

# PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 1

## EARTH CHARTER

School Sisters of Notre Dame • SHALOM North America

### **Guide 1    Call to Transformation and the Earth Charter    April 2004**

As the cover letter that accompanied the Study Guide reminded us, “The purpose of this process is to assist the Congregation to respond with renewed action ... in our time.” Over the next two years you will receive a series of six study guides to lead you through this process. Below is a suggested outline for a two part process to begin our study of the Earth Charter.

You will need:

- copies of the Study Guide and the Earth Charter for each participant
- at least one copy of You Are Sent
- some items for a central table such as a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible,
- pen and paper for each participant
- a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music

#### SESSION I

1. Set a centerpiece for your group with some of the items mentioned above.
2. Invite participants to quietly read the first section, “Making Connections,” and reflect on the questions that follow in the middle of the second column of page 1.
3. Ask each person in turn to share answers to the first question, “what word or phrase...”
4. Invite anyone to share a response to the second or third question. Allow some time for discussion. (This is not the time to move into action, rather to begin thinking of some possibilities.)
5. The leader reads the introductory paragraph of the next section, “Acknowledging a Critical Moment” and then invites the participants to each read one section of “The Moment Is Critical Because as a litany to which all respond after each section, “Open our ears to the cries of our world.”
6. Ask participants to share their reactions to the questions at the bottom of the first column on p.2.
7. As quiet music is played in the background, ask the group to read “Imaging Another World,” and to take some time to write their responses to the questions. Encourage them to also read the entire Preamble to the Earth Charter at this time.
8. After a generous time for reflection, invite participants to share their responses.
9. Ask all to save these response for the second session.

## SESSION II

1. Set the same centerpiece for your group as you had in Session I.
  2. Ask participants to think about and share any “cries of the world” they have heard since you last met. Invite participants to look over what they wrote last time and read anything they would like to share with the group.
  3. Allow time for the group to read, “Acting with Prophetic Courage” on page 3 to reflect on the questions at the bottom of the first column on that page. Play instrumental music quietly.
  4. Brainstorm a list of the ways we have updated our foundress’s “prophetic courage and folly” for our time. In other words, how have we updated Theresa’s vision - both her courage and her daring. Where do you see our “creative vision of the future” being lived out?
  5. Quietly read through the section, “You are Sent & General Chapter Calls” on pages 3 and 4.
  6. Share what memories come to mind as you trace the history of the calls of the last four General Chapters? How have you been changed by our growing awareness of our world?
  7. Take time to reflect on and write answers to the questions in the middle of column two of page 4 - “What practical steps/decisions . . .”
  8. Invite participants to share one commitment to this process that they will make from now until the next Study Guide is available.\* If the group is struggling with this, offer a few suggestions:
    1. Read and pray with the Preamble to the Earth Charter
    2. Explore some of the web sites listed under “Learn More” and share what you learned with someone who does not have access to web sites
    3. Write to Cathy Arata - the author of this Study Guide - and tell her what challenged you? Aratac@pcn.net or use the Generalate address in the directory.
- Prepared by S. Eileen Reilly, (WI)

## PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 2

# EARTH CHARTER

School Sisters of Notre Dame • SHALOM North America

### Guide 2

### The Scope of the Earth Charter

July 2004

You will need:

- \* copies of the study guide, The Scope of the Earth Charter, for each participant
- \* copies of the Earth Charter and the Call to Transformation for each participant
- \* a central table with the following: a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible, YAS
- \* a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music
- \* pen and paper for each participant

#### Session I

1. Begin by playing some instrumental music and inviting the participants to reflect on the images of Earth and of the World Trade Center, on page 1. Ask them to jot down their responses to the questions below the images.
2. After several minutes, invite participants to share what they have written. (If you group is large, you might invite people to form smaller groups of 3 or 4 for the sharing.)
3. As you begin to look at “The Scope of the Earth Charter” ask participants to open their copy of the Earth Charter and actually identify the Preamble, the four sections, the 16 principles and “The Way Forward.”
4. Read the material on page 1, either silently, or with participants taking paragraphs in turn. Pause to allow for discussion of the questions toward the end of page 1.
5. At the top of page 2, the quote from John Paul II and the questions following it, refer to “ecological conversion.” Ask participants to recall and share their “ecological conversions.”  
How are we “reverencing all creation,” as call for in The Call to Transformation.
6. Under “Section I” on page 2, call attention to the fact that:
  - A. Principle 1. “Respect Earth...” is spelled out in great detail in II. “Ecological Integrity”
  - B. Principle II “Care for the ...” is spelled out in great detail in III. “Social and Ec. Justice.”
  - C. Principle III “Build Dem....” is spelled out in great detail in IV. “Democracy . . .”
  - D. Principle IV “Secure Earth’s...” is spelled out in great detail in “The Way Forward.”In other words, Section I, is a summary of the rest of the document.

