

Getting Warmer

Aim

that young people learn about the causes and effects of climate change

Age

6 years and older

Time

40 minutes (part one 20 minutes; part two 20 minutes)

Materials

Large space, masking tape or string/rope, old newspapers

What to do

Part one: Causes

Begin with a quick brainstorm on activities the group does every day that need energy or fuel. For example, turn on the lights, travel by car, go in a plane on our holidays and so on.

Divide into two teams separated by a marked line across the space. A member of one team goes over to the other side calling out an activity from earlier and tries to touch the other team and run back to their own side. The other team has to try to hold them down. If they are captured for more than 10 seconds, they are out of the game. The other team then has a go. If necessary, introduce a rule that participants cannot take a rest of more than 20 seconds.

After about 10 minutes, end the game. Ask how people are feeling. Are they hot from all the running around? What happened in the game? Was there a clear winner? How did it feel to be captured?

Explain that this is what is happening in the air around us. When we switch on a light, have a shower, use a sheet of paper, drive in a car or light a fire, we are contributing carbon dioxide and other gases to be released into the atmosphere. The gases are trapped in the atmosphere and form a blanket around the earth that heats up, in the same way a greenhouse does. It is the effect of millions and millions of people, particularly in rich countries, doing the same that contributes to global warming.

Adapted from an Indian children's game, Ha Do Do. Source: Prodeepta Das (1999). Geeta's Day: From Dawn to Dusk in an Indian Village.

Part two: Effects

Place sheets of newspapers at random on the floor or ground, so that there is just enough for everyone to stand on. Explain that these are islands and the floor is the sea. Everyone begins in the sea, moving around. When the leader calls 'shark', everyone has to stand on an island. Anyone touching the water is out of the game. Encourage the group to participate to ensure as many people as possible survive.

After the first round, announce that a hurricane is blowing through and remove half the sheets. In the following rounds, announce floods, drought (leading to a reduction in food) and an outbreak of malaria, halving the number of sheets each time.

End the game and ask how the group felt during the game. Was it easy or difficult to survive? Why? Was it better to work individually or participate as a group to survive?



Getting Warmer

Continued

Take Action!

Join with other locally, nationally and across Europe in the 'Pave the Way for Action on Climate Change' action organised by Friends of the Earth and the National Youth Council of Ireland. To get more information, contact NYCI.

Explain that as a result of the atmosphere warming up, the weather is changing for the whole world. There is an increase in extreme weather such as hurricanes, floods and tornados, while rains are failing in many countries leading to drought. At the poles the ice is melting, leading to sea levels slowly rising and an increased risk of further flooding. It is poorest people in the poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America that will be hardest hit by this 'climate change'.

But it's not too late for us to do something about it. Each one of us can take small actions such as turning off the lights when we go out, cycling or walking sometimes and reusing or recycling paper and other materials where possible. We can also encourage others to take action locally and globally.

Climate Change: What's it all about?

- Climate change is caused by the release of too much carbon dioxide and other gases into the earth's atmosphere. The gases form a blanket around the earth that traps heat. These gases are released when we use fuels such as petrol, gas and coal or electricity from these sources.
- Rich countries contribute far more than poor countries to climate change because they use more energy in their homes, businesses and factories.
- The planet is getting warmer, resulting in rises in sea levels and an increase in extreme weather events, including floods, tornados and droughts.
- The effects of climate change are felt most by poor people in developing countries, where hurricanes, floods, drought and malaria affect their livelihoods and health.