

Video study guide:

Restoring a failing ecosystem

Lake Chad has shrunk by 90% in our lifetimes, turning fertile fields into dust. Farmers in the area say they can no longer predict rainfall. Hunger and disease are rising, while livelihoods disappear.

We want to tip the balance back toward natural environments that can flourish, protect life and support healthy communities.

We're doing that through an initiative called Friends of Creation. More than 100 churches across Canada have worked together to raise nearly \$1 million for a nature-based solution to this multi-faceted issue.

Together with our partners in Lutheran World Federation, we're implementing an ambitious approach that boils down to a simple premise: if we take care of creation, it can take care of us.

Over 128,000 people will benefit directly from an improved ecosystem—with better nutrition, water access, crop yields, and sustainable futures—and an additional 640,000 people will be able to live and work in ecosystems that will have been restored.

To celebrate the impact of this amazing work, Canadian Lutheran World Relief (CLWR) has created four videos exploring how life is changing for people living in the Lake Chad basin. This guide will help your group learn more about the project and dig deeper with discussion questions.

How to use this guide

This study guide is perfect for churches, small groups, adult Sunday school classes, youth groups or anyone else who want to learn more about CLWR's work in the Lake Chad basin.

Each of the four videos is accompanied by discussion questions, a faith connection and a prayer. You can choose to do all four videos and discussions on the same day or do one a week for four weeks.

Note: All Bible verses quoted in this study guide are from the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition

Video: Creating drought-tolerant farms in the Lake Chad basin

Watch the video with your group. Listen to Sandrine's story and the difficulties she and other farmers face due to inconsistent rainfall. Learn how new irrigation techniques are helping her community grow more food.

Runtime: 4:05



youtube.com/watch?v=jBiMAcLLPe0

Discussion questions

- Was there a time when you experienced scarcity of water?
 - ◊ What was the result?
- Water in the Lake Chad basin is either too plentiful (flooding) or too scarce (drought). How are these water issues affecting the people and the land in the Lake Chad Basin?
- How are CLWR and LWF addressing these shortages?
- What difference does this make for local communities?

Connecting to our faith

The prophet Isaiah challenges people to move beyond performative religious acts to action. Isaiah 58:11 says:

“The Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your needs in parched places and make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters never fail.”

How does this verse inspire you to act and make this also true for the people in the Lake Chad basin?

Prayer

God of creation, you send down the rains, you brought forth water from the rock. We thank you for the work of CLWR, especially the work they are doing in the Lake Chad basin.

We give you thanks for the life-giving gifts of irrigation and water bores. Keep us thankful for the water we experience in plenty here at home.

Empower us to be Friends of Creation. In Jesus' name we pray, amen.

Video: Empowering women through sustainable farming

Watch the video with your group. Listen to how Danigué's life has improved after learning new farming techniques and participating in a village savings and loan association. Learn how women farmers are building a better future for their families.

Runtime: 3:42



youtube.com/watch?v=R1H36lwkinI

Discussion questions

- How has the changing climate affected your life?
 - ◊ How are you responding to those changes?
- What are the challenges being faced by the people in the Lake Chad basin?
 - ◊ How is CLWR working to help overcome these challenges?
- How do village savings and loans associations help communities and individuals?

Connecting to our faith

Read the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30). The message of this parable is one of abundance. God wants the world to thrive. How does this passage connect to the work CLWR is doing with women farmers in the Lake Chad basin?

Prayer

God of our time and talents, we thank you for the work of CLWR, especially the work they are doing in the Lake Chad basin. Bless the work so that it helps communities address climate change and build brighter futures for tomorrow.

Strengthen the work of the village savings and loans associations. Help us to be generous users of the gifts you have given us.

Empower us to be Friends of Creation. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

Video: How communities are reforesting the desert in Cameroon

Watch the video with your group. Listen to the reasons why trees were over used and the benefits of reforestation in Eldjouma's life. Learn how community investment in this work ensures long term care for the forests.

Runtime: 5:55



youtube.com/watch?v=IABxNLiQgg

Discussion questions

- Do you have a favourite tree?
 - ◇ What do you love about that tree?
 - ◇ What is a favourite memory you have of that tree?
- Deforestation in the Lake Chad Basin is complicated. What are some of the things that have led people to cut down the trees?
- What are the effects of this deforestation?
- What are some of the things CLWR is doing to help address this problem?
 - ◇ How are these solutions helping?

Connecting to our faith

In Revelation 22:2 we read:

“On either side of the river is the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, producing its fruit each month, and the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations.

This story in the Bible is looked at as the full reconciliation of the fall in Eden. It is the restoration of God's people and creation. What connections do you see in this passage with the reforestation of the Lake Chad Basin?

Prayer

God of creation, even the trees clap their hands and praise your name. We thank you for the work of CLWR, especially the work they are doing in the Lake Chad basin. May the work addressing deforestation bring life and prosperity back to the land and the communities.

Empower us to be Friends of Creation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Video: Maintaining a fragile peace in Cameroon

Watch the video with your group. Listen to the reasons conflict is made worse by a changing climate. Learn how peace committees help people and communities resolve conflict.

Runtime: 4:06



youtube.com/watch?v=LzSs5ulK83k

Discussion questions

- Conflict in the world is on the rise. What are the conflicts that you worry about in the world?
 - ◊ In our country?
 - ◊ In your community?
- What are the common conflicts in the Lake Chad basin?
- How are the local peace committees helping to address these conflicts?
- What is unique about the local peace committees?

Connecting to our faith

In Ephesians 4:1–3, Paul writes to the community about resolving conflict:

“I, therefore, the prisoner in the Lord, beg you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace...”

How does the work of peace committees in the Lake Chad Basin live out our biblical call to strive for peace?

Prayer

God of peace and justice, we thank you for the work of CLWR, especially the work they are doing in the Lake Chad basin.

We thank you for the work of the local peace committees in alleviating conflicts within their communities. Help us to be agents of peace in our own homes and communities.

Empower us to be Friends of Creation. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.