(continued on backside)

7. Recalling the “ecological conversions” discussed in #5 above, invite participants to now share their “ecological sins.” How else might they need to be “converted?” Or, to put it positively, use the first questions, “how might you join God’s work to repair some of creation’s wounds.”

8. Close by singing “How Great Thou Art,” sharing a time when each person has felt “awesome wonder,” and finally, sing “How Great Thou Art, one more time.

## Session II

(Before the session begins, the facilitator either plans to meet in setting where objects in nature are easily visible or gathers some plants, flowers, pets so that the exercise at the top of page 3, referring to “Annie Dillard and Ellery” is possible.)

1. Begin with a brief prayer: sing “How Great Thou Art,” invite someone to read Levertov’s poem at the bottom of page 2, allow some time for reflection and then invite participants to share their responses to the two questions as the bottom of page 2.

2. Read the description of Ellery the goldfish at the top of page 3. Ask participants to choose some object of nature to contemplate and write this kind of detailed description, capturing as many aspects as possible, as Annie Dillard has done.

3. After 15 minutes or so, invite participants to share what they have written. (If you group is large, you might invite people to form smaller groups of 3 or 4 for the sharing.)

4. The table on page 3, gives participants another opportunity to understand the format of the Earth Charter that was highlighted in Session I. With the Earth Charter and this table side by side, invite participants to read the table, refer to the sections of the Earth Charter that are mentioned. The goal of this process is to become generally more familiar with the contents of the Earth Charter. Future Study Guides will address each section in detail.

5. Turn to page 4, and discuss the two questions at the top of the page. Is their commonality in the sharing? Are suggestion emerging about actions the group could agree on? What commitments can be made?

If the group is struggling, some possible suggestions would be:

1. Under the “Learn More” section, calculate your “ecological footprint.”
2. Use the Preamble for prayer and reflection
3. Write to Eileen Reilly, the author of this Study Guide, and tell her what challenged you? What you found helpful? (EileenSSND@aol.com or 345 Belden Hill Road, Wilton, CT 06897)
6. For a closing prayer, invite participants to pray together the two doxologies proposed on page 4, “In the Name of the Bee. . .” and “To Our Higher self . . .” Then, as instrumental music is played, invited them to compose their own prayer, either in the form of a doxology, or not. Invite anyone to share the prayer they have written. Close with “How Great Thou Art.”

• Prepared by S. Eileen Reilly, (WI)

## PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 3



### Guide 3. Section II: Ecological Integrity      October 2004

#### You will need:

\* copies of the study guide, Section II: Ecological Integrity, for each participant

\* copies of the Earth Charter and the Call to Transformation for each participant

\* a central table with a few of the following: a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible, YAS

\* a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music

\* pen and paper for each participant

#### Session I

1. Ask a participant to read Genesis 1:28-31, the end of the first creation story. How are we to understand that story in our day? What does it mean to “have dominion”? If God looked at everything created and found it “very good,” how are we to relate to all created things? Does this contradict the idea that we are “part of and not separate from all other forms of life”?
2. Read the first column on page 1. Discuss the questions at the bottom of the column. When discussing your “relationship with earth,” encourage participants to be specific about a particular plant, animal, tree, place with which they have a relationship.
3. Read the rest of page 1. Ask participants to take some time to read quietly Section II of the Earth Charter, underlining words or phrases that are new to them. Discuss Section II, especially the new words and phrases. Clarify the meanings for one another. If there are unanswered questions, see the first action suggested on page 4. If you still have questions, perhaps you could consult with your SHALOM contact person before Session II.
4. Take some time for individuals to follow the suggestion at the end of page 1, “to journal about how you understand and live out any of those relationships.” (Play some instrumental music.) After 10 or 15 minutes, invite any participant to share one way she “lives” these relationships.
5. Ask three different people to read a paragraph on page 2. Talk together about the questions at the

Christ was sent,” as inclusive of more than humans? How would your daily life change, if you did?

