

Every Creature Singing

Embracing the Good News for Planet Earth

Leader's Guide:

Unit 3: Choosing a Simple Lifestyle

Session 9	Rethinking the Market Economy
Session 10	Simple Abundance
Session 11	Creating Communities of Accountability
Session 12	A Spirituality that Sustains

[Leader Resources](#)

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 9: Rethinking the Market Economy

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals *(Circle your top priority.)*

By the end of the session, people will

- Be aware of where and how the assumptions underlying our economic system conflict with the teachings of Jesus.
- Desire to seek the reign of God, especially as it relates to economic life.
- Understand what is meant by externalized costs and be able to give examples related to their own consumption of resources.
- Have envisioned a sustainable alternative to at least one aspect of our current society that troubles them.

Advance Preparation

- Session 9 begins a new unit on Choosing a Simple Lifestyle. Scan the remaining sessions so you are clear about where you are headed.
- Think about how to capture energy generated in this class. How will you use your 13th session? Are there projects you want to take on or groups that need to form in order to build on this study? Do you want to do any of the retreats described on pages 6 to 10 of the Leader's Guide?
- See suggestion 3 below and decide if you want to use any of the supplementary readings that describe what an alternate economy might look like. Let others know what they need to read in advance or print it for use in class.
- Assess whether any class members or local friends would be a good resource for Place Questions 1 and 2. If so, contact them and request their input.

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- Be aware of where and how the assumptions underlying our economic system conflict with the teachings of Jesus.
- Desire to seek the reign of God, especially as it relates to economic life.

Sample Class Period

- **Opening moments:** Comment on the fact that you are making a transition to the third unit in this curriculum, which focuses on lifestyle issues. Adapt your prayer of intent to reflect this.
- **Engage three readers**—one to read Matthew 6:25-34; one to read the bulleted list on page 9-1 of the Participant Guide and one to read the bulleted list on page 9-2. Ask the reader of the first list to interject the points into the scripture reading as a series of interruptions. Conclude with the third reader. Follow up with Discussion Question #2 on scarcity versus excess.
- **Zero in on Matthew 6:33** on seeking the kingdom of God. What does your group suppose this means? Ask each person to think of a purchase from the past year that they used as a tool for kingdom work (as described in the essay) and another purchase that did not serve that purpose too well. Reflect on each other's stories.
- **Cover one or more of the place questions** by interviewing a local business owner, fair trade advocate or green investing enthusiast.

More ideas

1. **Begin with [The Story of Solutions](#):** This 9-minute video introduces the idea that our economy may be pursuing the wrong goals in an engaging and youth-friendly way. It is listed under Suggested Resources.
2. **Imagining alternatives:** If you want to work with Discussion Question 5, you can glean ideas from these additional readings:
 - Excerpt from ["Conserving Communities,"](#) by Wendell Berry
 - ["31 Ways to Jumpstart the Local Economy,"](#) by Sarah Van Gelder
 - See the Resource section of the Participant Guide.

Select quotes to read aloud with your group, or ask them to look at one reading in advance. In what ways would your group's vision of a sustainable society correspond to or diverge from this vision?

3. **Possessions as Tools:** Do household practice 1 in class. You could bring in a collection of small objects or write the names of larger objects on slips of paper and have people

draw an object or a slip out of a hat. Take turns imagining how this possession could serve the kingdom of God that Jesus preached.

4. **Explore Issues:** Break into two groups, based on interest in either investments or fair trade shopping. See discussion questions 8 and 9. Is there an Everence advocate or MEDA fan in your congregation who could introduce the funds mentioned under household practice 4?

You may have discussed fair trade purchases during Session 7 on the global community, but if you didn't, here's another opportunity. These sites were mentioned as resources.

- [Equal Exchange](#)
- [Fair Trade USA](#) See their [Global Reach Map](#)
- [Ten Thousand Villages](#)

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing You Faith

Why the Questions Below Matter

- Non-consumption is not an option. We are creatures with material needs. Business and industry can be positive forces. Thoughtful consumption can shape our economy in ways that improve our communities and create jobs.
- A rudimentary knowledge of the businesses in your area could reveal positive qualities consumers will want to reward or negative impacts on the community that need to be addressed.

