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Rooted & Rising Book Study

A book study supplemented by author presentations exploring [Rooted & Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis](#).

Facilitator's Guide

In the summer of 2020, The BTS Center convened a cohort of our community members to read and discuss *Rooted & Rising: Voices of Courage in a Time of Climate Crisis*. We explored the seven sections of the book together over the course of seven sessions, with each session including a presentation by a contributing author, small group conversation, and an invitation into spiritual practice.

The aim of this guide is to help you create a community of learning, such that the content of *Rooted & Rising* might be enriched through weekly presentations by authors, small group conversations, and invitations to spiritual practice.

We will provide you with a suggested outline for leading your book study group. Based on the size of your group and your own learning goals and objectives, adjust accordingly.

The video portions for each section are approximately 25 minutes long. Depending on the size of your group, you can anticipate 30 to 45 minutes of discussion time. Each session can therefore take 60 to 75 minutes to complete with your group.

Outline

Section One: Rooting in Interfaith Friendship

Section I Introduction

- Chapter 1: Living in the Four Worlds: Spiritual Practices in the Midst of Climate Disruption by Rabbi Mordechai Liebling
- Chapter 2: Connecting Faith, Environmental Justice, and Sustainability: An Islamic Reflection by Huda Alkaff
- Chapter 3: Building the Eco-Ethical Ark in the Age of Climate Disruption by Rev. Dr. Leah D. Schade
- Chapter 4: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Introduce yourselves and share** one favorite quote or idea from Section I
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Rev. Dr. Leah Schade (15 min 39 sec)
 - a. Leah is [Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship at Lexington Theological Seminary](#) in Kentucky. An ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America since 2000, Leah has served congregations in rural, urban, and suburban settings. Her books include: [Creation-Crisis Preaching](#) and [Preaching in the Purple Zone](#). Key to her work is a research questionnaire she designed entitled "Preaching About Controversial Justice Issues" which gathered responses from 1200 mainline Protestant preachers. Visit [The Purple Zone](#) to learn more.
3. **Discuss the questions on page 23, starting with #2.** Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed. Your groups may move through the content quickly and have a chance to talk about all the discussion questions or your group may linger on a topic of your choice. Either way is totally fine. Please let these small group conversations be whatever you need today.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (9 min 11 sec)
 - a. The spiritual practice videos are all led by Aram Mitchell, Director of Partnerships and Formation at The BTS Center.
 - b. About Aram: Aram Mitchell is a Registered Maine Guide and Wilderness First Responder with a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies from Chicago Theological Seminary. He lives on a little plot of land in Maine with his spouse, two dogs, a cat, and several chickens. Aram moved to Maine in 2015 to serve as the Executive Director of Renewal in the Wilderness, where he worked for five years planning and facilitating programs designed to help sustain the vocations of care providers, justice workers, and faith leaders. Through his work for Renewal in the Wilderness, Aram connected with The BTS Center in 2016 and has collaborated on a variety of programs since then. In 2021 Aram joined The BTS Center team as the Director of Partnerships and Formation.
6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.
7. **Assignment for next meeting will be Section Two: Rising in Social Activism**

Section Two: Rising in Local Activism

Section II Introduction

- Chapter 5: Praised Be the Flood by Rev. Fred Small

- Chapter 6: The Ground Beneath Our Feet by Rabbi Shoshana Meira Friedman
- Chapter 7: The End of Hope and the Beginning of Miracle by Jay O'Hara
- Chapter 8: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section II
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Jay O'Hara (15 min 54 sec)
 - a. Jay O'Hara is a Quaker and has spent most of his life on Cape Cod. Born to two public school teachers, he studied politics at Earlham College, with a faith that participation in the political system would bring about needed change. While working in Washington DC, Jay had his moment of climate awakening. Having seen how the political system worked, he realized that change-politics-as-usual are not up to the task of addressing this problem. Searching for an authentic response to the climate crisis and inspired by Wendell Berry, he moved back to his home town of Bourne to ground himself in community and engage in grassroots climate action. Learn more about Jay at [Climate Disobedience Center](#).
3. **Discuss the questions on page 49**, starting with #1. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (7 min 31 sec)
6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.
7. **Assignment for next meeting will be Section III: Rooting Science and Policy in Faith and Spirituality.**

Section Three: Rooting Science and Policy and Spirituality

Section III Introduction

- Chapter 9: The Imperative of Hope by Dr. Katharine Hayhoe
- Chapter 10: The View from My Window by Natasha DeJarnett, PhD, MPH
- Chapter 11: The Thing with Feathers by Corina Newsome
- Chapter 12: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section III
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Dr. Natasha DeJarnett (17 min 52 sec)
 - a. Dr. Natasha DeJarnett (she/her) is an assistant professor in the Christina Lee Brown Environment Institute at the University of Louisville, Division of Environmental Medicine, where she researches the health impacts of extreme

heat exposure and environmental health disparities. In addition, she is a professorial lecturer in Environmental and Occupational Health at the George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health. She is also a board member at The BTS Center. [Learn more about Dr. DeJarnett.](#)

3. **Discuss the questions on page 75**, starting with #3. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (9 min 22 sec)
6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.
7. **Assignment for next meeting will be Section IV Rising from the Margins**

Section IV Rising from the Margins

Section IV Introduction

- Chapter 13: Not Our First Rodeo: Memory and Imagination Stir Up Hope by Peterson Toscano
- Chapter 14: Confronting Climate Change: Wisdom from a Civil Rights Activist by Rev. Dr. Gerald L. Durley
- Chapter 15: Interview with Rev. Lennox Yearwood Jr. with Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
- Chapter 16: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section IV
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Peterson Toscano (16:06)
 - a. Peterson Toscano is the host of [Citizens Climate Radio](#). After spending 17 years and over \$30,000 on three continents attempting to "de-gay" himself through conversion therapy, Peterson Toscano came out a quirky queer Quaker concerned with human rights. He asks himself and his audiences unusual questions: Who are the gender outlaws in the Bible? What is a queer response to climate change? What is the role of comedy when addressing trauma? His film, [Transfigurations—Transgressing Gender in the Bible](#) explores the stories of gender non-conforming Bible characters; his Bible scholarship has been featured in *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible in America*.
3. **Discuss the questions on page 103**, starting with #1. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (6 min 55 sec)
6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.

