. Re-Energize: Reflection <i>30 minutes</i>
9:00-9:30	9. Re-Energize: Worship Together <i>30 minutes</i>

For 24-hour PowerDown Day

You may choose to do your Closing Worship the following morning.

Consider what you could to use the least fossil fuel or fossil fuel electricity for the following evening, night, and morning needs/desires:

- Light after sundown
- Evening entertainment
- Heated or cooled sleeping space
- Washroom facilities
- Breakfast

10. Follow Up Discussion and Action

A week or two later (no more than a month), decide on further actions during another event or dedicate a full event to this purpose.

Appendix 2: Power Awareness — Petroleum Products in our Homes

Did You Know?

In your home:

- Solvents, such as formaldehyde, and wood finishes, furniture polish and paint thinners are all produced from petroleum.
- Fuels come in many forms: butane, ethane and propane as well as naphtha, kerosene, gasoline and fuel oils are all petroleum byproducts. How and where do you see these fuels being used?
- Laundry detergents, including chlorine and conventional bleaching products are formulated from petrochemicals.
- Clothing made from synthetic fibers such as acrylic, nylon, and polyester is made from petroleum. These fabrics are also coated with formaldehyde finishes, which continuously give off minute plastic vapors (outgas), causing unknown effects as well as allergies and breathing troubles.
- Polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic is present in countless household products like bags and children's toys, not to mention household piping and vehicle interiors.
- In your backyard, are your pesticides and fertilizers derived from petrochemicals? What about insecticides and mosquito repellants?
- As you walk outside, you may discover petroleum products in road construction supplies such as asphalt, tar and tires.

A few alternatives...

Clothes can be bleached by the sun — and dried at the same time.

Try buying clothing made from organic cotton or hemp, as well as purchasing reused clothing.

In your washroom:

- In your bathroom, you may find your lipstick, lip gloss, baby oil and cold creams include petroleum jelly as a main ingredient.
- Synthetic hair dyes include petroleum-derived coloring chemicals as well as other harmful ingredients such as ammonia and lead.
- Many kinds of soap contain petroleum-derived synthetic fragrances.
- Conventional cosmetics contain petrochemicals called phthalates (labelled DEHP and DBP), known to disrupt hormonal and normal body functions. In animals, both DEHP and DBP are toxic to the liver, kidneys, testes, and the nervous system. DBP is used extensively in perfumes, nail polishes, lotions, and hair sprays. Phthalates can also be found in your sunscreen.

- For more information on the presence of petrochemicals in your body care products this website lists cosmetics by brand name and the hazardous ingredients contained in them: <http://www.cosmeticsdatabase.com/>.
- Perfume and aftershave usually consist of a combination of chemicals, solvents, and natural essential oils in a base of alcohol. Approximately 95% of the ingredients in perfumes are derived from petrochemicals.
- Which of these products are you most surprised to learn contain petroleum? Aspirin, toothpaste, crayons, glue, pen ink, carpet, contact lenses and wax.

A few alternatives...

Look for fragrance-free, vegetable-oil-based soaps.

Try natural, essential oils instead rather than perfumes or perfumed products.

The world of plastics:

- Petroleum-based plastics are made of hydrocarbon gases. From manufacturing to consumption and disposal, plastics can be hazardous to humans and the environment. Hazards include “off-gassing,” as well as the leaking of carcinogens and endocrine disrupting chemicals.
- When they are thrown away, plastics don’t break down or compost; they stay with us for a very long time.
- Vinyl, used to manufacture shower curtains, some floor tiles and tools, is made of PVC plastic, and is derived from petroleum. #3 PVC plastic is among the most eco-unfriendly plastics. It is difficult, if not altogether impossible, to recycle, nor should it be landfilled or burned — it is best handled as hazardous waste.
- As consumers, we can send a message by not purchasing products packaged or made from PVC (look for the number 3 in the recycling symbol or the letter “V”).
- Plastic waste is creating environmental and labour rights catastrophes in many developing countries. Plastic packaging waste, discarded by consumers in North America, is now frequently being shipped overseas to countries with lax pollution standards and lower wages and less health protection for workers. Much of this waste, including plastics sorted for “recycling,” is eventually dumped or incinerated.

A few alternatives...

Look for products with little or no packaging. Refuse the bag (bring your own if you need it).

Choose purchases carefully: always consider how long it will last and how you will dispose of it.

