

Eco-Drama

A collection for
Eco-congregations



Collected by

SAFCEI

**SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAITH COMMUNITIES'
ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE**

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Acknowledgements:

Our warm thanks to everyone who has contributed to this collection, especially the Vuka House Church in Kalk Bay.

We would love to know how you have used or adapted this material.

Please share your stories and photographs with us so that we can share them with others.

If you have any dramas or sketches that you are happy to share with other congregations, please send them to us so that we can expand this collection.

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Noah's Ark II – a tale of global warming

*Original idea Marie Birkinshaw,
modified by the Vuka Housechurch*

Children and congregation start by singing the Arky song. Noah appears during the last verse and stands with back to congregation.

5 Narrators appear as the song finishes and stand in a row on either side of Noah (and one step back). They motion for the congregation to sit. Then assume a pose, arms stiffly at their sides.



*[Noah, in jeans and workman's shirt, stands centre stage with back to the audience. Around and behind him are **five narrators**, dressed in black]*

Voice 1: **Noah...** *[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]
[Noah turns to face the audience]*

Voice 1: ...was an **outdoor, active** man.

[Noah walks on the spot]

Voice 2: He liked to take walks and to explore the mountains.

Voice 3: He watched the seasons come and go and followed the fish runs along the coast.

[Noah stands watching with hand over eyes]

Voice 4: He enjoyed seeing zebra and bontebok with their young at Cape Point each springtime.

Voice 5: He noticed the vast variety of plants in the fynbos: ericas, restios and proteas.

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...**

[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was an **observant and wise** man.

Voice 2: He took time to get to know the world around him.

[Noah smiles down at his watch]

Voice 3: He saw the signs of change in nature and became a pretty good weather forecaster.

[Noah licks his finger and holds it in the air to check the wind]

Voice 4: He could see that the summer was becoming hotter and the winter drier.

[Noah looks up and shakes his head.]

Voice 5: He noticed all the animals huddling together in the same spot. Something dreadful was going to come about.

[Noah crosses his arms and rubs them as if shivering]

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...** *[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]*

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was a man **with a good memory**.

Voice 2: He remembered a time many, many years ago when God had told him to care for the scared animals that came to his door.

[Noah reaches out his arms]

Voice 3: He had obeyed God and built an ark that also saved his family.

[Noah pretends to build]

Voice 4: He remembered the leaking roof when it rained for 40 long days and 40 long nights.

[Noah catches drops above his head]

Voice 5: He remembered that the floods had destroyed the world as he knew it

Voice 1: **Noah...** *[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]*

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was a man **who believed in God**.

[Noah looks towards the heavens]

Voice 2: He remembered the promise of the rainbow.

[Noah traces an arc in the sky]

Voice 3: He knew that God would never destroy the earth again

Voice 4: He had learnt to respect and value God's creation.

[Noah reaches out his arms and smiles at creation]

Voice 5: He knew that God would never leave us again.

[Noah hugs himself]

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...**

[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was a **worried** man *[Noah folds his arms looking slightly sad]*

Voice 2: Would people do what God had promised not to do?

[Noah scratches his head, looking thoughtful]

Voice 3: Would people destroy the earth?

[Noah looks to the audience for an answer]

Voice 4: Would people cut down rain forests in Indonesia to supply South Africans with garden furniture?

Voice 5: Would people invest in more roads to cope with traffic congestion, rather than develop public transport.

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...**

[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...wondered if it was possible to **warn people**.

[Noah's gaze searches the audience]

Voice 2: Noah saw that the rest of his community were busy, very busy. They were all struggling to survive in the new world economy.

Voice 3: Noah saw them aspiring to bigger cars, credit cards and consumerism.

Voice 4: Noah saw that they thought the solution lay in patching the environment, not changing their life-style.

[Noah shakes his head sadly]

Voice 5: Then Noah heard the children sing a song about the ark. Maybe there was hope if the children remember to care for creation.

