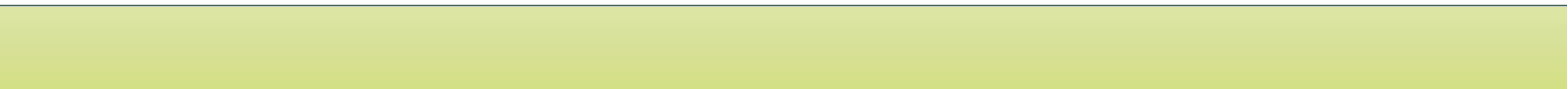


Climate Conversations

Lead and Persuade by Example

St Mark's Creation Care Ministry

January 2025



Agenda

- **Land Acknowledgement:** Saint Mark's Cathedral acknowledges that we gather on the traditional land of the first people of Seattle, the Duwamish People, who are still here, and we honor with gratitude the land itself and the life of all the Coast Salish tribes.
 - Opening Prayer
 - Why tell stories
 - Discussion
 - How to tell stories and overcome barriers
 - Sharing and Q&A
 - Closing Prayer
-
- It's great to take action to reduce climate change in your daily life. To have more of an impact more broadly, be an example of impactful change and let people know what you're doing. We'll discuss what researchers have learned about the impact of discussing climate change and creation care with friends and family, how telling people what you do can change their behaviors, and how to have friendly conversations even with climate change sceptics.

Opening Prayer

Lord, Show us how to make our contribution
As we change the way we live, travel, make and
consume, distribute and sell, use and reuse energy
and products.

Show us how to do simple things well in our home,
places of work and daily lives.

Show us how to protect the world you made, in all
its diversity and goodness, from our carbon
emissions, global warming and climate change,
rising temperatures and sea levels, the
displacement of peoples, environmental poverty,
harm and destruction.

Show us how and show us why, so that alone and
with others, our contribution will make a difference.

Amen



Individual Actions Matter

- Individual actions, from reducing food waste to installing LED lights, can produce 25%-30% of the reductions in US GHG emissions needed to avoid dangerous climate change
- Rare examined 7 personal choices and their impact on climate change: switching to an EV, reducing air travel, eating a plant-rich diet, offsetting carbon, reducing food waste, tending carbon-sequestering soil and purchasing green energy
 - If 10% of people in each category adopted a reduction behavior, total U.S. GHG emissions would decrease by 8%.
 - It would shrink by 80% the gap between was promised in the Paris Agreement and where it is now



People see Barriers to Making Changes

- Make more beef-free meals? Compost food scraps? Replace a natural gas stove with an electric one? These actions can help combat climate change. Most Americans don't do it.
- Why?
 - Because it means changing lifelong habits
 - Because they believe it won't make a difference
 - Because they think their friends and neighbors aren't doing it.
 - Rationalizations between convenience and conscience
 - Concern that promoting personal solutions lets companies & government off the hook



