



***Climate Changed* Podcast Discussion Guide
Season 3, Episode 2**

Guests: Joelle Novey, Jessica Jacobs

Title: Jewish Perspectives on Climate Change

Welcoming Activity

In this episode, Joelle Novey and Jessica Jacobs explore the intersection of faith, climate action, and storytelling through a Jewish lens. To begin, reflect on a personal value or belief that motivates you to care for the planet. Write it down and consider how it connects to your faith, community, or cultural background. Share with the group how this belief influences the actions you take in response to climate change.

Introduction to Episode

In this episode, Nicole Diroff and Dr. Keisha McKenzie are joined by Joelle Novey, director of Interfaith Power & Light (DC, MD, and Northern VA), and poet Jessica Jacobs. Joelle shares how her Jewish faith informs her climate work and draws on ancient wisdom to offer practical and moral guidance for engaging with the climate crisis. Jessica Jacobs provides a powerful grounding moment, reading from her poetry collection *Unalone*, which reflects on biblical stories and their relevance to our modern environmental challenges.

First Listening Section: Jessica Jacobs' Poetry and Reflections on Faith and the Environment

Start and End Time: 6:57 – 11:51

Summary:

Jessica Jacobs shares her poem "Collective Nouns" from her poetry collection *Unalone*. This piece explores the theme of "climate apartheid," where the wealthy save themselves while the poor suffer, drawing a parallel to the biblical story of Noah's Ark. Jacobs reflects on how Noah builds the ark — too small for many, including his loved ones — and how his actions symbolize the exclusion and suffering of others during environmental catastrophes. The poem challenges us to rethink how we respond to the climate crisis, proposing that instead of narrowly focusing

on saving a select few, we should be striving to create a "peaceful fleet" that recognizes and welcomes all.

Discussion Questions:

1. Jessica Jacobs critiques the exclusivity in Noah's Ark story. How does this apply to today's environmental crises? What parallels do you see between "climate apartheid" and modern societal responses to climate change?
2. Jacobs suggests building a "peaceful fleet" that welcomes all. What would this look like in your community or in global climate efforts? How can we shift from exclusionary thinking to inclusive climate responses?
3. How can poetry and the arts help us better engage with difficult topics like climate change and environmental justice? Have you encountered any art forms that have shifted your thinking or inspired action?

Second Listening Section: Small Boat Theology and Collective Action

Start and End Time: 23:24 – 33:19

Summary:

Joelle Novey introduces the concept of "small boat theology," referencing Noah's Ark as a symbol of exclusion, where only a few are saved while others are left behind. She challenges this mindset by asking, "What if we saved everyone? What if we saved everything we can?" Joelle emphasizes the need for a more inclusive approach to climate action — one that seeks to protect all life and addresses the systemic causes of environmental destruction. This discussion invites listeners to think about the broader impacts of their actions and to strive for collective solutions that protect both human and non-human life.

Discussion Questions:

1. Joelle Novey's "small boat theology" concept critiques the idea of saving a select few while leaving others behind. How does this mindset show up in today's climate actions or policies? What changes can we make to be more inclusive in our approach?
2. Joelle asks, "What if we saved everything we can?" How does this question inspire you? What would it look like to save as much of the natural world as possible in your personal life, community, or faith group?
3. The conversation touches on the importance of collective action. How can we build movements that address climate change and foster solidarity across different communities, especially those disproportionately affected by environmental disasters?

Additional Discussion Questions

1. **Faith and Climate Action:** Joelle Novey draws upon Jewish teachings to inspire her climate activism. She emphasizes the concept of "pikuach nefesh" (the obligation to save a life) as a driving force behind her work. How does your faith or values system influence your views on climate work? Are there teachings, stories, or rituals from your faith that help you engage with the climate crisis in a grounded way?
2. **Community and Collective Action:** Joelle speaks about the importance of community organizing, particularly through her work with Interfaith Power & Light. What is the role of community in addressing the climate crisis? How can you or your faith community engage more deeply in collective climate action?
3. **Rethinking Our Relationship to the Earth:** Joelle challenges the idea that we can treat the Earth as separate from ourselves, emphasizing the Jewish belief in the sacredness of all creation. How might this understanding change the way we live and act? In what ways can we begin to restore our relationship with the natural world and move away from harmful, extractive behaviors?

Closing Activity

In the episode, Joelle invites listeners to initiate climate conversations within their own communities. Spend some time thinking about one community or group you are part of where you could begin a conversation about climate change. Write down a few questions or topics that you could bring up to spark engagement. Share these with the group and brainstorm ways to begin these important discussions.