



# Center for Earth Ethics

## Seven Days Reflections and Steps

### Day 1: Light

**Symbolic Theme: Energy**

**Reflection: *Sunlight and plasma energy are abundantly ever-available and ready to harness***

The human quest for energy through natural resource extraction and refinement needs ethics to guide it. Learn what your congregation can do as stewards to reduce its environmental impact. Consider joining the campaign surrounding Arizona's Prop. 127 for 50% renewable energy by 2030. Learn how fracking for methane gas is absolutely not the way to go forward in the provision of energy.

*Resources:*

<http://www.greenfaith.org/getting-started/houses-of-worship/6-steps-for-getting-started-in-your-house-of-worship>  
*Great launching point for recommendations about houses of worship, following the principles of "spirit, stewardship, and justice."*

*Interfaith Power and Light website on congregational solar directory:*

<https://www.interfaithpowerandlight.org/congregational-solar-directory/>

*Karenna Gore and many others participate in Rally for Our Planet:*

<http://bluevirginia.us/2018/09/video-photos-karenna-gore-leads-rally-in-arlington-for-our-planet-against-destructive-dirty-fossil-fuel-e-g-fracked-gas-pipeline-projects#comment-4084269371>

### Day 2: Sky

**Symbolic Theme: The Atmosphere**

**Reflection: "With what diligent backs might we sustain the immense and fissured sky which, for a second time in a long history, we fear may fall on us?" (Michel Serres, *The Natural Contract*, 1990:84).**

Reach out to environmental agency local chapters, and investigate environmental racism in your area, to learn about connections between local resource extraction, river health, infrastructure, human rights, and ecosystems. Learn from local environmental agency chapters at what rate extreme weather conditions are amplifying health, environmental, political, social and economic problems. Become a climate advocate by engaging your representatives in working towards robust, renewable, zero-emission infrastructure based on solar, wind, hydropower and geothermal; including infrastructure for public transportation.

*Resources:*

*"A Leader in the War on Poverty Opens a New Front: Pollution" [New York Times article](#)*

[Sierra Club Grand Canyon \(Arizona\) Chapter](#)

[350.org](#) (the most active local group seems to be [350Tuscon](#))

[Arizona PIRG](#)



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[Chispa AZ](#)

[GreenAction](#), which can connect you to GRACE (Gila River Alliance for a Clean Environment), one of the grassroots indigenous rights groups.

<https://www.indianz.com/m11/more.cgi?tag=gila+river> - A search results page of environmental racism issues affecting the local Gila River Indian reservation that can be a resource of advocacy ideas the congregation can take up. Note: If pursuing this route, it is important to note the [marginalization of the Pii Paash](#) people within this community.

## **Day 3: Dry Land, Herbs, Trees**

**Symbolic Theme: Healing plants**

**Reflection: *Every single plant can heal, it's just a matter of learning with them how.***

Consume organic herbs, flowers and fruits that are grown in your bioregion which correspond to the growing season. Get to know your local flora and their potential healing properties, as well as their spiritual significance.

Consider one of these options for promoting food justice:

- For those suffering from sexism, racism and economic inequality, connect with or start a community garden, a memorial garden a greenhouse or even a tree orchard. Teach at-risk children, special needs children, sexual assault survivors, substance abuse rehabs and prison survivors gardening and composting as healing. Consider a biodynamic approach to farming (one that recognizes a garden as an integrated whole and a living organism in its own right, connected to the positions of the moon and stars)
- Or, for those with access and affordability issues, promote seasonal fruits and vegetables in your home and your communities events; be in contact with Foodlink in Flagstaff to learn about Food Justice models.

*Resources:*

CommunityGarden.org's [guide](#) "10 Steps to Starting a Community Garden"

"What is Biodynamics?" [an introductory guide](#)

[Flagstaff Foodlink](#)

"Food Justice and Building a Movement in Arizona"

<https://civileats.com/2011/03/18/food-justice-and-building-a-movement-in-arizona/>

"In the Arizona Desert, Tucson Models Affordable Food Access"

<https://civileats.com/2018/04/04/in-the-arizona-desert-tucson-models-affordable-food-access/>

[City of Joy](#) is a grassroots women's organization in the Congo for sexual assault survivors looking to heal "bodies and minds" in part through a community farm.

"The program is to transform their pain to power. We also have a farm to transform pain to planting. We live with Mother Nature, and we give back to Mother Nature. For example, they learn how to make compost." [A quote from](#) program director Christine Schuler Deschryver.

[Casa Verde](#) is a grassroots organization in El Salvador for children living in neighborhoods where high levels of violence are an everyday reality, that in part involves learning to garden and compost as therapeutic.

## **Day 4: Sun, Moon, Stars**

**Symbolic Theme: Celestial timekeepers**

**Reflection: *Religions have based calendar cycles on celestial bodies since time immemorial***



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Participate in family ceremonies that bring into your awareness the moon cycles and passage of seasons.

Pay more attention to the lunar calendar by seeing the new moon as the beginning of each month. Follow the Jewish lunar calendar in this way, perhaps using your imagination as if you were living in a time prior to the Gregorian calendar.

Reflect on how due to this, and the fact that many Jewish holidays are connected to the agricultural calendar, Judaism is a nature-based religion.

