



## The St. Francis Care for Creation Award

Presented by the National Council of Catholic Women  
With support from the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

### OVERVIEW and APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

#### AN OVERVIEW OF THE ST. FRANCIS CARE FOR CREATION AWARD

Young people today worry about their future in a world where rain forests and oceans, clean water and air are threatened, and where rising temperatures create more damaging storms and longer droughts. They long to make a positive difference in their communities and in the world.

The Catholic Church has always been a voice of hope in trying times. The Church's social teaching sheds light on a situation like climate change through Scripture and Catholic social teaching. Catholic school students can be empowered to live their faith by acting to protect God's creation and advocate on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change

The National Council of Catholic Women has partnered with the Catholic Coalition on Climate to present the St. Francis Care for Creation Award to recognize schools that put their faith into action to reduce their carbon footprint, care for the "least of these," and raise the Catholic voice on behalf of the environment and the poor.

#### The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor

With the help of the National Religious Partnership for the Environment and the support of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change launched *The Catholic Climate Covenant: The St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor* in 2009.

The St. Francis Pledge is a promise and a commitment by Catholic individuals, families, parishes, organizations, and institutions to live our faith by protecting God's creation and advocating on behalf of people in poverty who face the harshest impacts of global climate change.

To receive the St. Francis Care for Creation Award, Catholic schools must demonstrate specific actions as they relate to these **five tenets of the St. Francis Pledge**.

- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God’s creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- **ASSESS** how all of us—as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations—contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.

## ABOUT THE AWARD SPONSORS



### The National Council of Catholic Women

The National Council of Catholic Women acts through its members to support, empower and educate all Catholic women in spirituality, leadership and service. NCCW programs respond with Gospel values to the needs of the Church and society in our modern world. NCCW is a leading voice for Catholic women, on Capitol Hill and in your own backyard. Through our Campaign for Human Dignity we defend the unborn and advocate for families, the poor, and the less fortunate. [www.nccw.org](http://www.nccw.org)



### The Catholic Coalition on Climate Change

Founded in 2006, the Catholic Coalition on Climate Change is a membership organization consisting of twelve national Catholic organizations, including the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and helps to more fully implement the U.S. bishops’ statement, *Global Climate Change: A Plea for Dialogue, Prudence and the Common Good*.

The Coalition has focused its work on providing a forum to explore the issues and faith implications of climate change through education, outreach and organizing in the Catholic community around the country. It connects Catholics by connecting with state and diocesan leaders who are promoting climate change activities and partners with other national Catholic organizations to assist them in connecting the issue of climate change within their institutions.

**Applications are reviewed on a rolling basis. For more information about the St. Francis Care for Creation Award, contact Catherine Jarboe at the National Council of Catholic Women, 703-224-0990 x106 or [cjarboe@nccw.org](mailto:cjarboe@nccw.org).**

## APPLICATION DIRECTIONS

To be awarded the St. Francis Care for Creation Award, schools must:

- 1) provide evidence that shows action across all grade levels, in all five of the topic areas (tenets) delineated in the Sr. Francis Pledge, and
- 2) make a commitment to further good works by signing the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor. Actions/ activities must take place between May of 2011 and May of 2012.

Winning schools will demonstrate at least one action or experience per topic area. Examples of actions/activities are listed below. However, we recognize the creativity of teachers and students. If there are alternate activities, lessons, or experiences that your school wishes to present as evidence of action within a topic area, we welcome those ideas. Different grade levels may choose different activities in each topic area, provided that the school, as a whole, has demonstrated at least one activity in each one of the topic areas.

### The Five Tenets of the ST. Francis Pledge

#### **1) PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's creation and protect the poor and vulnerable

Schools may show action by completing **AT LEAST one** of the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Hold a school-wide liturgy to pray for God's creation and protection of the poor and vulnerable.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Study the scriptures and reflect in a special way on the gift of God's creation and our spiritual response to it.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Participate in prayerful activities, such as the Feast of St. Francis or Blessing of the Animals Day, that encourage reflection on God's creation.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Our school chose another experience or activity. *Please describe how this activity elicited a prayerful response to God's gift of creation.*

#### **2) LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.

Schools may show action by completing **AT LEAST two** of the following:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Include criteria within the Science core curriculum and/or Science lessons for each grade related to climate change.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Include criteria within the Religion core curriculum and/or Religion lesson plans for each grade, that provide instruction on Catholic social teaching (i.e. that creation is a gift from God, recognition of our responsibility to care for the gift of creation).

\_\_\_\_\_ Participate in celebrations of the environment such as Earth Day Celebration or other related activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participate in lessons that teach care for creation, climate change, and our moral responsibility to those most affected by climate change (the poor).

\_\_\_\_\_ Our school chose another experience/activity. *Please describe how this activity was educational in nature and how it taught both the science of climate change and the Catholic teaching on stewardship and the environment.*

**3) ASSESS** *how we, as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations-contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.*

Schools may show action by completing **AT LEAST one** of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Participate in a school energy audit and make some of the changes recommended (i.e. lights, windows, etc.).