Help with Place Questions

1. **Choose a retail business or industry that is located within your map area. Find out what challenges they face in balancing costs and impacts on the environment.**

The easiest way to do this is to draw on the work experiences of class members when possible. Call likely prospects in advance and see if they are willing to share.

[The CSR Hub](#) ranks companies on various categories of corporate social responsibility. You may find something of interest there.

2. **Where do the raw materials that your local industries use come from? How are they transported to your region? Could the raw materials be produced locally?**

To find out about raw materials and environmental challenges, you will probably need to choose one or two businesses and ask them. Better yet, this could be an opportunity to hear from someone in your congregation whose workplace is within your map area.

3. How much of your spending supports local businesses? What changes could you make to ensure that the income you spend on goods and services provides income to your neighbors? Is this important to you?

These sites make the case for supporting local small businesses rather than chains:

- [Sustainable Connections: Why Buy Local](#)
- [Conserving Communities](#), by Wendell Berry
- [31 Ways to Jumpstart the Local Economy](#)
- [Institute for Local Self-Reliance](#)
- Don't miss the above site's page that summarizes studies on [the effects of big box retail stores](#) on communities that host them.

An engaging way to encourage local shopping could be to bring in a number of household items that people might typically buy at a large chain store and ask the group where else they could buy a similar item from a local business. Do cost comparisons if you have time.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 10: Simple Abundance

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals

Participants will...

- Name an environmentally friendly action they could take that would be a source of greater wellbeing.
- Name barriers that prevent them from making environmentally friendly changes they would like to make, and identify ways to overcome these barriers.
- Been inspired to work at a sustainable living issue in their personal lives, such as food or energy.
- Opened the door to discussing lifestyle issues with each other in the future.

Advance Preparation

- Your discussion on lifestyle issues could go in many different directions. Decide in advance whether you want to encourage specific household actions in an area such as food or water or whether you want to stick to the underlying concepts in the essay. Reviewing several of the Suggested Resources may help you decide how to focus this session for your group and your setting. The [Grace Communications Foundation](http://www.gracecommunicationsfoundation.org) site makes some interesting connections between food, water and energy.
- Consider further discussion options. You could spend a week each on food, energy, water and so on. Is there energy to go beyond your one-hour session, and if so, how could that need be met?
- The sample lesson plan requires a Bible and gift wrap.
- If using the sample lesson plan, make copies of the Household Food Sheet, Leader Resources, pages 5 to 6.

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- Been inspired to work at a sustainable living issue in their personal lives, such as food or energy.
- Opened the door to discussing lifestyle issues with each other in the future.

Sample Class Period

- **Psalm 23 as gift:** Mark this text with a bookmark and wrap up a Bible as a gift to emphasize the abundant life, freely given, that texts such as Psalm 23 envision for us. Ask participants to reflect on what they want most out of life and allow a moment of silence. Then invite someone to open the gift box you brought and read the 23rd Psalm. Discuss: What does abundant life look like, according to this familiar text? Does this Psalm address your deepest needs and desires? In what way?
- **Where are people coming from?** Move on to discussion question 2 and spend time exploring participants' associations and history with a simple lifestyle. Depending on your congregation, this will be very familiar for some folks, or it could be brand new. What people, images or stories come to mind when your class hears the phrase, "simple lifestyle?" Do they have positive associations with these ideas, or frustration? How can we talk about lifestyle issues in ways that inspire change rather than unproductive guilt? In ways that honor diversity?
- **Watch for opportunities** to lead the conversation toward Discussion Question 3, 4 or 5.
- Ask your place leader to share either a few facts from the Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide or a source of locally and sustainable grown food he or she has discovered.
- Look at the [Household Food Sheet](#) together and encourage people to work through it with their households.

More Ideas

1. **In groups of twos or threes**, share:
 - a sustainable habit that you feel good about,
 - a cutting edge area—something you'd like to work on but haven't achieved yet,
 - and possibly an area of frustration or failure. We all have them.As a larger group, brainstorm ways to implement the cutting edge ideas people share.
2. **Other small group discussions:** If you have couples in your class or other household groupings, you could provide time for people to discuss actions to implement at home. Or form smaller groups around interest areas such as food, water, energy.