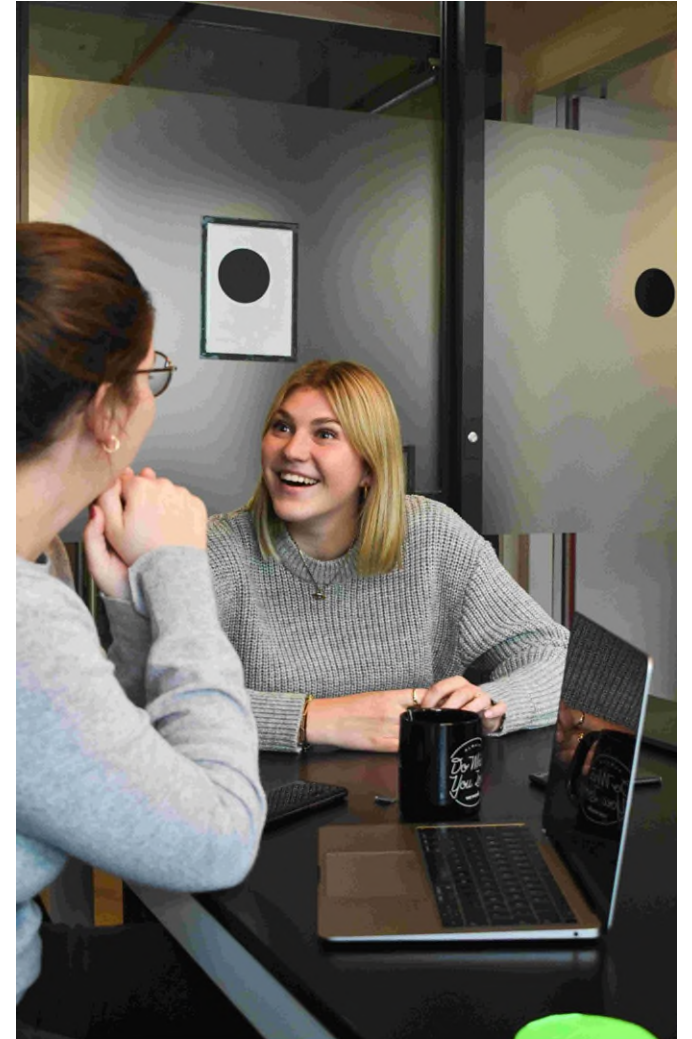
How to get People to Change

- People remember stories more than most any other form of communication
 - Personal stories connect climate solutions and individual action
 - Share who you are
- Of 6 ways to change people's behavior, social comparisons - what friends and neighbors are doing - has the biggest effect
 - When customers hear how their utility use compared neighbors, higher users often reduced consumption by 1%-2%
 - People install solar panels more if they see them on a neighbors' roof
 - Data or information was least successful



Friends, Colleagues & Networks Matter

- People trust peers, family members and loved ones more than experts and scientists
- The most effective interventions used social comparison, such as highlighting behaviors or attitudes of others (Yale)
- Engaging our social networks in dialogue can help address enormous environmental crises, including biodiversity loss and climate change (Yale)
- When people see or hear about friends, family or co-workers doing something, it makes them more likely to do it too
- Interactions with respected peers, such as colleagues, friends and family members, triggered voluntary change in 64% to 75% of people as opposed to 29% that was triggered by information only



Our Change is Inspired by Friends & Family

- We think self-control comes from within
 - Actually, our actions depend as much on our friends and family as ourselves
 - Those around us have the power to make us fatter, drink more or care more about the environment
- Our brain constantly picks up cues from people around us to inform our behaviour
- These are called social norms
- Vicarious dissonance: When you see someone behave in a way inconsistent with your attitudes, you may change your attitudes
- We can use our influence for good - positive behavior can spread through a network



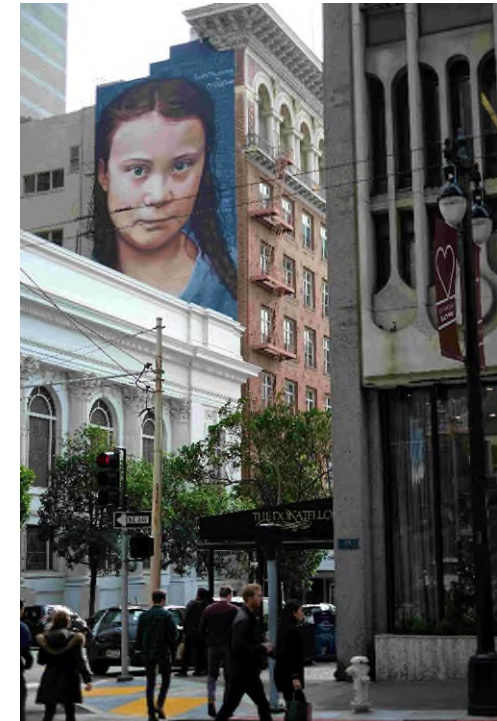
Sharing Stories Works in the Bible, Too

- Matthew 18: If a man owns a hundred sheep, and one of them wanders away, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go to look for the one that wandered off? And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he is happier about that one sheep than about the ninety-nine that did not wander off.
- Luke 15: Suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn't she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?
- Titus 2: Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity, dignity, and sound speech ...



