



## Hosting “The Letter”

# EVENT AGENDA GUIDE

As the host of this event, you are bringing together a community of people who can journey through faith in caring for Creation.

This guide provides a suggested agenda for a 2-hour event.

## WELCOMING

### Ask attendees to sign in and begin with simple refreshments (10 minutes)

It is helpful for event organizers/Creation Care committee members to wear nametags so attendees can easily identify them.

Invite someone to help document and take photos at your event to help inspire awareness and follow-up action. Please use the **AOC Photo/Video Release Form** in the toolbox for attendees at sign in if they have not already submitted one prior to the event. Have copies printed out.

Set the stage for the event. Create a welcome table for attendees when they arrive. Set out the film **flyer** or **poster** (download from Creation Care Ministry landing page), a copy of the *Laudato Si'* encyclical, the Laudato Si' Action Platform Goals and a crucifix. Set out a piece of paper and ask attendees to kindly sign in with name, email and phone if they did not already pre-register. We will send you a spreadsheet of those who pre-registered, so you can simply mark their name off the list as they arrive.

Collecting names and contact information lets you follow up with attendees after the event, which will be important for inviting future participation and taking action.

### Ensure everyone feels engaged

The attendees at your event are key to creating a better world connecting through faith. It's helpful for people to feel engaged rather than passive. As attendees arrive and sign in, ask each participant to share what brought him or her to the event.

Starting with refreshments helps break the ice and makes all feel welcomed as they find their seat. Light refreshments are encouraged. Make it simple and sustainable.

Important — please be aware of any parish/location protocols for serving food. Our theme is caring for creation, so avoid paper/plastic if possible. Plastic contradicts our message.

Ask participants you know to help bring something simple and help serve hospitality.

### Begin promptly, welcome all and introduce the film (5 minutes)

A few brief positive comments at the start of your event will help set the tone.

“On behalf of the Archdiocese of Chicago, Care for Creation Ministry, and [Parish/Host Location], thank you for attending this event.”

Also, share some “housekeeping items” such as location of the restrooms and kindly ask everyone to silence their cell phones.

If your community's leader is attending, invite him or her to say a few words ahead of time.

Share how this event connects to your community's spiritual values. Explain how you hope it will strengthen your community. You may want to refer to brief talking points from *Laudato Si'* and how their participation in this event is an important step in taking action on the ecological crisis for our common home.

## Take a Moment to Begin in Prayer (2 minutes)

A moment for reflection or prayer will help participants feel grounded. Read Scripture or a quotation from *Laudato Si'* aloud, and reflect silently together for one minute.

## SCREENING THE FILM: (80 MINUTES)

Tech preparation and internet connections should be in place and tested far in advance. Review the guide to **Manage Tech Equipment** located in the Host Toolbox on **“The Letter” landing page** on the Archdiocese of Chicago, Care for Creation Ministry page.

## AFTER THE SCREENING: (15-20 MINUTES)

### Reflect

When the film is finished, ask audience members to sit quietly for one minute, reflecting on what they have seen and how they feel called to contribute to caring for Creation. You may consider offering a *Laudato Si'* quote as a prompt for reflection.

### Discuss

A 15-20 minute discussion will help build solidarity and encourage action steps to care for each other and God's Creation.

*Note: Depending on the size of the group, it may be helpful to have attendees turn to those sitting around them for discussion. With this type of agenda, time will not allow for an in-depth reflection/discussion. However, it is important to prompt deep thinking, and positive dialogue as an essential element following the film. You may choose to have a follow-up discussion group at another time.*

### Discussion Question Suggestions

These questions could be used for personal reflection or small group discussion. It is recommended to choose one or two questions only, followed by the suggested action statement for next steps.

We want to encourage further engagement and participation without overwhelming the attendees with too much information or infringing upon their personal allotted time for the event.

- What made the most impression upon you from the film? What is your key takeaway?
- The film presents the planetary crisis as a human crisis. What do the people in the film share in common with each other? How can we connect with being disciples of Christ?
- How can we make time and space to listen to those whose voices we do not usually hear?
- How/where have you encountered the sacred? Where have you met God in nature and what does that feel like?

- In the film we are told “The Amazon depends on you.” We are also asked how we will care for our common home. What will you do and how do you think caring for Creation connects with our faith?
- What signs of hope do you see in the film and/or in our world?

## TAKING ACTION

### Key

Encourage action toward getting involved in Creation Care and the Laudato Si’ Action Platform at your host location. Additionally, mention your solidarity with the Archdiocese of Chicago Care for Creation Ministry that amplifies your efforts.

Inform attendees how the Vatican has given us a tool called the Laudato Si’ Action Platform to guide parishes, families and individuals with specific goals and impactful actions on this journey. Encourage them to talk with your committee representatives further and visit the Vatican’s Laudato Si’ Action Platform as a way to begin at home. Remind attendees that taking action is a way to bring their unique gifts, special skills and abilities to our shared movement for a better future for generations to come.

Additionally, you may hand out an action pledge card for them to fill out before they leave or bring back when they return for mass. A sample will be available in the Host Toolbox.

A pledge card can include:

Sign the Pledge!

- I pledge to pray for Creation.
- I pledge to live more simply.
- I pledge to advocate to protect our common home.
- I pledge to share a talent or expertise with my parish/community.
- Tear off at the bottom with name/email/phone and talent/expertise to share.
- List of resources such as [archchicago.org/creation](https://www.archchicago.org/creation) and [laudatosiactionplatform.org](https://www.laudatosiactionplatform.org)

### Closing (2 min)

Please close your event by inviting each person to say one word of gratitude for this moment, then thank everyone for taking this step on the journey toward caring for our common home. Invite attendees to connect with you further before they leave.

### Follow up after the event

- Promptly reach out to attendees and thank them for attending.
- Encourage:
  - Attendees to get involved in your Creation Care Committee and how to reach out to you.

- Enrolling on the Laudato Si' Action Platform as a family or individual
- Attendees to sign, take the pledge and get involved at the parish (if doing a Creation Care pledge drive).
- Reading the *Laudato Si'* encyclical (hold a study group)
- Inform your community regularly about the Laudato Si' Goals.
- Connect and collaborate with leads across the parish.
- Lean on the Archdiocese of Chicago Care for Creation LSAP Vicariate Facilitators.
- Continue efforts along the Laudato Si' Action Platform.
- Share and celebrate your efforts and good works for Creation!