- 3. Review carbon footprints:** This session could be a good place to discuss the results of the carbon footprint exercise suggested in Sessions 5 and 9, if people chose to do it. What actions seemed to make the most difference as you played with the carbon calculators? What surprised you? Did you find realistic actions that would make a significant difference for you? Review the sheet on carbon footprints as needed.
- 4. Recognize socio-economic differences:** If you want to explore Discussion Question 5, consider inviting two readers to dramatize the scene from *Flight Behavior*, using the paraphrased version in the essay. Which character do listeners identify with? The complete scene is found on pages 326-329 of this popular novel, available in most public libraries.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Why the Questions Below Matter

For many of us in North America, food and water are cheap and abundant. For others, water sources are threatened by drought or overuse, and keeping food on the table is a daily struggle. Thinking about how these basic services are provided is an opportunity for gratitude—and for doing justice. It can also make us better caretakers of these vital resources. Those of us acquainted with the hard work of gardening may also wonder why our food is so inexpensive.

Help with Place Questions

Choose to work on either food or water.

- 1. Where does your drinking water come from? Where does your wastewater go and how is it treated? Are there contaminants in your water?**

The answers here could be framed in terms of geography or of city government. Geographically speaking, your water source could be a lake, a river, a reservoir or an aquifer. Two thirds of Americans get their water from surface sources; the rest draw on ground water. For about 86% of us, the water is provided by a public water supply system rather than a household well.

If you are on city water, you can follow your water bill to your local water and sewer department and ask your questions there. You might even be able to tour a wellfield or a wastewater treatment plant. The wastewater treatment workers in our town are enthusiastic and proud of their work. They enjoy sharing it with the public. Yours may be the same.

If you drink bottled water (Why do you?), check the label to see where it comes from. Fiji Water, for example, is shipped in from an island due north of New Zealand. Just think of it as a bottle of oil and leave it alone.

Helpful Vocabulary:

- **Aquifer:** A natural underground layer of porous, water-bearing materials (sand, gravel) usually capable of yielding a large amount of water.
- **Combined Sewer Overflows:** When the capacity of the sewer system is exceeded during heavy rains, some municipalities discharge a mixture of untreated stormwater and domestic waste directly into local rivers. Find out if your town has this problem and where the excess water is released.
- **Wellfield:** Multiple wells under common ownership that supply water to a community.

Water Resources

- [U. S. Geological Service Water Science School](#)
- [List of U.S. Aquifers](#) and information about [aquifers](#).
- [Reservoir overview](#) Once you know the name of your aquifer or surface water source, you can search for more information by name.
- Environmental Protection Agency, [Ground Water and Drinking Water](#) They've got risk management and water security on their minds.

2. Where does food come from in your community? How much is grown within a 25-mile radius?

This week is a chance to visit your local farmer's market if you have one, or to ask questions at grocery store chains within your circle.

- [Factory Farm Map](#) This can give you a sense of how many animals are in your region.
- [Local Harvest](#) Plug in your zip code and find farms in your area selling local produce, grass fed meats, organic foods, etc.

3. How can you support the farmers in your region who are doing the best job of caring for their land and animals? Where can you buy their food?

- [The Sustainable Food Purchasing Guide](#) is a very helpful resource for those trying to sort through the ethics of eating. It reviews the rationale for sustainable food choices, describes the issues related to different food groups and suggests questions to ask local farmers.
- [Certified Naturally Grown](#) This is a certification designed for small-scale, direct-market farmers and beekeepers using natural methods. On this site, you can read the [standards](#) they require of various types of farms. This could help you formulate questions you might want to ask farmers in your area. You can also find a listing of [local food guides](#) for various regions of the country here.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 11: Creating Accountable Communities

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals

Participants will...

- Gain a deeper understanding of the Christian tradition's communion ritual: its relationship to table fellowship in the Gospels, its roots in the resurrection and coming of the Holy Spirit, its practical function in meeting human need.
- Understand sustainable living as a community-wide endeavor, not just an individual pursuit.
- Encounter several models for creating accountable communities and consider what elements might transfer to their own setting.
- Begin planning for ongoing congregational initiatives that support sustainable behavior.
- Understand how the assumptions of the surrounding culture--past and present--have shaped care for the land in your area.