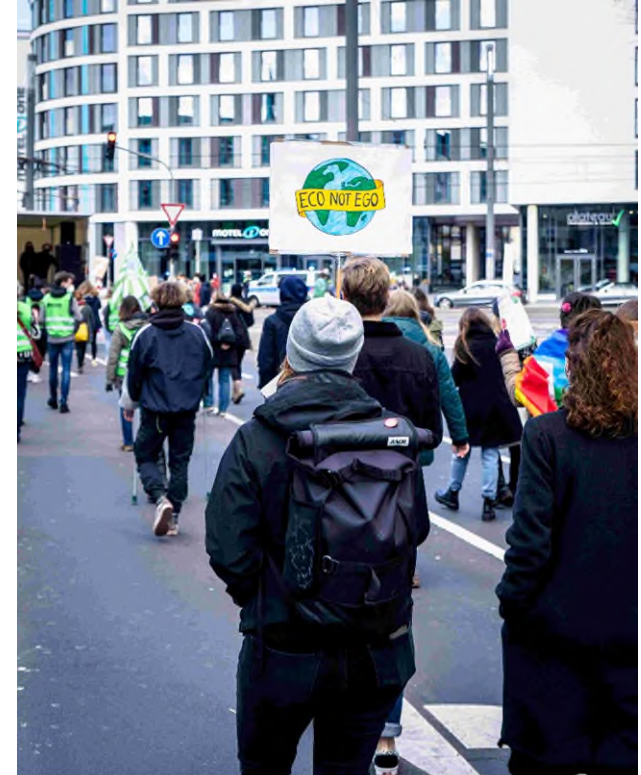
People who Set Examples

- David Attenborough: Movies & shows
- Greta Thunberg: “Blah, blah, blah”
 - Travel by train and boat
- Katharine Hayhoe: “Get Inspired” stories
- Jane Goodall: The vegetarian



How Else Can You Make a Difference

- Advocate
 - Meet with legislators and regulators
- Testify
 - Talk at city council & other meetings
- Vote
 - Convince others to vote too
- Protest
- An easy and everyday path: Talk and tell others about what you do



 **Environmental
Voter Project**

<https://www.environmentalvoter.org/>

Discussion & Breakout Session

Questions:

- Is there someone in your life who has changed what you do?
- What experiences have you had where telling a story changed behavior?
- How do friends and family influence what you do?



It Seems Hard to Talk about Climate Change

- It can be hard to know how to bring up the topic of climate change
 - People doing something to tackle climate change, even if small and personal, found it easier to start conversations about what they were doing
- Doing 'something' makes intimidating information about climate change easier to cope with
- We are motivated by stories
 - Telling your 'climate story' can be a better way to connect than statistics



Some things Work Well, Some Don't

What works well

- Use reliable sources
- Talk about the problem *and* the solution
- Start with a related issue – jobs, pollution or weather

What doesn't work well

- Bombard people with information and research
- Monetary rewards
- Telling people what to do
- Talking only to climate change converts



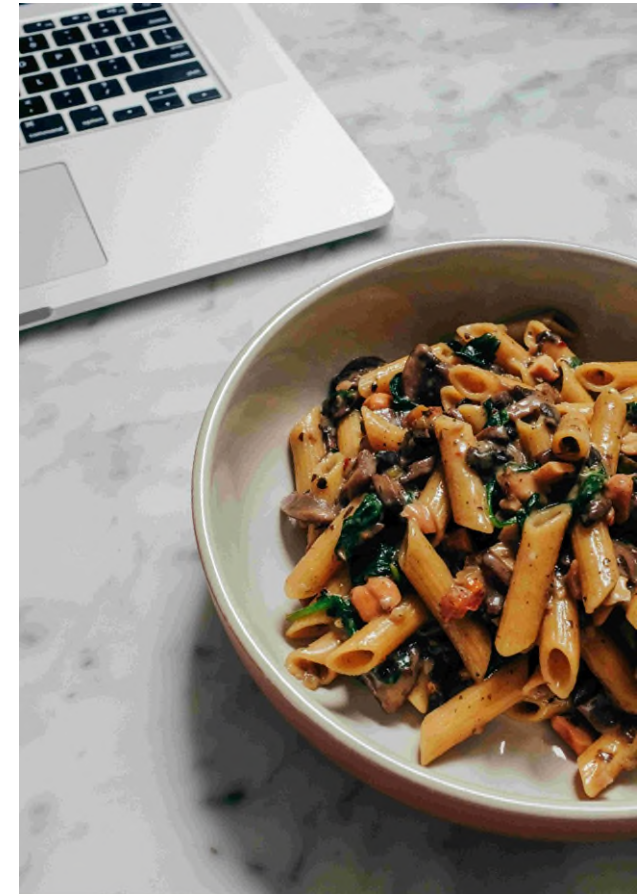
How to Tell Stories

- Bring up climate change to family, friends, neighbors & fellow faith community members in a nonthreatening, nonjudgmental way
- Think about and listen to what the other person cares about
 - Tailor your conversation to connect climate change to what's most important to them - hobbies, family, health, values
- Let them know the climate actions you're taking and why
- Explain how every person has a role to play in halting climate change.