At the Dinner Table:

- Unlike materials such as glass and metal, petroleum-derived plastic is unstable in that it has a tendency to migrate into the food or drink it contains. Some types of plastic migrate when heated up in a microwave, some when they are cooled down, and others upon first contact with food. The safest bet is to avoid food sold or stored in plastic, especially plastic wraps, PVC, and polystyrene foam.

Your best bet is to find alternatives to plastic products whenever possible, like glass or stainless steel.

- Do we need to use petroleum products to grow food? Most food in your supermarket uses petroleum-derived fertilizers and pesticides in its production and is heavily packaged in plastic. From its long distance transport to its refrigeration, our entire food system depends on massive consumption of fossil fuels, mainly oil.
- To give you a sense of this matrix — to meet the basic food needs of the eleven billion people who are expected to be alive in 2040, we will need to triple the global food supply. Doing so with today's conventional methods would require a 1,000 % increase in the total energy expended in food production. Even if we could tolerate the global warming and pollution that would produce, it simply can't happen — there's nowhere near enough oil in the world to make it possible.
- One way we ingest petrochemicals in food is from pesticides. Dairy products, apples, bananas, broccoli, cantaloupes, and carrots have among the highest rates of petrochemical residues and are foods that we commonly give to children, who are particularly sensitive to pesticides.

A few alternatives...

Support sustainable agricultural methods.

Make changes to your regular diet: reduce the amount of resource intensive, meat-heavy foods you eat.

Purchase and encourage local, organic, pesticide-free production, and ask for it in your local grocery store.

Material adapted from the Environmental Resource Center in Berkeley, California:
www.ecologycenter.org

Appendix 3: Worship Materials

The following service of worship can be used to close your time together as a group. Before the service, choose two hymns (suggestions are provided below) as well as a piece of music that can be used the period of personal reflection after the scripture. Arrange for musical accompaniment, if desired, and set up areas for the reflection after the scripture (see below). Also, obtain a beeswax candle to light during worship and a Bible for the scripture reading.

BACKGROUND MATERIAL: WHY BEESWAX CANDLES?

These days, most of our churches use paraffin wax candles. These candles are made of petroleum products, pulled from the ground for a one-time use. Beeswax is naturally secreted from the bodies of honeybees, meaning that it is a renewable source of heat and light (for small scale use). It is clean-burning, produces very little smoke, and since it has a much higher melting point than paraffin, will burn longer and more slowly.

For centuries, people around the world used this renewable resource for light and medicine. Bees were seen as sacred in many cultures, and beeswax candles are prescribed for use as the Paschal or Easter Candle in the Roman Catholic Church and are commonly used in most Eastern Orthodox churches. As we struggle to see the environmental and human impacts of the oil industry and our use of oil, a switch to beeswax in our houses of worship can be a symbolic reminder of our call to live with reverence and restraint in God's creation.

HYMN SUGGESTIONS:

Book of Praise (Presbyterian): 667: God you touch the earth with beauty, **716:** Pray for the wilderness, **717:** We cannot own the sunlit sky, **719:** God in great love for us lent us this planet, **720:** Our cities cry to you, O God

Catholic Book of Worship: 531: For the Beauty of the Earth, **532:** For the Fruit of All Creation (VU 227), **541:** I Sing the Mighty Power of God, **547:** All Praise to God, **420:** Creator God, Creating Still, **478:** O God of Earth and Space, **503:** For the Healing of the Nations (CP 576)

Common Praise (Anglican): 656: She Comes Sailing on the Wind (VU 380 576: For the Healing of the Nations, **577:** God of Grace and God of Glory, **578:** O Healing River, **589:** Come, O God of All the Earth, **593:** O God of Every Nation

Hymnal A Worship Book (Mennonite) 405: Where Cross the Crowded Ways **403:** The Church of Christ in Every Age, **390:** God of the Fertile Fields **367:** For the Healing of the Nations, **417:** All Who Love and Serve Your City

Lutheran Book of Worship: 251: O Day of Rest and Gladness, **366:** Lord of our Life, **416:** O God of Every Nation (CP 593), **413:** Father Eternal Ruler of Creation (CP 574), **414:** O God of Love, O King of Peace, **420:** Lord, Save Your World