Advance Preparation

- **Get the lay of the land from a leadership perspective:** This is a crucial session. It encourages change on a broader level than just a few individuals. Consult with your pastor and church leadership for advice on what church-wide directions make sense and what level of support is likely. Come to class prepared with a couple of actions you think the congregation is ready to take.
- **Make use of MCCN resources:** Spend time with MCCN's [Greener Congregation Score Sheet](#). Also review the stories archived on the [congregations](#) page to see what other Mennonite congregations are doing.
- **Pray for guidance:** This week's session calls for communal thinking that may be difficult for a group of North American individualists. Pray for an inviting, accepting yet challenging atmosphere.
- **Plan to assess** how the class went afterwards. Put some reflection time on your calendar and use it to journal or talk with a friend.
- **Idea 5** below requires a roll of paper, ruler, markers, and tape.

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

- Understand sustainable living as a community-wide endeavor, not just an individual pursuit.
- Encounter several models for creating accountable communities and consider what elements might transfer to their own setting.

Sample Class Period

- Begin by reading the quote from William Willimon on page 1 of the Participant Guide. Review the point made in the essay that the coming of the Holy Spirit resulted in lifestyle practices such as sharing food.
- Use Discussion Question 6 about buying a van as a case to get people talking. Then shift the focus to your own congregation using Discussion Question 1.
- Have people break into five pairs or small groups. Ask each group to review one of the bold print sections of the essay and discuss how this model of community might apply in your context (Discussion Question 4.)
- Have your place leader share what is known about the history of the land that you meet on and how it has been cared for. What is one positive thing you can learn from the former inhabitants of your region? What regrets do you have about their behavior?

More Ideas

1. **Write before speaking:** Discussion Questions 1 to 3 are fairly personal. If you use one of them, you may have a better discussion if you give people scratch paper and a chance to write down their thoughts before sharing.
2. **Keep it practical:** As a group, scan this session's household and spiritual practices. Where is there energy for conversation or more? Break into small groups based on the practices that catch people's interest.
3. **Another way to use break-out groups:** Present MCCN's [Greener Congregation Score Sheet](#) mentioned in Household Practice 1. People could divide by interests, with one group working on worship ideas, another on building ideas, and so on.
4. **Consumption Addictions:** Question 10 about consumption addiction could be especially interesting if you have a member of a 12-step group in the congregation who is willing to speak about his or her experiences there. Perhaps the whole congregation can benefit from this person's struggle. Be sure to ask the person to share in advance, not just assume he or she cares to share.
5. **Future people:** Question 8 asks about providing for future people as well as the present. This could bring fresh imagination to a somewhat tired question about human need. How can you bring these future people to life? Refer to page 4 of the Session 1 leader's guide, which describes using an empty chair to represent future people.

Another idea might be to borrow a roll of paper from the Christian education closet and make a timeline that encircles the whole room. Begin in the year 2000 and label 10-year periods so that your group is surrounded by the future. List the birth dates of your congregation's youngest children.

Think of a decision made in the past 100 years that has had a profound effect on your community and use it as an example of the long-term effects group choices can have on wellbeing. Examples include conservation or depletion of groundwater, projects requiring debt, prudent versus imprudent buildings or community development, introduction of invasive species.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing You Faith

Why The Questions Below Matter

Both of the Place Questions deal with the communal stewardship of resources.

- The first question invites thought about the culture your congregation is embedded in. We do not each decide as individuals how we will care for the land we inhabit. We are part of a broader culture that teaches us how to think and act.

Different communities understand land differently and live on it in different ways. For example, the Miami people who lived in my Northern Indiana neighborhood in the early 1800s and the first European settlers who arrived in the mid-1800s had very different understandings of wetlands. Contrasting cultures and land management practices can give you insights into your own behavior related to the land.

Also note that the original Native American groups may have had valuable insights into the local terrain that could still be helpful today. The longer a community has lived on the land, the more likely that it will have developed sustainable management practices. Most newcomers to a region do not understand the landscape well and make mistakes.

The question of earlier inhabitants could also bring up justice issues regarding appropriation of Native American land that your group may not have grappled with before.

- The purpose of the second question is to capitalize on the relationships people in your congregation have built and relate them to the land. If a cluster of people who know each other live on the same branch of a river or use the same park, it provides added accountability and engagement. We all need reminders that others care about our corner of the world too.