[Noah points to and smiles at the children]

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...** *[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]*

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was a man who liked to **analyse**.

Voice 2: Rainforests are being cut down, fossil fuels are being burnt, cars are adding to the pollution

[Noah demonstrates tree felling]

Voice 3: This causes increased carbon dioxide emissions that make the temperature rise.

[Noah wipes the sweat off his brow]

Voice 4: By 2050, the Artic ice cap will begin to melt and the water level will rise.

[Noah demonstrates a rising water level]

Voice 5: This flood will come from the sea, not from the heavens.

[Noah shows a water level up to his neck]

[Narrators put arms down. Noah turns with back to audience and there is a short pause]

Voice 1: **Noah...** *[all narrators point in turn directly to Noah as each speaks]*

[Noah turns to face the audience]

Voice 1: ...was a man who liked to **strategise**.

Voice 2: Should he build another ark to escape the water?

[Noah hammers at a new ark]

Voice 3: Should he pray?

[Noah puts his hand together in prayer]

Voice 4: Should he start by changing his lifestyle?

[Noah looks surprise and mimes "Who me?"]

Voice 5: Should he join voice with others who remember to care for God's creation?

(Noah pointing to the congregation) What will you do?

Enviro-stars

Vuka House Church, Holy Trinity, Kalk Bay

Objective – with tableaux and narration, to illustrate starkly and dramatically through the plight of victims, some of the threats to our environment and the way in which we, as people of faith who hope in God, can make a difference.

Cast – A group of 11 or more. Half the actors dressed top-to-toe in black and the other half in white, plus a narrator to read the scripts.

Those dressed in black assemble across the dais in 4 distinct places, assuming static positions with their placards at their side. As the narrator begins talking about their particular situation, they raise their placard and begin their appropriate actions:



Person A raises her/his placard, shields her/his eyes and looks up fearfully:

“These are the people who cower in fear under the shadow of the nuclear power station”

Two people (B & C) stand together – one with arms raised as branches of a tree, the other first placing the placard in the “branches” and then motioning to chop down the tree with an axe –

“These are the subsistence farmers who need to clear woodland to create new pasture and who use the wood for housing and fuel”.

Person D breaks off the dry head of a maize stalk and struggles to hold back tears “These are the farmers whose once-fertile land is now bone dry. The drought caused by climate change has destroyed all their crops”.

Person E stands coughing behind a pollution mask –

“These are the people who breathe in the air polluted by car exhaust fumes and the burning of fossil fuels. Their health is ruined”.

“But wait; who is this coming towards us” (the group in white approach) – “is it a bird, is it a plane? No, it’s the wonderful band of enviro-stars, rising out of our churches with a mission to protect the world God has created”.

The enviro-stars move towards their respective “victim” and, as the narrator introduces their story, they move to push away the “threat” placard and replace it with their own:

Person F holds aloft an energy efficient light bulb as if to screw it into a fitting –

“These are the people who help us to cut down our demand for electricity with efficient light bulbs and blankets around their geysers”.

Person G puts down the “tree”, holds up their placard and motions as if to dig a hole –

“These are the people who are planting indigenous trees that will breathe fresh oxygen into our polluted atmosphere”.

Person H raises her/his placard and steps into a plastic bowl, rubbing her/himself down –

“These are the people who recycle their shower water to nurture their gardens and flush their toilets”.

Persons I and J put up their placard and move on the spot – one cycling, one running –

“These are the commuters who have decided to leave their cars at home and find better ways to get to where they are going”.

At this point, all come together, link arms and, at the Narrator’s cue of

“And what about you”,

all raise right arms, point to the congregation and say –

“do **you** want to be an enviro-star?”



a snail's pace (working title)

by David Muller

Actor with large light tin basin attached to his/her back enters slowly up the aisle. Behind actor trails the end of a toilet roll unwinding as the snail goes. holding two sticks each about a half metre long each with a silver tin sans paper wrapping on their ends denoting the feelers of our snail; the actor feels his/her way through the audience. When a plant in the audience cries out:

Plant 1: Hey, No snails allowed; don't you know?

