

## Faith to Forest Book Discussion Guide

***The Future We Choose: The Stubborn Optimist's Guide to the Climate Crisis***  
(softcover published 2021)

***The Future We Choose: Surviving the Climate Crisis***  
(hardcover published 2020)

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Note that the hardcover and softcover editions are substantively the same.

### **Guiding Thoughts**

Groups and group leaders need flexibility and options. This framework is a starting place.

1. Consider what types of book discussions you want:
  - Group size
    - 12-15 people allows for more discussion among group members
    - a larger group listen to a presentation by the group leaders and submit questions/comments for discussion.
  - Time commitment
    - Most people are comfortable with a 60-90 minutes meeting and prefer to know the time frame ahead of time.
    - A one-time session might focus on specific parts of the book, e.g., the mind set section and the chapter on trees.
    - A series of two or more sessions could allow for a fuller exploration of the book.
  - Pandemic constraints as of January-February
    - Some people may prefer a Zoom discussion, which is not difficult to arrange and should probably be limited to 60 minutes.
    - Others may prefer meeting in person, following whatever community guidelines are in place at the time.
  - Larger congregations or groups of congregations may want to offer more than one discussion group, perhaps to reflect the different styles mentioned above.
2. Choose your date/s. Perhaps there are standing meetings to avoid or a time of the week that is customary for such events. Faith to Forest suggests having discussions in February, or possibly January, so they're completed before Christians begin observing Lent on March 2.
3. Decide how participants will obtain the book and sign up for their groups.
4. Consider whether you want to team up with another congregation. This could be a good option for smaller faith communities or those wishing to build more neighborhood, denominational, or interfaith ties. For example, neighborhood churches St. Matthew's Episcopal and Westminster Presbyterian are planning to offer a joint discussion group. Consider whether to offer groups for youth or explicitly invite them to be part of discussion groups.
5. Identify group leaders. Each group leader/group should determine what it wants to focus on, including what discussion questions to use, which chapters will be discussed, etc. Faith communities may wish to consider blending into the discussion what their denominations say about trees, creation care, environmental justice, and climate change.
6. We're honored that Lincoln City Libraries Director Pat Leach and State Climatologist Dr. Martha Shulski will be leading a review/discussion of the book during a Zoom session on Thursday, February 3, 7-8 pm. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86330944924?>

[pwd=TIInRnYrUkF6bGx3dmdKSIRDbU0xdz09](#) Consider how this session might intersect with your plans, perhaps as a kickoff or wrap up to your discussions.

7. For more basic education on faith and trees, trees, climate change science, or how to be effective advocates, please refer to the Faith to Forest webpages hosted at <https://www.firstplymouth.org/catforest> Videos of the January presentations will be posted within days of each presentation.

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## **Ideas for Discussion Sessions**

### 1. Opening

- Faith groups: Gather in quiet or group prayer.
- Introduce group members to each other if group size permits. Get acquainted questions could include “What motivated you to participate?” or “What are your key interests in trees and/or climate change?” or “Describe a moment when you were in awe of the natural world.”
- Set guidelines for participation: Group leaders may want to state these in the beginning and then be prepared to restate as needed during the meetings.
  - Stay on topic because time is limited.
  - Balance time so everyone has the opportunity to share.
  - Expect differing viewpoints and listen with open minds and hearts. Listening is an act of respect. You may learn something new and it’s how to keep civil conversations going.

### 2. Discussion: Questions and prompts

- What Vision of the Future from the chapter “The World We Must Create” resonated most with you? Why?
- The authors outline Three Mindsets they think are required of us – Stubborn Optimism, Endless Abundance, and Radical Regeneration.
  1. Can you describe the core of each of these mindsets in a few words that are meaningful to you?
  2. Which is/are the most challenging for you? Why? What first steps might you take to transform that mindset to be more constructive?
  3. What additional mindsets do you think are important to develop that are not included here?
- The last section of the book is about Ten Actions to take.
  1. Which actions are you already doing? What lessons can you share?
  2. What actions related to trees might you take?
  3. Which actions do you find challenging?
  4. Which actions will you try to add to your life?
  5. Which actions could your faith community or other group take?
- More questions:
  1. What are your takeaways from reading this book?
  2. What facts or ideas are new to you? Which ideas make sense to you? Which ideas do you question or doubt?
  3. In what ways does this book’s information connect to your life? Consider past events, current routines, and future purpose.
  4. In what ways does this book relate to efforts to reforest Lincoln and mitigate climate change? In what ways does it relate to world-wide initiatives to reforest the earth and mitigate climate change?
  5. Note the difference in the subtitles between the hardcover and softcover editions of the book. Why do you think the authors changed the subtitle? Which do you prefer and why?
  6. What other sources (books, news, articles, talks) have helped build your own personal body of information about trees and/or climate change?

7. Who are the friends or family members that you could talk to about this book, or who might be interested in reading it themselves?

**3. End with gratitude for participation and showing love to our earthly home.**