7. Assignment for next meeting will be Section V: Rooting in Liturgy, Moral Vision, and Vocation

Section Five: Rooting in Liturgy, Moral Vision, and Vocation

Section V Introduction

- Chapter 17: The World as Sacrament by Rev. Dr. John Chryssavgis
- Chapter 18: A Letter by Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda, PhD
- Chapter 19: Fighting Climate Change: Our Responsibility, Our Vocation, Our Salvation by Rev. Dr. Jim Antal
- Chapter 20: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section V
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Rev. Dr. Jim Antal (16 min 49 sec)
3. **Discuss the questions on page 129**, starting with #1. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (10 min 7 sec)
6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.
7. **Assignment for next meeting will be Section VI: Uprooted, Replanted, and Rising**

Section Six: Uprooted, Replanted, and Rising

Section VI Introduction

- Chapter 21: The People around Me: Reflections from a Post-Christian Anarchist by Kiran Oommen
- Chapter 22: Interview with Dr. Tink Tinker (wazhazhe/Osage Nation), PhD with Leah D. Schade
- Chapter 23: Working Up Hope by Tim DeChristopher
- Chapter 24: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice

Invite participants to read all three chapters prior to meeting.

1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section VI
2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Kiran Oommen (17 min 46 sec)
3. **Discuss the questions on page 153**, starting with #3. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (7 min 39 sec)

6. **After watching the Spiritual Practice video together, invite participants to share one idea** or intention that they will be carrying with them between now and when you next meet.
7. **Assignment for next meeting will be Section VII: Grief, Love, and Trees**

Section Seven: Grief, Love, and Trees

Section VII Introduction

- Chapter 25: Contemplating Creation: Wisdom from a Sequoia by Christina Leño
 - Chapter 26: Living with Environmental Despair by Roger S. Gottlieb
 - Chapter 27: Love Every Leaf by Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas
 - Chapter 28: Questions to Ponder and a Spiritual Practice
1. **Welcome everyone. Take turns sharing** one favorite quote or idea from Section VII
 2. **Share presenter's bio and watch video** featuring Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas (17 min 31 sec)
 3. **Discuss the questions on page 179**, starting with #1. Three to four people in a discussion group is ideal, breakout into discussion groups as needed.
 4. **Upon returning to the main group ask:** What was something from your small group conversation that you're leaving feeling blessed by today?
 5. **Spiritual Practice Video** (10 min 49 sec)
 6. **Book Study final reflection:** Invite participants to spend 5-10 minutes writing about the take-aways they have from studying *Rooted & Rising*.
 7. **Next Steps:** After spending time reflecting on climate change, its causes, and its impacts, participants often want and need something practical to do. You can conduct a discussion about the next meaningful, significant, and achievable steps individuals or the group can take. Potential next steps could include:
 - Further study. A couple other books to consider:
 - [*All We Can Save*](#), a collection of essays, poems, and artwork amplifying feminist voices that help grapple with the existential threats of climate devastation. It highlights a host of women at the forefront of the climate movement who are harnessing truth, courage, and solutions to lead humanity forward. It is candid, insistent, inspiring, and rooted in the conviction that everyone has a part to play.
 - [*Words for a Dying World: Stories of Grief and Courage from the Global Church*](#). How do we talk about climate grief in the church? And when we have found the words, what do we do with that grief? There is a sudden and dramatic rise in people experiencing a profound sense of anxiety in the face of our dying planet, and a consequent need for churches to be better resourced pastorally and theologically to deal with this threat. *Words for a Dying World* brings together voices from across the world - from the Pacific islands to the pipelines of Canada, from farming communities in Namibia to activism in the UK.

- Learn about [Climate Resilience Hubs](#) and how your own faith community or other community group can address the local impacts of climate change and extreme weather events.
- Plant Trees: “[The Nature Conservancy's Plant a Billion Trees campaign](#) is a major forest restoration effort with a goal of planting a billion trees across the planet. Trees provide so many benefits to our everyday lives. They filter clean air, provide fresh drinking water, help curb climate change, and create homes for thousands of species of plants and animals. Planting a Billion Trees can help save the Earth from deforestation. It’s a big number, but we know we can do it with your help.”

NOTE to facilitators: We would love to get feedback from the participants and from you as workshop facilitator. Please fill out the facilitator feedback form, and share the participant feedback form with all of the participants.

- Participant Feedback Form: [Form Assembly link TBD]
- Facilitator Feedback Form: [Form Assembly link TBD]

Additional resources

In the summer of 2021 at the General Synod of the United Church of Christ The BTS Center hosted a live conversation, circling back to reconnect with Rev. Dr. Leah Schade, Rev. Dr. Margaret Bullitt-Jonas, Dr. Natasha DeJarnett and Rev. Dr. Jim Antal. We continued our ongoing exploration of how best to live and lead in a climate-changed world. You can [watch that full conversation here](#).

A 2020 article by Rev. Dr. Leah Schade in Patheos, titled “#CloudOfClergy: The Many Ways Faith Leaders Show Up for Justice.”

<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2020/07/cloudofclergy-many-ways-faith-leaders-show-up-for-justice/>