The snail continues ignoring the plant; when another plant bursts out in a rather sing song fashion:

Plant 2: Thank You-oo; you can go now!

But our snail continues as a third plant pipes up:

Plant 3: Who do you think you are disturbing our worship?

Still our snail continues, pausing now and then as snails do to feel and observe, but never loosing focus of its mission to make it to the front/stage. Finally it turns around and addresses those who are listening.

Snail: My friends, thank you for letting me come this far. There are millions of my kind outside, but I bring good news; for under my shell is God's Blessing.

Plant 1: Aw, come now, you're just another preacher/rabbi/imam. We've heard it all before.

Plant 2: Yeah, tell us something new or beat it. To me you're just a creepy-crawly pretending to have an answer.

Snail: Ah, dear friends, some of us are slow movers, some of us are slow thinkers and some of us are slow in taking action. You want answers? I can give you some answers to our environmental crises; but, why should I when the answers lie around you, about you, within you.

Plant 1: Told you he was just another preacher. Probably rattles around under that shell too.

Plant 2: Hey, maybe the snail is right; I mean maybe we do need to clean up our back yards. Each and every one of us.

Plant 3: Is that what this is about? Are you saying we are responsible for the mess we are in? (*Plant three comes out picking up the toilet paper en route to the front/stage*) Wherever we go we leave a trail of garbage behind.

Snail: You are getting the picture now.

Plants All: So what can we do?

Snail: Do you really want to know?

Pl 1: Why would we ask then?

Snail; Because I want to be sure you turn your words into action.

Pl 1: Aw, come on. Who wouldn't?

Snail: There are many of you who wouldn't. You listen, you think, you debate. But how many really walk the talk? It's all very well you coming up here but what about the rest of us? Those left sitting in their seats? (*Snail moves towards the audience releasing more toilet roll as it goes*)

Pl 3: Think we get the point: You are saying that its always the same few who do all the work?

Snail: Yes...and No.

Pl 1: Whadaya mean?

Snail: You make it sound as if it is too much PT; keeping the environment balanced; it's a hard slog; it's work, something you don't like doing? It's unpleasant. Am I right?

Pl 1, 2, 3: Yes

Snail: It is then I may as well go and sit on the steps outside and wait for a soul.

PL All: A soul!?!?

Snail: Yes the soul of the boot which will come down on me putting me out of the misery you have put me in.

Pl 1: So now it's my fault?

Snail: Listen, I can list a whole lot of things you can do to help save our planet but what's the point if you don't WANT to do them?

Pl ALL: We do! We do we do we do

Snail: Promise?

PI All: As God is my witness.

Snail: None of this: Sorry I can't come and play I HAVE to clean up the planet ?

PI All: No, I mean Yes

Snail: None of this: I told the Snail I would do this so it's my DUTY to fix the planet?

PI ALL: Yes

Snail: You really really, really, REALLY want to do this?

PI 1: *(quickly)* Yes!

PI 2: *(quickly)* Yes!

PI 3: *(quickly)* Yes!

PI ALL YES! *(the idea is to mimic the Snail's "really really really REALLY")*

Snail: Even if it seems trivial? Even if it seems simple? If it seems so little? If it seems no one else is doing it? Even if it.....

Plant 4 *(Angry fourth plant is still in the audience)* Look. I have been listening to all this and I think you think we are a shallow, slow, irresponsible, uncaring, dispassionate, greedy, unenthusiastic and wasteful members of the community

Snail: Well....now that you mention it....

PI 4: Well, I am not... and I'll tell you why!

Snail: Before you do won't you join us up here please.

PI 4: *(as he/she makes her/his way u to the front)* I do a heluva lot around the house to save energy.

Snail: Tell us about it.