6. End this session by calling attention to two of the suggestions on page 4: “Make walking outdoors part of your daily routine.” or “Learn from the earth-wise mystics.” Perhaps participants might have suggestions of other books by earth-wise mystics to read, and even books they could share with on another. Agree that the next time you gather, you will share reflections on one or both of these suggestions.

## **Session II**

1. Begin by sharing what was learned (from #6 in the previous session) by “learning from an earth-wise mystic” or “walking outdoors and listening to Mother Earth.”

2. Read the first paragraph on page 3. Discuss examples of when living in SSND community brings individual and community needs into conflict with each other. Move to discussing examples of how environmental consciousness further complicates this conflict. What is meant by the “seventh generation”?

3. Pages 2 and 3 highlight Wonder, Spirit, and Trust. Allow participants time to identify, and perhaps write, which of these three they possess. Which of these do they need most? (Play instrumental music) Invite some sharing after a period of reflection.

4. Share responses to the question after the first paragraph on page 3.

5. Ask someone to read reflectively, “It Takes a Universe,” on page 3. Discuss concrete suggestions for how you would help a child (or your inner-child) to become “fulfilled in the universe.” What does the child (or your inner-child) need for the universe to be “fulfilled in the child”?

6. Take the second suggestion on column two of page 4 and begin to work together as a group or individually to write your “creed.” Think of ways these beliefs can be part of your community prayer or prayers of the faithful at liturgy.

7. Good Stuff? A Behind-the-Scenes Guide to the Things We Buy, mentioned on page 4, column one, has information on the following: Appliances, Baby Products, Beverages, Cars, CDs and DVDs, Cell Phones, Chocolate, Cleaning Products, Clothing, Coffee, Computers, Electricity, Fast Food, Furniture, Gold Jewelry, Health Care, Housing, Lighting, Meat, Paint & Varnishes, Paper, Personal Care, Plastic Bags, Shrimp, Soap. (N.B. the correct website is [www.worldwatch.org](http://www.worldwatch.org))

Perhaps one member of your group with Internet access and skill could download the sections of Good Stuff? to help you with future purchases.

8. Finally, the first suggestion on column two of page 4 is for the long term. Perhaps, before you end you could brainstorm suggestions for ways over a period of time to study and put into action the mandates issued in Section II of the Earth Charter.

Prepared by S. Eileen Reilly, SSND (WI)

## PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 4

# EARTH CHARTER

School Sisters of Notre Dame • SHALOM North America

**Guide 4      Section III      Social and Economic Justice      January 2005**

### You will need:

- \* copies of the study guide, “*Making Connections and Making Choices*”, for each participant
- \* copies of the *Earth Charter* and the *Call to Transformation* for each participant
- \* a central table with a few of the following: a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible, YAS
- \* a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music
- \* pen and paper for each participant

### Session I

1. Ask someone to read the introductory paragraph on the first page. After a brief time of reflection ask participants to share what are the “joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the people of this age.”
2. After quietly reading the remainder of the first page, do you have other “griefs and anxieties” to add to your list? Discuss: What is your understanding or experience or “disposable” people? How is that image different from “marginalized”?
3. Read aloud points 9 a, b, and c from *The Earth Charter*. How would Mother Theresa respond to these directives? Name examples of how we SSNDs today are already implementing these directives.
4. Quietly read the rest of the material on the top half of the second page. “Where do you see yourself in the ‘two-tiered’ world? How are you part of the “accumulating sector,” and how are you part of those serving it? Give concrete examples.
5. Take some time for quiet reflection and journaling as soft music is played. How has the Tsunami of December, 2004 touched your life? What picture, what statistic, what image, has stayed with you? After significant time for writing and reflecting, share your responses.
6. Read aloud points 10 a, b, c, and d from *The Earth Charter*, as well as the first paragraph on the bottom half of the second page. Share what you know about efforts like the Taco Bell Boycott, Fair Trade Coffee, and Water for People.

