

How to Organize a Local Interfaith Vigil on Climate

Interfaith Moral Action on Climate (interfaithactiononclimatechange.org) is calling for and encouraging local interfaith vigils calling for action on the climate crisis **on April 24th or anytime during Earth week, April 21-27.**

Public vigils are a simple yet effective way to reach people and bring public attention to an issue. Here are some suggestions and ideas to help you organize a successful one in your area:

Who: An interfaith vigil can be initiated by an individual, a faith community, or by an already existing group. We encourage people who want to put one together to reach out to a cross-section of faith traditions. Looking at the endorsers of Interfaith Moral Action on Climate is one way to get ideas on who might be interested. Another source would be groups working on the climate crisis who will probably know of faith-based groups, congregations, or individuals interested in this issue as a result of their work.

How: Once there is a group, as small as a few people, or a mix of groups who are interested in organizing an interfaith vigil, a meeting should be held to make basic decisions, such as the nature of the vigil, where and when it should be held, ways of publicizing and outreaching for the vigil, making signs to hold during it and contacting local media.

Nature: The vigil could be done in the evening as a candlelight vigil, or an LED light vigil. It could be mainly a silent, deeply reflective event, or it could involve spoken prayers from different faith traditions. It could be a vigil where the emphasis is more on outreaching via signs and leaflets to vehicles and pedestrians who pass by. Or it could be a mixture, with designated periods of time to do some or all of these.

Where and When: A first decision to be made is where and when to hold the vigil. There are a mix of options: busy intersections where lots of people will see you-outside the office of a fossil fuel company or location where fossil fuels are being burned or produced-an Exxon/Mobil, BP, Chevron or other gas station-a location where wind turbines or solar panels are being used (a positive message)-a federal building or other governmental office-another location of your local group's choosing.

The decision as to when the vigil should take place during Earth week should be guided by what members of the initiating group or coalition think would be best based upon work, school and family commitments or other relevant considerations.

Publicity and Outreach: There are lots of ways to spread the word about your plans: sending out emails, setting up a Facebook page and reaching out that way, sending out Twitter posts, making telephone calls, putting together a leaflet and posting it in houses of worship, public bulletin boards or in local stores and sending public service announcements to local media.

Signs: Be sure to make up signs with appropriate messages to hold during the vigil so vehicles and pedestrians who see you will know why you're there. Since this is an interfaith vigil, some if not most/all of the signs should reflect that, as in "We Must Be Good Stewards of God's Creation," or "People of Faith Speaking Up for Clean Energy." If you're at a location with lots of vehicle traffic and the group so desires, you might want to make a "Honk If" sign, like "Honk If You Support Renewable Energy," or "Honk if You Support Care of God's Creation."

If you will be at a location where there will be a lot of pedestrian traffic, having a leaflet to pass out explaining why you are there would be a good idea.

Media: Be sure to contact local media outlets, including any religious media, and ask them to cover the event. You should do up a short, one-page media alert that has the basic information and an explanation of why it is being done and send it to local media 3-4 days in advance, with follow up phone calls a way to increase the chances of coverage.

And don't forget our own media: take pictures and/or a video and post them on Facebook or elsewhere on the internet and send them out via emails.

Please let us know if you organize a vigil so that we can keep track of all the vigils that happen during Earth Week. We want to show the world that a movement of people of faith is building for moral action on the climate crisis.

Thanks for seriously considering doing this! Good luck!

If you have questions contact us: <http://www.interfaithactiononclimatechange.org/contact-us.html>