More Voices (United Church): 135: Called by Earth and Sky, **158:** Dream a Dream, **144:** Like a Healing Stream, **143:** We Cannot Own the Sunlit Sky (BofP 717), **41:** O Beautiful Gaia, **163:** River Running in You and Me, **174:** Soil of God, You and I (Holy Ground)

Psalter Hymnal (Christian Reformed Church in North America): 104: Your Spirit, O Lord, Makes Life to Abound, **437:** Thank You, God, for Water, Soil, and Air, **455:** For the Fruits of His Creation, **602:** Where Cross the Crowded Ways of Life (Menn. 405), **611:** As Stewards of a Vineyard

Voices United: 303: For the Beauty of the Prairies, **517:** Praise God for the Harvest, **227:** For

the Fruit of All Creation, **229**: God of the Sparrow, **297**: All Praise to You **307**: Touch the Earth Lightly

Worship in Song: A Friends' Hymnal: **29**: This is My Father's World, **152**: This Is Holy Ground, **309**: God, Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens, **311**: Take Off Your Shoes, **312**: The Earth is My Mother, **335**: The Trees of the Field

PowerDown Day Closing Worship

Candle Lighting *[to be read as the beeswax candle is lit]* — 2 minutes

As we light this beeswax candle, a renewable energy source, we are reminded of the bush that burned but was not consumed. And God was present.

As we gather as a community to worship, let us, like Moses, trust and follow the voice of God in our midst: for the Holy Spirit is present.

As we light this Christ candle, we gather here and everywhere to confront injustice and walk the path of peace. Let us remember that Jesus is always present with us.

Let our ways be challenged, our minds engaged, and our spirits lifted at this sacred time, on this holy ground.

Hymn *[choose one of the hymns listed above]* — 3 minutes

Scripture Reading *[read this passage, or consider presenting it as a drama]* — 5 minutes
Moses at the Burning Bush: Exodus 3: 1- 6

Reflection After Scripture *[The reading below may be read to open and close a time of personal reflection on the day and on the scripture. Consider setting up the room with various stations for individuals to visit as they feel called — boxes of sand, rocks, a tub of water with jugs to pour the water, an area with rugs/mats and a shoe rack (so participants might take their shoes off before entering this area), a foot-washing station with chairs, tubs, and clean towels, an area with candles, an area to draw, an area with photos of nature (e.g. from old calendars). Allow participants at least 10 minutes to explore the areas. Soft music in the background may help to reduce disruptive noises.]* — 10-15 minutes.

Introductory comments: “We are now going to respond to the earth’s invitation by using some time to reflect with our minds and bodies. Move from station to station as you feel drawn, respecting some quiet time”

AN INVITATION FROM EARTH

Take off your shoes
Like Moses, take off your shoes
This is holy ground
Walk gently through my woods
Tread softly on my face.
Walk reverently through my garden.
This is holy ground.
This is God’s sanctuary.
I invite you to worship with your feet this day.
I invite you to walk across my landscape
And sense the life within,
The glory that fills my body —
God’s presence below.

I invite you to reach down
To the holy ground beneath you.
Walk in the water. Sink in the sand.
Stand on a rock. You are walking on fire,
The fire of God's glory vibrant within.
Take off your shoes. This is holy ground.
This is the sanctuary of God.

Norman C. Habel, Seven Songs of Creation, Pilgrim Press, Cleveland. Reprinted by permission of the author.

HYMN

[choose another hymn from the lists above to bring participants back from their time of reflection] — 3 minutes

Closing Prayer — 2 minutes

Create or choose a prayer from your own tradition, or close with this Environmental Sabbath Prayer. *(Consider having different readers each share a section of this prayer; observe silence between stanzas.)*

We join with the Earth and with each other
To bring new life to the land
To restore the waters
To refresh the air

We join with the Earth and with each other
To renew the forests
To care for the plants
To protect the creatures

We join with the Earth and with each other
To celebrate the seas
To rejoice in the sunlight
To sing the song of the stars

We join with the Earth and with each other
To re-create the human community
To promote justice and peace
To remember our children

We join together as many and diverse expressions
of one loving memory:
For the healing of the Earth
And the renewal of all life

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SENDING FORTH — 1 minute

Let us go from this space challenged to live faithfully in creation, removing our shoes and “powering down” to walk more gently upon the earth. Let us celebrate God's presence in our lives, in one another, and in the goodness of creation, knowing that this world is truly holy ground. May we go in peace, ever guided by God's call.