PI 5: Switch lights off that needn't be on. Replace bulbs with energy saving CFL ones. Turn the geyser down so that we don't waste cold water. Use a hot box to keep food warm instead of the warming drawer. Stop the tap from running while brushing my teeth even if they are false. Put the children's bath water in a bucket so that we can flush the toilet: one five litre bucket of used bath water makes a royal flush. Close the door to dampen the sound of *Law & Order* so that our children can sleep peacefully. Open the windows to cool the house down in summer. Close the windows to warm the house up in winter. Cycle to the shops for a

pint of milk instead of using the car. Form a lift club for taking our children to school. Get up earlier and drive under the speed limit. Call the municipality to promote saving water, electricity and paper. Call the local newspaper to run a story on ways to sustain our planet creating a better life for all, animal mineral and vegetable.

Snail: *(big sigh)* Didn't I say before we met that the answers are within you? This gentle person is already giving our planet a break. But may I ask a question?

PI 4: Certainly

Snail: Are you really enjoying doing all this?

PI 4: *(winces)* It's a pain in the neck. Every day there is always a light on. Every day a newspaper hasn't been recyc.....

Snail: Stop! Until you change your thinking. Until you change your feeling. Until you actually enjoy doing all you are doing to save the planet you may as well stop; for you will only achieve burnout. If you can't get your guts to turn to enjoyment then change your mindset into smile mode and soon your guts will follow and before you know it you'll be saving the planet with pleasure!

PI ALL: You really think it'll work?

Snail: *(Starts making his/her exit)* A smiling face always generates curiosity. Satisfy the curiosity and your nearest and dearest will want to join in and soon you'll reach tipping point where everyone is mucking in to prevent global warming and the like. *(leaves the building)*

PL 1: Hey, where did Snail disappear to? *(but the other plants have already begun chatting among themselves and among the audience/congregation about what they have just learnt)*

FINIS

(Plus minus 7 minutes)

Caring for God's creation

A drama sketch written by Adrian and Lucy Thompson,

Associates of the John Ray Initiative

Scene: An easel with a clipboard canvas facing away from the audience. God is standing at the board with a paint brush and paintbox, delicately putting some final touches in.

Man enters and on seeing God painting, he goes to have a look.

Man: Wow God, that's really brilliant. I love the way you've captured the sky, and those clouds. And those trees are fantastic, they must have taken you hours. And those birds, they are so colourful. You must have spent ages on this.

God: *(smiling)* Yes, a fair bit of time. I think it's more or less finished now.

God stands back and smiles.

God: I have to admit I'm pretty pleased with it. I wasn't sure about the slugs at first, but I found a lovely shade of grey for them, and the hedgehogs do so like them. Still not sure about that duck billed platypus though. Gabriel laughed for hours when he saw it.

Now listen Adam, I want you do me a favour. Can I leave my painting with you, so you can keep an eye on it. In fact you can even add a few useful things if you like, the odd farm, a few houses maybe, but give me a shout first, and I'll give you a hand.

God leaves stage and man stands and looks at the painting.

Man: *(thoughtfully)* Yes, it is wonderful, God's right though, it does need some houses, maybe even a town. I won't bother him now about advice, I'm sure this painting thing isn't as hard as it looks.

Man picks up paints and brush and starts dabbing at the canvas.

Man: Hmm, I'm not quite, quite as good as God yet, but I'm sure with some practice. *(Hums for a few seconds)*. The thing is, there are a lot of trees and I could do with some more towns and maybe some factories. I've got to get that essence of global economy into it.

Man sets a spray can out of back pocket.

Man: I'll just spray out a few of these forests, woops, I didn't mean to do those birds as well. Now, I can paint over that!

Paints again. for a second.

Man: Hmm not really what I wanted.

I'll just put another road in. Oh blast, there's an oil slick in the middle of the sea where that paints dripped. Oh and the smoke from the factories smudged and the sky's gone all grey and yukky.

Stands back

Man: Oh help, I didn't mean it to end up like this. Nearly all those lovely trees and animals have gone. God's going to be really mad when he gets back and finds this mess.