\_\_\_\_\_ Students complete self/family evaluations on energy use and reflect, then share ideas about positive changes that can be made.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our school chose another experience/activity. *Please describe how this activity assessed energy use, conservation and lowering the carbon footprint of the school or students.*

**4) ACT** *to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.*

Schools may show action by completing **AT LEAST one** of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Reduce waste – create programs or policies that reduce student/faculty classroom waste - i.e. conservation of energy, reuse of paper products, recycling or eliminating bottled water, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Create a garden or restore habitats on the school grounds.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourage care/concern for wildlife – i.e. make and place bird feeders, switch to natural fertilizers, create a butterfly garden, etc.

\_\_\_\_\_ Begin a school-wide recycling program or expand an existing one.

\_\_\_\_\_ Participate in National Walk to School Day or National Bike to School Day.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our school chose another experience/activity. *Please describe specific actions your school took that reduced energy use, promoted conservation and reduced the carbon footprint of your school.*

**5) ADVOCATE** *for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable.*

Schools may show action by completing **AT LEAST one** of the following:

\_\_\_\_\_ Collect excess supplies and/or belongings and give to those who have none/few, or provide to the poor (locally or abroad)

\_\_\_\_\_ Write letters to/visit local city council representatives to encourage their engagement in more environmentally sensitive uses of public land and public resources, and community services that also take into consideration the poor/vulnerable communities in your area.

\_\_\_\_\_ Visit the state capital and share your concern for God's creation with your state representatives.

\_\_\_\_\_ Encourage a neighboring school to take the St. Francis Pledge to Care for Creation and the Poor.

\_\_\_\_\_ Hold a competition between grades to see how many students can get their families to sign the St. Francis Pledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ Our school chose another experience/activity. Please describe specific actions that would be considered advocacy on behalf of those without a voice to expand the awareness of Catholic teaching on the environment through the St. Francis Pledge.)

**In addition, all St. Francis Care for God's Creation Award applicants must ensure that:**

- 1) All students sign (or each classroom or grade may sign together) the St. Francis pledge or the St. Francis Pledge for Kids, which continues good works. The St. Francis Pledge may be found below and online at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge/>. The St. Francis Pledge for Kids can be found below – it is not yet online.
- 2) All faculty and administrators, or the School as an "organization," must sign the St. Francis Pledge (below), which continues good works. The St. Francis Pledge may be found below and online at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge/>.

**The St. Francis Pledge**

**I/We Pledge to:**

- **PRAY** and reflect on the duty to care for God's Creation and protect the poor and vulnerable.
- **LEARN** about and educate others on the causes and moral dimensions of climate change.
- **ASSESS** how we, as individuals and in our families, parishes and other affiliations- contribute to climate change by our own energy use, consumption, waste, etc.
- **ACT** to change our choices and behaviors to reduce the ways we contribute to climate change.
- **ADVOCATE** for Catholic principles and priorities in climate change discussions and decisions, especially as they impact those who are poor and vulnerable

### The St. Francis Pledge for Kids

#### **I/We Pledge to:**

- **PRAY** and think about my responsibility to care for God's Creation and protect people who are poor or needy.
- **LEARN** about climate change and pollution - especially air pollution - and how it affects God's Earth and His Creation.
- **THINK ABOUT** how my actions can sometimes hurt God's Earth and His Creation – especially the ways in which I may be ungrateful or wasteful with the special gifts he has given all of us.
- **ACT** to change my behaviors so that I can be more mindful of the Earth and not pollute God's creation.
- **BE AN EXAMPLE** to others by my words and actions, as Jesus asks me to do. Talk to others about how I care for God's Creation and people who are poor, and ask them to help me.



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### APPLICATION

#### Part 1 – School information

Official School Name \_\_\_\_\_ Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Name and phone number of person submitting application: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address and Telephone \_\_\_\_\_

Website address \_\_\_\_\_

**I have reviewed the information in this application and certify that it is accurate, to the best of my knowledge.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Principal's signature)*

#### Part 2 - Narrative

1. For **each** of the five tenets of the St. Francis Pledge (*PRAY, LEARN, ASSESS, ACT, ADVOCATE*), please provide a 1) short narrative (approx. 200 words or less) explaining the action(s), activities, or experiences accomplished by the school, as outlined in the *Application Process* section above. To strengthen your application, attach photos, student work, newspaper articles, or other materials. To assist the review committee, please be as detailed as possible.

PRAY

LEARN

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ASSESS

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ACT

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## ADVOCATE



### **Part 3 – St. Francis Pledge**

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As explained in the *Application Directions* above, all students must sign (or each classroom or grade may sign together) the St. Francis Pledge or the St. Francis Pledge for Kids, which encourages continued good works. In addition, the school as an “organization” or each faculty member and administrator individually, must sign the St. Francis Pledge. The St. Francis Pledge can be found online at <http://catholicclimatecovenant.org/the-st-francis-pledge/> and in the *Application Process* section of these award materials. The St. Francis Pledge for Kids can be found only in the *Application Process* section of these award materials.

**I certify that our school has made a commitment to continued good works through our signing of the St. Francis Pledge, by students, faculty, and administrators.**

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*(Signature of Principal)*

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***Please send this application and all supporting materials to:***

***The National Council of Catholic Women  
ATTN: Catherine Jarboe- St. Francis Care for Creation Award  
200 North Glebe Road, Suite 725  
Arlington, VA 22203***

***\*\*Applications may be submitted electronically. For an electronic copy of this application, please email Catherine Jarboe at [cjarboe@nccw.org](mailto:cjarboe@nccw.org)\*\****