



Climate Changed Podcast Discussion Guide
Season 3, Episode 6

Guests: Elizabeth Rush and Sophia Cheng

Title: Parenting in a Climate-Changed World

Welcoming Activity

Think back to a moment when you faced a difficult decision about the future — whether it was about your career, family, or another significant life choice. What emotions did you experience? What helped you navigate uncertainty?

Now, consider how climate change adds a new layer of complexity to decisions about the future, particularly for parents and caregivers. Share your reflections with the group.

Introduction to Episode

In this episode, hosts **Nicole Diroff** and **Ben Yosua-Davis** explore the intersection of parenting and climate change with two special guests: **Elizabeth Rush**, award-winning author of *The Quickening*, and **Sophia Cheng**, a climate educator, and new parent. Together, they discuss the emotional, intellectual, and ethical questions surrounding parenthood in a climate-changed world, the challenges of raising children with climate uncertainty, and the role of love and community in shaping a hopeful future.

Discussion Topics

1. Love as a Response to Climate Change

Summary:

Elizabeth Rush shares a story about a single mother who struggled with the decision to have a child in a climate-changed world. After experiencing wildfires, extreme heat, and parenting uncertainties, she concluded that her responsibility was to “love even stronger” in the face of uncertainty.

Discussion Questions:

- How do you relate to climate change requiring us to love more fiercely?
- How can love and connection help us navigate uncertainty about the future?
- In what ways does your faith or worldview shape your response to climate challenges?

Listen and Reflect Activity:

- **Start Time:** 15:00
- **End Time:** 18:57

After listening to this segment, reflect on the following:

- What stands out to you about Elizabeth's story?
- How does climate change shape your personal decisions, whether about parenting or other aspects of life?

2. The Role of Community in a Climate-Changed World

Summary:

Sophia Cheng and Elizabeth Rush emphasize that raising children—and responding to climate change—cannot be done alone. Both guests reflect on the importance of **mutual support, shared responsibility, and intergenerational learning** as essential elements of resilience.

Discussion Questions:

- What role does community play in helping you feel less alone in facing climate challenges?
- How might faith communities, neighborhood groups, or other social circles better support parents and caregivers during times of crisis?
- How can we create spaces where difficult conversations about climate and parenting feel welcome?

Activity:

Take five minutes to brainstorm practical ways your community could support parents and caregivers in adapting to climate challenges. Share your ideas with the group.

3. Imagining a Hopeful Future

Summary:

Sophia Cheng discusses the practice of "**future dreaming**" — a way of envisioning a world that has successfully addressed climate change. By imagining a **beautiful, abundant, and sustainable future**, we can shift from fear to empowerment.

Discussion Questions:

- What would it look like if you could design an ideal future for children growing up today?
- What personal or collective actions could help bring that vision to life?
- How can storytelling and imagination help shift our perspective on climate change from despair to possibility?

Creative Exercise:

Using words, sketches, or symbols, create a vision board of a thriving, climate-resilient future. Share your vision with the group.

Next Steps: Engage and Take Action

- **Future Dreaming Exercise:** Spend time journaling or discussing with a friend what a thriving, sustainable world could look like in 10, 50, or even 100 years. What changes would make this vision possible?
- **Join or Start a Climate Parenting Group:** Look for **climate cafés for parents** or start a group to process emotions and strategize for action.
- **Read and Reflect:** Explore books like *The Quickening* by Elizabeth Rush or *Generation Dread* by Dr. Britt Wray to deepen your understanding of climate emotions.
- **Connect with Nature:** Spend time outdoors with a child or loved one. Engage in a mindful practice like nature journaling or storytelling about the land.
- **Build an Emergency Kit:** Create a **72-hour climate emergency kit** with your family. Include essentials, but also comforting items like favorite snacks or books to help ease anxiety.
- **Share Your Thoughts:** What does climate-aware parenting look like to you? Post about it on **social media** using #ClimateChangedPodcast.

Closing Reflection

“How do we keep choosing to care within a context of the unknown?”

Take a moment to reflect on this question. In what ways does choosing to care—whether for children, for community, or for the planet—shape your own sense of purpose?

Share your reflections with a partner or journal about them before wrapping up the discussion.

This guide is designed to spark meaningful conversation and inspire action. Thank you for engaging with this important topic!