Frantically takes a tissue and tries to clean some of the paint Off.

Man: Its dried, I can't move it.

Gods enters back onto stage.

God: Hi Adam, how's my painting?

Man hangs head.

Man: I'm really sorry God, I should have asked you for help when I tried to add a few things and it's all gone pear shaped. I guess I'm a pretty lousy artist.

God looks at painting and slaps man on the back.

God: I see what you mean, but there's still time to learn.

God gives man brush and starts to guide his hand across the painting.

Light dims and man takes painting off the easel and places it at the foot of the cross, where it can be seen to be a picture of the earth.

Poolspew and Goodroprain

You are the Team

Written by David Muller, the Merry Scholar, in 1990. Revised in 2007

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June 2007

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Many, many miles away and long long ago,
High up in the mountain tops at the melting of the snow
Were circle of birds, clouds and rain-drops.
There fell one good drop of rain,
Crystal clear down it came,
Through sky untouched, quite sane.

It followed a river course unarmed by man;
In tinkling streams, over good earth it ran
Down, towards the sea
Giving life to you and me.

At the same time over there
A doomed cloud sunk through the air
It hovered, menacing a while
Looking for dirt, a great big pile.
Not knowing why, it found its spot
And opened up and made its drop
Which fell and fell and broke about!
People stepped in, those who were out
a-spluttering, a-coughing and a-muttering;
a butterfly ducked for cover, fluttering!

And so, my friends, two raindrops fell:
One as if from heaven and one as if from hell.
Each followed an artery of the earth,
A river course down to the sea one in misery and one in mirth...
To cut a long story short
Each met in the ocean, deep in thought
And, as thinking people do, they didn't look where they were going
And, as birds of a feather, a strange friendship started growing...

“Hey! Man!” said the one who’d fallen in the dirt,
“my name’s Poolspew, with a dirty squirt,
“and I’m not at all an introvert!

“That’s cool.” Said Goodroprain, for that’s *his* name.

“Come over and join our game.”
You see they were near a wave and a shore
Playing *there ssssshhhh, here ssssshhhh*
There ssssshhhh, maybe three maybe four
But Poolspew found it such a bore.
“Boring!” said he, turning his back with a kick.
“I’m busy tanning my belly on this oil slick.”

“But ...” Goodroprain tried to make a suggestion.
No chance, for Poolspew that was out of the question.

So Goodroprain played with another buddy,
Riding the waves to the shore, sandy not muddy...
Then with the backwash out to sea...
You check, they were surfing merrily:
Hang ten, hang five,
the curl, three sixties, then dive!!!
Creative manoeuvres they could do,
and they surfed until a quarter to two,
When Goodroprain went off on his own
To look for Poolspew, so attached he’d grown.

“Hey man, Goodo!” Poolspew cried out loud,
“You ever been on an acid cloud?
“When I came down over there,” said with a point
While he grabbed a packet to roll a joint,
“The smoke from the chimneys made me high,
And never mind suffer, it’s the sulphur that’s in the sky.
“And hey man! Me and sulphur pop a cap of acid!!!”

“What!?!” cried Goodroprain, “why not just be cool and placid.”

“No wayyy! That kinda stuff’s not for me!”

“Yeah, but...” once more Goodroprain tried to help
But Poolspew didn’t give a kelp
Instead he raved on and on an on.
“You wanna hear my song, hey man you wanna, you wanna?
“Here it is then...

“**A**fter the acid trip when I was about ten
Seconds old, I landed on a roof with a gutter;
Yech: dead leaves I muttered,
Muttered and spluttered, not yet in tune
With this trash heap home
But soon baby soon!
Slip-slopping down, sliding around
Into a stormwater, more dirt, what a mound:
Plastic packets, bits of cloth, a can or two.
Gee, there I was, what was I to do? I asked myself:
From cloud to roof to pipe
Nothing clean; so, being weak and the smell so ripe,
I changed my attitude and joined the multitude

Of all the gunge, all the slime, all the muck
Hey man, such fun! Such luck!!”