How to Talk with Family and Friends

- Encourage family and friends to consider high-impact behaviors such as a plant-rich diet, and flying or driving less
 - Spend less time advocating for low-impact behaviors like single-use plastic straws (Yale)
- Tell stories that make environmental impacts and solutions more relatable and human
- Conduct your conversations respectfully



Tips from Katharine Hayhoe

- Share why climate change matters to the places and things you both care about
 - Talk about how it's already affecting people you love, and highlight examples of real solutions
 - Don't use 'climate change', environment or green
- 1) Begin by talking about things people care about
Hobbies, sports, kids, pets, faith
 - 2) Connect those shared values to climate change
Show how heat, storms, or more extreme weather impact the things you both care about
 - 3) Highlight solutions too
Share practical actions people can take at home, at work, schools, or faith communities to make a difference. Talk about success.



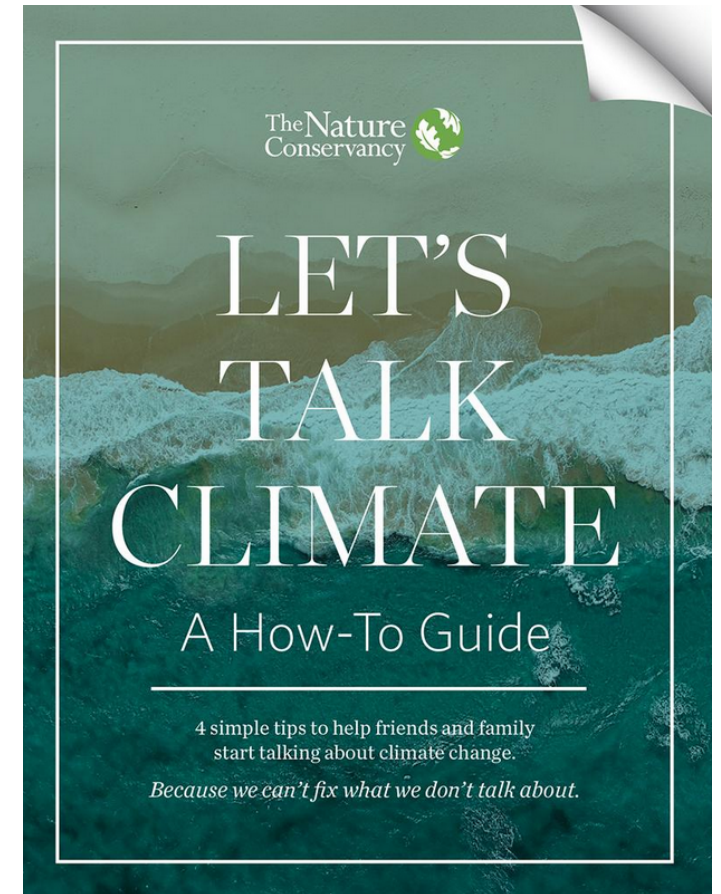
Most Effective Actions

- Make it personal and local
 - Actions locally more than Asia or Africa
- Credible information from credible sources
- Make it easy
 - Observable benefits people can see
 - Easy ways to try changing
 - Simplicity
 - Advantages – money, health & more



More Ideas on What Works

- Why it seems difficult
 - I don't know enough
 - I don't want to talk about scary things
 - I don't think I can make a difference
 - I don't want to cause an argument
- What works
 - Meet people where they are
 - Connection – shared values and identity - outweighs facts
 - Start with what's happening - weather
 - The goal is conversation, not conquest
 - Focus on the person



5 Key Steps

- A 5-step Cheat Sheet
 - Ask
 - Listen
 - Reflect
 - Agree
 - Share



Sharing, Discussion and Q&A

Questions

- What difficulties do you have in talking about climate change?
- Who, outside your usual circle, can you talk to about actions you are taking?
- What practices have you found work well for telling stories?



Make a Difference

If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one – Mother Teresa

One person can make a difference, and everyone should try – John Kennedy

One person can make a difference. You don't have to be a big shot. You don't have to have a lot of influence. You just have to have faith in your power to change things. – Norman Vincent Peale

Closing Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:
where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
where there is sadness, joy.
Amen