If your group wants to know more, someone can volunteer to go to:

<http://www.ciwonline.org/> to learn more about the Taco Bell Boycott

<http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/coffee/> to learn more about Fair Trade Coffee

<http://www.waterforpeople.org/> to learn more about the Privatization of Water

7. What one concrete step can your group take to participate in one of these efforts that “promote human development in an equitable and sustainable manner”?

8. Once you decide, ask one volunteer to e-mail your province SHALOM contact with the information of what your group will do.

## Session II

1. Begin by evaluating the concrete step you agreed on at the last session (#7). Has everyone been able to participate in some form of action? Will you continue, or do you need to choose a different action?

2. Read aloud points 11 a, b, and c from the *Earth Charter*.

3. Discuss: how is this already happening? Be specific. What still needs to change? How does our SSND charism and mission support the goal to “affirm gender equality and equity”?

4. Read aloud points 12 a, b, c, and d from *The Earth Charter*.

5. Allow some time for reflection and journaling. Take each of the four points in #12 and think about “one positive step you can take to strengthen each of these.” Next, take each of the four points and think about what more you need to know in order to act.

6. Share your responses from #5 above. Can you answer some the questions of other members of your group? Can they help you answer your questions? How will you group get more information?

7. Read the bottom half of the third page. What is new for you? What challenged your assump-



# PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 5

# EARTH CHARTER

School Sisters of Notre Dame • SHALOM North America

## Guide 5 Part IV - Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace by Jeanne Wingenter, SSND (MK)

April 2005

### You will need:

- \* copies of the study guide, *Democracy, Nonviolence and Peace*, for each participant
- \* copies of the *Earth Charter* and the *Call to Transformation* for each participant
- \* a central table with the following: a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible, YAS, a newspaper
- \* a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music
- \* pen and paper for each participant

### Session I

1. Discuss: how are democracy, nonviolence and peace related? Can you think of examples that illustrate their relationship? E.g. When democracy was restored to South Africa, a decision was made to pursue a peaceful, nonviolent response to the past by establishing a “Truth and Reconciliation Commission.”
2. Read the definition of Democracy on page 1. How does the government of your country measure up? Now look at the two questions in the box in the middle of the page - how do you measure up?
3. Read Principle 13 and subpoints a-f of the Earth Charter. What is meant by “transparency”? How is it different from “accountability”? Name some current examples of transparency - or the lack of it - in government.
4. Read the section on page 1 about the UN. Discuss your answers to the questions.
5. Read the quote from Pope John Paul II at the bottom on page 1. Write your reflections on the question of “how do you define the ‘common good’?” give specific examples of when you or others have acted to bring about the “common good.” After some quiet time, share your responses.
6. Read Principle 14 and subpoints a-d of the Earth Charter. Which subpoint captures your imagination? Which poses the biggest challenge?
7. What is a “sustainable way of life”? Just for fun, think of it financially, physically, emotionally, ecologically? What happens in each area if you are living an “unsustainable way of life”?

8. Read the quote from Pope John Paul II at the top of page 2. As reflective music is played, take some time to write your reflections in response to the following questions. Can you cite a “genuine conversion in ways of thought and behavior”? What areas are you aware of in which your “conversion” has changed your thoughts, but not yet changed your behavior? What is your next step in that “conversion”? Make a commitment to take one more step in your “conversion.” What will you do before your group meets the next time to move toward ecological responsibility? Save these reflections for the next time your group gathers.

## Session II

1. Share your reflections from # 8 in the last session. How do your answers relate to the two questions in the box at the top of page 2?

2. Quietly read the section at the bottom on page 2 about “who owns what.” What do you know about who owns the newspaper you read? Can you cite examples of media bias that you have experienced in print or broadcast media? How might military contracts effect news reporting? What is the danger in one company owning more than 100 newspapers? Look at the related questions in the box on the bottom of page 3.

3. What alternative sources of news are you aware of other than the broadcast networks and your local newspaper? Share with your group about where they can be found.

4. Read Principle 15 and subpoints a-c, as well as the two paragraphs at the top on page 3. With reflective music as background, spend some quiet time journaling about Mechtild’s spiritual awakening and the question that follows.