“You know that’s all very well...” Goodropain interrupted
But Poolspew wouldn’t listen, being so corrupted.
He went on with his rave,
Almost impossible to save.

“**H**ey man, we slipped out into a river
With a concrete bottom on which we could slither;
“Owing to the sludge and the slime, the grudge and the grime,
The water of which I was a part
Sat around lazy and dark:
There I lay on my back, as now
While a mosquito tickled my stomach, Wow!
All the right ingredients for pollution nutrients:
Stagnant water
Damned up by cans, plastic bottles, a dog’s hindquarter!
In this I lay wasting away...
Nobody came to my plight,
So why, I thought, put up a fight
If you can’t beat ‘em join them
And this I did, I joined the mayhem.”
“Pity, if only you had...” Goodropain tried again,
But alas, in vain
For Poolspew hadn’t, d you think he was in pain?
If so he didn’t notice, he didn’t care.
He looked so stoned all he could do was stare

You know, Goodropain, my mate,
There’s one word I really hate.
I mean for me it’s so uncomfortable
Hey man it shouldn’t be printable
In fact it should be taxable
It’s a dying shame.
You wanna know its name.

This word that's so incorruptible?
I'll tell you it's bio bi bio b b i o d e g r a d a b l ...e....
It hurts me to say but it's so uncontrollable.
Bio bio biodegradable.
Hey man you know what it means don't you?"

Poolspew paused perhaps waiting for applause
Goodroprain, scratching his scalp, said to himself
"I'm gonna have to summon some help,
Poolspew too far gone and under stress
To clean up this unbiodegradable mess
I mean look what he's been through down gutter and pipe
Down rivers with garbage smelling so ripe!
There's only one thing to do no time to be stagnant
This is the job for the river agent...
But wait, Pools seems to have more to spew."

"Hey man, Goodroprain, what your scheming you schmuck!?
Wanna hear about my next turn of luck?
"Well, Ier....er..." but he didn't stand a chance...
"After the mosquito massage and the larva dance
I joined a gang of river slime
Performing hyped up pollution crime.
You know those plastic shopping packets??
In that we jived, made such a racket.
Until from the bottom of a car, a belly of oil named Slick
Showed us his style thick and quick
In no time at all he had us outa breath
And we jorled all night nearly to our death.
Then, those of us still alive
Were given a chance to revive
By listening to a story about a detergent
Which Slick thought rather urgent,
So he led us downstream
To frolic in this filthy white cream.
This was in fact left-over Omo
And there we lingered frothing in slomo
Plants died, coughing in strife...
Ag, to hell with green smelling indigenous wildlife!!"

While Poolspew cursed some more,
Goodroprain stopped a friend surfing to shore,
“Quick climb aboard a fish and go upstream,
Bring back the river agent and his team
NOW! Go now! Don’t delay
Poolspew is about to decay
There are thousands like him around
Turning our rivers into dying dusty ground
Go now! If James doesn’t come this minute
Pools will stretch beyond his limit
And not only him but the path he’s taken
Needs our care else all is forsaken
James is the one who can save the day
His team works wonders in their special way
Keeping our rivers fresh and clean
And turning the countryside back to green

The surfing friend got aboard a salmon
Swimming upstream as fast as a cannon
And in no time at all it seemed
The river agent appeared with his team

“Hi, what seems to be the problem?”

“Hey man! Who do you think you are: Superman?”

“The name’s River, James River, Double aitch Oh,
And I and my team can make any river flow.”

“So where’s this team of yours, ek sê?”

“Right here working for the cause,
Together we’ll clean up this mess
Don’t worry you’ve been under a bit of stress.
One moment please if you’ll stand aside,
We must begin and avoid more ecocide.”

“Ecocide?” asked Goodroprain

“Yes, ecocide: destruction of natural environment.
That’s what Poolspew has been through.

Now, without any further yahoo
Let’s see what our Team can do.....”