Help with Place Questions

1. What native peoples originally inhabited your region? What waves of immigrants followed and when did they arrive? How did they relate to the land? Are remnants of these groups still present?

Consider if there are elders in your congregation who can help you with this question, or others who have lived in the area for generations. Perhaps you have people within your group whose heritages represent the different eras of your local history. Your historical society may also be able to help you. One way to narrow this topic might be to research the history of the land your congregation's meeting place stands on.

- [Maps of United States Indians by State](#) This resource zooms in on each state, showing which tribes lived where, what other groups passed through and what federally recognized Indian tribes remain today.
- [Immigration Explorer](#) See where different nationalities settled across the United States.

You may enjoy exploring the field of [environmental history](#). This relatively recent area of study looks at human interactions with the natural world at particular times and places. Well-known environmental historians include William Cronon, Alfred Crosby, Carolyn Merchant and Donald Worster.

2. What natural resources or community resources do members within your congregation share? How can the relationships you already have with each other be an asset in caring for these natural resources?

If you are using an electronic map and have an Excel spreadsheet of your congregation's names and addresses, it is possible to make the addresses appear on a map layer. You could then highlight geographical relationships. Even if people know they live near each other, they may not have thought of themselves as potential carpool mates or co-stewards of a common creek.

Another way to approach this question is to ask what natural spaces people use, what civic groups they attend, what highways they frequent, etc. Give people who are part of, say, a local Audubon club or river alliance a chance to share about their group and invite others to attend.

Every Creature Singing, Leader's Guide

Session 12: A Spirituality That Sustains

Knowing Your Faith

Jump to Knowing Your Place

Choose Your Goals

Participants will...

- Come to know Christ in new ways through imagery from nature: a slain lamb and the root of a plant.
- See worship as a sustaining force supporting their attempts to care for creation.
- Be sustained by an active hope.
- Be eager to implement some of the worship ideas suggested, or to explore other resources.
- See the Gospel of Jesus Christ as extending to all creation.
- Hear creation singing along with human worship.
- Review and solidify key learnings from this curriculum.

Advance Preparation

This is either your last session or second last session, depending on what you planned to do with the 13th Sunday of the quarter.

If this is your second last session:

- **Give directions for next week:** Suggestion 1 in the Session 13 leader's guide invites people to bring an object that represents something they value from the quarter. If you want people to do that next week, remember to tell them. Also send a reminder email in a few days.
- **Review your Session 11 conversations:** If ideas for congregational actions surfaced last week, think about what needs to be done to keep the energy going before your group disbands next week. Do subgroups need to form? Do you need to involve the church leadership?
- **Review recent worship services** mentally or look at bulletins on your church website if they are archived there. Recognize the ways your congregation already acknowledges creation in its worship.

If this is your last session:

- **Consider closure exercises:** If you already used your extra week, look ahead to the closure exercises suggested in the Leader's Guide for Session 13 to see if you want to fit any of them in this week.
- **Keep creation care on people's minds:** Invite your class members to join Mennonite Creation Care Network. MCCN members get monthly emails containing resource suggestions, ideas from other congregations and news about events. Print out the sign-up sheet on page 1 of the Leader Resources and mail to the address offered. People can also use the Join Us page on the MCCN website
- **Join MCCN as a congregation:** Is your church a member of MCCN's Green Patchwork Congregations? Having worked through this curriculum qualifies you as being actively engaged in creation care. Now you just need to appoint a liaison. Perhaps someone in the class is willing to serve in this role. See Green Patchwork Congregations and [Become a Liaison](#).

Sample Lesson Plan

Selected Goals

Participants will...

- Come to know Christ in new ways through imagery from nature: a slain lamb and the root of a plant.
- See worship as a sustaining force supporting their attempts to care for creation.
- Be eager to implement some of the worship ideas suggested, or to explore other resources.

Sample Class Period

- Have the place leader begin with a focus on roots. Bring in some examples of roots and describe any "root" issues he or she noticed in your community. What does it mean to claim Christ as our root? How might this metaphor strengthen your congregation?
- Worship is a way that we root ourselves. Briefly review the points in the introduction to the essay about worship in general and then spend your time on Discussion Question 4. See the Household Practices on pages 12-7 to 8 in the Participant Guide. Which ideas might work in your context?
- Conclude with Place Question #3. Are there ways in which God is calling your congregation to root itself in your community with a sustained commitment?