Resources:

[http://jewecology.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/The\\_Jewish\\_Holiday\\_Cycle.pdf](http://jewecology.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/The_Jewish_Holiday_Cycle.pdf) *High Holy Days as birthday of Earth*

<http://hazon.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/Agricultural-Origins-of-the-Jewish-Holidays.pdf> *“Pesach is associated with the barley harvest, which occurs in the early spring; Shavu‘ot is associated with the wheat harvest and the ripening of the first fruits, both of which occur in the early summer; and Sukkot is the great fall harvest festival, celebrated after all produce has been gathered from the fields. These three holidays, accordingly, were markers for the ancient Israelite farmers, with their strong ties to the land.”*

[https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/3582740/jewish/Why-Are-Jewish-Holidays-Pegged-to-the-Agricultural-Cycle.htm](https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/3582740/jewish/Why-Are-Jewish-Holidays-Pegged-to-the-Agricultural-Cycle.htm) *“Gd wants Judaism to be ingrained in the pattern of our lives. He does not want our festivals to be abstract exercises, divorced from our daily activities. He wants the two to be interwoven; our lives suffused with religion, and our religion etched into life.*

*“In plain words, this means that He wants us to be aware of the approaching festival without needing to consult a calendar. He wants us to see our festivals in the change of the seasons, and to think of the season as we consider the festival. He wants life and religion to be seamless.*

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/first-fruits/> *“In the Land of Israel, the most basic sense of faith stems from an agricultural dependence on God. The Jewish farmer, whose livelihood is entirely dependent on God’s blessing, must live in a perpetual state of faith and appreciation.*

*The agricultural enterprise does more than just sharpen one’s awareness of God. According to Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, agriculture also has the power to unify the Jewish nation.*

*“Today, most people live the state of alienation between nature and civilization described by Rabbi Kook. Most of us don’t realize that many of the things we use in our “civilized” daily lives—including food, medicine, and even plastic—have their origins in the natural world. We are also unaware that our individual cultures were once inextricably linked to nature.*

*“The loss of local culture — that intricate web of language, food, religion, economy, and ecology — is disastrous for both people and the planet. Wendell Berry, an American farmer and writer, suggests that ‘lacking an authentic local culture, a place is open to exploitation, and ultimately destruction, from the center.’*

*“This faith is even indicated in the kind of fruit farmers brought as bikkurim; they only offered the seven species for which the Land is praised—wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates. These species are native to Israel and are especially dependent on the blessing of rainwater for their growth. We can grow and eat the seven species, taking the extra time to learn about their spiritual symbolism.*

*“We can become acquainted with the traditional agricultural practices of the region and support farmers who implement them. And we can build stable, diverse, morally upright communities in the Land of Israel. All of these small tikkunim (repairs) serve to reinforce our dependence on God and maintain a balance between different sectors of Jewish society. Even in the Diaspora, we can still experience a sense of partnership with God by growing our*



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*own food. We can help maintain an environmentally sensible food culture by purchasing locally grown products in season. We can grow some of the seven species that might be compatible with our bioregions.”*

## **Day 5: Fish, Birds, Reptiles**

**Symbolic Theme: Those who came first have endured...**

**Reflection: *How do my actions directly or indirectly destroy the water bodies home to the first creatures of G-d?***

Evaluate your ethic of stewardship of local watersheds (and the fish, waterfowl, and reptiles/amphibians who depend on them) that are at high risk of contamination, reduction, deviation, channeling or disappearance. Learn and support watershed protection initiatives and support biological corridor initiatives (such as monarch butterflies) and demand the elimination of human barriers that block migratory trails. Are there any local dams and water barriers that are outdated or defunct that you can advocate to be removed, and the waterways restored?

*Resources:*

[The Watershed Connection](#) promotes the health of the Salt and Verde Rivers  
Environmental Protection Agency [list](#) of tools and resources for protecting watersheds

## **Day 6: Land mammals, humans**

**Symbolic Theme: Mammals are our elder kin**

**Reflection: *Why do we think humans are G-d’s most fine creation piece? What right do we have to decide over the destiny of G-d’s creatures, including that of every human being?***

Pay extra care to the most vulnerable in your community. Homeless people and neglected elders might be most in need. Visit them with food and your undivided attention. Volunteer in hospitals, and contact non-profits that work with homeless and disenfranchised communities to see how your congregation can help with their mission. Contact HIOC to learn their model of an interfaith coalition to help needy families pay for utilities (see resources below). Contact local migrant justice organizations to learn how to safely report any suspicious treatment of people that may be related to financial exploitation, extortion, and trafficking (or general sex trafficking).

*Resources:*

HIOC- Hunterdon Interfaith Outreach Council  
<https://www.hioc-helps.org/contact-us.html>

[Elders for a Sustainable Future](#)

[Human trafficking hotline](#) (for any form of trafficking)

The [Arizona Interfaith Alliance for Worker Justice](#), a worker center in Phoenix, has seen a “huge spike” in wage theft since SB 1070, Arizona’s draconian immigration law, according to [this article](#)

[How to Help a Neighbor’s Neglected Animal](#)



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### **Day 7: Rest**

**Symbolic Theme: Hard working demands rest**

**Reflection: Let us be fair and consider this: *The land that nurtures us needs rest as much as we do.***

Do family walks or prayerful meditation at the end of the day to rest your mind and body. Organize hikes focused on mind rest and self-restoration. Do them throughout the seasons with your congregational members so you can appreciate and observe the changes the earth goes through. And if there are any members of the congregation who cannot afford to take days off for Sabbath, for general respite, and/or family time, consider a community resource pool to fund this for them.