5. Read the section in the middle of page 3 about animal farming. Share your responses to the question that follow. Also, share ideas about how one might find that information.

6. Read Principle 16 and subpoints a-f. What relationships do you see between this section of the *Earth Charter* and our *Call to Transformation*? What signs of hope do you see within SSND that we are contributing to Principle 16?

7. Read the top half of page 4. Take some time to journal about your reactions to these two paragraphs. What resonates with you? What challenges you? What do you disagree with? If you could have a conversation with Wendell Berry, the author, what would you want to say?

## PROCESS FOR EARTH CHARTER GUIDE 6

# EARTH CHARTER

School Sisters of Notre Dame • SHALOM North America

### Guide 6      Part VI      Earth Charter Study Guide The Way Forward      July 2005

You will need:

- \* copies of the study guide, *“The Way Forward,”* for each participant
- \* copies of the *Earth Charter* and the *Call to Transformation* for each participant
- \* a central table with the following: a plant, a candle, a globe, a Bible, YAS, a newspaper
- \* a tape or CD of reflective, instrumental music pen and paper for each participant

#### Session I

1. *“The Way Forward”*, the last section of the Earth Charter, is a call to action. Ask someone to read aloud the top section on page 1, which is the beginning of *“The Way Forward.”* After a pause for reflection, during which instrumental music is played, invite participants to share what phrase from this section stirred their hearts.
2. The text says that to promote the values of the Earth Charter, “requires a change of mind and heart.” Share ways that your mind (and your behavior) has changed as a result on this study of the Earth Charter. Share ways that your heart (and your attitude) has changed as a result of this study.
3. As you consider **“What Kind of a World Do We Live In?”** share examples of some countries that would fit into each of the three categories in the chart. Are there examples of countries that the participants have lived in or visited?
4. How do you explain the fact that the percent of population under 15 increases as the income decreases? (Hint, look at “life expectancy”) What else in the chart either surprises you or puzzles you?
5. Look at the first column on page 2, “What Is Our Call?” Take some time to quietly read the suggested passages from Scripture, *Populorum Progressio*, and *You Are Sent*. As you consider the questions in the box at the bottom of the column, take some time to write your reflections, making specific recommendations for both “individuals and as a faith community” in light of what you have come to know about the Earth Charter.
6. Allow time for sharing of these recommendations, listing them for all to see, either on newsprint, or on a paper, which will be copied and distributed after this session. Do not discuss or eliminate any at this point, rather save them for the next session, allowing all to reflect on them in the interim.

## Session II

1. Recall the recommendations from the last session (step #6). Invite the participants to share reactions to these. Have they tried implementing any of them? Do they have others they want to add at this point? (Hold these recommendations for the end of this session.)

2. Quietly read the right-hand column on page 3, *What WILL We Do?* The discussion questions for this section are in the box at the top of the first column on page 3. Answer these questions in light of your earlier recommendations. Perhaps you will want to expand the list, especially in light of the question about “ministry.”

3. Again, set the list of suggestions aside and spend some time reflecting on the center section, *What Can We DARE To Do?* which is taken from *The Way Forward*. The last paragraph which is not included here, begins “Let ours be a time remembered . . .” The box at the bottom of this section details the four things we hope will be the hallmark of our time. Look back at your recommendations. Can they fit those four categories:

1. reverence for life;
2. sustainability;
3. struggle for justice and peace;
4. the joyful celebration of life

Do you need to add other recommendations so that you touch on each category?

4. Look at page 4, *What Is Your Dream for the World?* Under the section, *Take Some Action*, can you as a group agree to take one of the suggested actions? Look at the section *Learn More*. Does anyone in the group have any of the suggested videos or books that could be shared? Does your Province SHALOM office have any of these resources to share? (If you don’t know, you could contact your Province SHALOM contact to find out.)

5. Close with a prayer. Ask someone to read, “*Living the Earth Charter*.” After some time for reflection, invite participants to share “seeds of peace and seeds of hope” from this Earth Charter study process. Which of the recommendations generated above will be seeds that will bear fruit? End with the prayer, “God our creator . . .”

**6. Send a message to your Province SHALOM Contact S. Gen Cassani, SSND listing the recommendations that your group plans to implement.**