More Ideas

1. **On what sustains hope:** Discussion questions 1 and 2 are a good place to start. Write comments down on a white board so that you can review them. You could learn a lot about each other this way. Be prepared for answers that don't fit where you expected to go. Also try to bring in worship as a potential source of hope and sustenance, if people

don't go there themselves. How can your worship speak to issues like climate change and habitat loss?

- 2. Ask hard questions:** Our text from Revelation 5 is set within the context of plagues, disasters, big nasty monsters and martyrdom. It is not just a lamb but a *slain* lamb that conquers. Hope comes too easily if we do not acknowledge the plagues and disasters of our own time. Can the victory of the lamb possibly make sense in the context of climate change, globalization, militarization and the other massive forces that seem to dictate our existence?

Remember this quote from Andrew Shepherd on page 1-3 of Session 1?

To walk in the steps of the suffering Savior will surely involve coming face to face with degradation and pollution...the polluted stream, the toxic waste dump, the rubbish-filled gully... Inevitably, these places of environmental destruction will often be the places where those less fortunate, those blessed by God, also reside. A characteristic mark, therefore, of Christian ecological living will be an acceptance of and experiencing of suffering and pain.¹

Do you agree that suffering along with creation and with the humans most affected by its devastation is a mark of Christian ecological living?

- 3. Jesus and creation:** Discussion question 3 is an important one and a good way to review the course as a whole. For example, you could repeat the seven-word Gospel exercise suggested in the Session 2 Leader's Guide, page 2-1 and note any changes that have occurred.
- 4. Listen to creatures singing:** Weather and location permitting, take your group outside and spend 10 minutes doing Spiritual Practice #2, either at the beginning or the end of class.
- 5. Begin or end with a song:** You could play the "Worthy is the Lamb" portion of Handel's Messiah as a way of introducing today's text. Or you could listen to creatures singing via the Anabaptist Bestiary group listed in the resources.
- 6. On Revelation:** This book of the Bible makes many people uncomfortable and is subject to misinterpretation. For guidance on how to read Revelation, see one of the following:

Kraybill, J. Nelson. *Apocalypse and Allegiance: Worship, Politics and Devotion in the Book of Revelation*. Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010.

Rossing, Barbara R. *The Rapture Exposed: The Message of Hope in the Book of Revelation*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2005.

¹ Andrew Shepherd, "Creation and Christology: The Ecological Crisis And Eschatological Ethics." *Stimulus* 18.4 (2010): 51-57.

Yeats, John R. Believers Church Bible Commentary: Revelation. Scottdale, PA: Herald Press, 2003.

Knowing Your Place

Jump to Knowing You Faith

Why the Questions Below Matter

“What can sustain our commitment to creation care?” this session asks. Your main task is to bring this larger question down into your own area of study. What can sustain your commitment to *this* valley, *this* river, *that* superfund site next door? The best preparation for discussion questions like that comes from talking to people on the street or in your congregation.

This session also explores the image of Christ as root. You can help make the root metaphor concrete by referring to local plants and soils.

Help with Place Questions

- 1. What soil types are common in your community? What kinds of plants grow best in these soil types? What “root” issues do you notice within your map area?**

Keep your eyes open for the absence or presence of actual roots in your community. For example, a dust cloud blowing off of a farm field indicates a lack of roots holding the soil down. Or maybe this is an occasion for noticing the amount of asphalt in your community. Maybe a tree with distinctive roots speaks to you and you want to share a photograph.

A local farming or gardening friend is your best resource for the soil question. These sites provide basic information on roots and soils if you want more background:

[Soil Types](#), Soil Science Society of America

[About Roots](#), Master Gardener Manual

- 2. What does it mean to be rooted in this community? What bonds people to this particular locale? How is a sense of place expressed? How has your relationship with God been shaped by this place?**

Ask natives who have lived within your area of study for a long time what keeps them there. Ask newcomers how they are going about putting down roots. Note prominent

landmarks, ecological features, community strengths, industries your region is known for.

3. What places within your area of study need a sustained commitment? How might Christ the Root provide that?

- Approach this question by reviewing what you've learned about your community from past sessions.
- Ask a co-worker or neighbor who is different from most of your classmates what places they think need help. Share their insights.