

## The Climate Ribbon — a DIY Kit for Faith Communities

*A participatory art ritual of love and hope for the Climate Justice Movement*

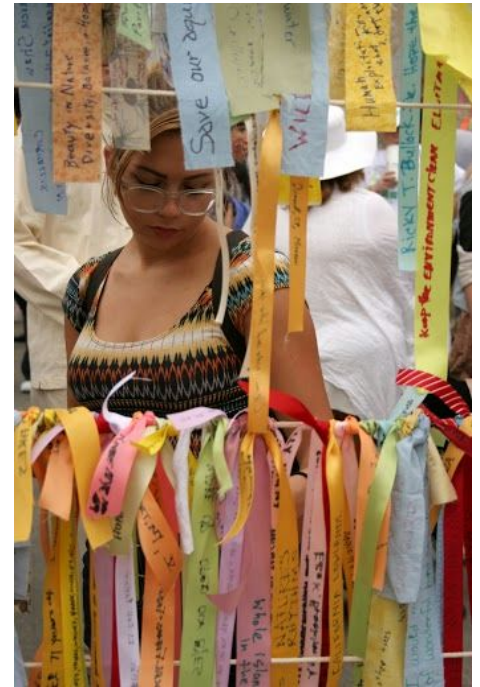
*"It takes roots to weather the storm."*

—Climate Justice Alliance

The Climate Ribbon is our movement's equivalent of the AIDS Quilt—a mass distributed art-ritual to grieve what each of us stands to lose to Climate Chaos, and affirm our solidarity as we unite to fight against it.

After its spectacular launch at the People's Climate March in New York, the Climate Ribbon has been inundated with requests from all over the world, including sites all along the lead-up to the next big climate mobilization in Paris. The process is simple: In a moment of deep reflection, write on a ribbon what you love and hope to never lose to Climate Chaos. Share it with others. When you are moved by someone else's ribbon, tie it to your wrist, committing to work to beat back Climate Chaos so that our worst fears never come true. Together, our promises weave a giant tapestry of commitment among all of us for a healthy, sustainable planet.

*Will you join us to help realize this vision of collective reflection, ritual, and redemptive action?*



### I LOVE AND HOPE TO NEVER LOSE...

the hope that my children can live healthy lives. Jon, Milwaukee

THE COASTLINE OF MANHATTAN - ANDY, LOWER EAST SIDE

The sound of bees buzzing in the morning. Monica H, NYC

Next year's harvest. Jacob L., Akron, OH

Miami, my city Lynda Montoya, FL

tumblr

### How the Climate Ribbon can support your climate justice work:

- > Create a gateway into the movement for non-yet-engaged people
- > Facilitate a deeper personal connection to the often abstract issue of climate change
- > Enable personal moments of awakening and solidarity that strengthen the movement
- > Offer a striking set of personal stories and visuals enticing the press to cover the issue
- > Provide a way for people to remotely but meaningfully participate in climate mobilizations by mailing in ribbons and posting ribbon-messages to twitter and
- > Engage a diverse network of faith-based leaders and communities

"Rituals like the Climate Ribbon have a power, beyond words, to connect us through our grieving into new ways of being and relating to one another and the world."

—Reverend Juan Carlos Ruiz, a community catalyst at St. Jacobi Church in Sunset Park, Brooklyn

"Like the AIDS Quilt, the Climate Ribbon works on two fronts simultaneously. One, it is both intimate and personal: it provides a place for us to tell our personal stories and share our feelings, fears, desires, hopes and griefs. In doing so, we show the outside world what's inside each of us. Two, it is large and collective: Together, our stories create a giant whole, allowing us to see each other & visualize the WE."

### Checklist of Stuff You'll Need

- > **Ribbons** - Consider recycling old ribbons from gift wrapping, or ripping an old sheet or piece of fabric into strips (ideally, the less imported new materials, the more eco-friendly, the better). We recommend 2 feet long ribbons, but you're welcome to take creative liberty to make sashes or other sizes. Pick a ribbon that is wide enough to write on.
- > **Pens** - Thin Sharpies and basic Bic pens are recommended. You can get crafty and add in glitter glue and colored markers and even collage in leaves and pressed flowers, as you wish.
- > **Table or clipboards** to write on.
- > **A tree** - You can designate a living tree in your community or churchyard to hang ribbons on (ongoingly or just for the duration of the ritual). Or if you're inside, simply display them on a table, or rig a clothesline to hang them on.
- > **Printed ritual script** - see sample included in this kit.
- > **A community...**

### Resources:

- > Flyer with ribbon making instructions
- > Sample [Press Release](http://bit.ly/climateribbonpr) ([bit.ly/climateribbonpr](http://bit.ly/climateribbonpr))
- > Detailed [Ritual Script](http://bit.ly/climateribbonritual) from the Climate Ribbon at the People's Climate March ([bit.ly/climateribbonritual](http://bit.ly/climateribbonritual))
- > [Reflections](http://theclimateribbon.org/witness) from past Climate Ribbon participants (<http://theclimateribbon.org/witness>)

### Ways to participate:

1. Convene a climate ribbon ritual at your local congregation or community meeting.
2. Designate a tree in your community, playground, place of worship as a Tree of Life.
3. Mail in your ribbons -- Climate Ribbon, 139 Norfolk St. #3D, New York, NY, 10002, USA
4. Post/tweet your photos (#climateribbon) and/or ribbon stories to [theclimateribbon.org](http://theclimateribbon.org)
5. Come to one of the big installations of the ribbons in DC, NY or Paris!

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### The Ritual (a short guide)

The Climate Ribbon is a simple and meaningful ritual that works for groups of all sizes. You can host an event with your community, faith group, local organization, union, or family. It has been done around the table in a meeting of five people; in a training with 20 people; in a church with 600 people; and at a march with thousands of people!

To help you facilitate the ritual, here is the basic arc and a few suggestions for what you might say:

**Open:** Introduce the Climate Ribbon, frame why it's an important activity in the context of your community or faith, and be concrete about what you're inviting/asking people to do (how long it will take, and what will be asked of them, etc.). Make sure folks feel safe and comfortable to proceed.

**Reflect:** Invite folks to take a quiet moment to reflect on what they "love and hope to never lose to Climate Chaos." Encourage them to be specific and personal. Ask them to write their response in a short statement on their ribbon. Then have them add their name and hometown (and age if they so choose).

**Share:** After each person creates a ribbon, have them tie it to the tree (or place it on a table, if there is no tree). The tied-on ribbons become the roots and leaves of a Tree of Life, an apt symbol of how we are bound up with the Earth; how we are both the root cause of climate chaos, and together have the power to change it; how we are the ancestors and the future generations.

**Witness:** Ask people to read the ribbons others have added to the Tree, and choose one that moves them deeply. Each person should in turn step forward and read aloud the ribbon they've chosen, concluding with

the person's name and "I am with you." As in: "Sally, I am with you." Then the whole crowd answers, "We are with you," acknowledging that person's fear, grief, love, and vulnerability. Alternatively, you can say, "Sally, I've got your back," and "We've got your back." After each person reads their chosen ribbon, have them tie it to their wrist. Through this exchange of ribbons we make a commitment to take action to protect a stranger's hopes and loves from Climate Chaos.

**Affirm:** The leader of the ritual might then offer a closing affirmation such as:

*We have said together - We are with you. We've got your back.*

*May these ribbons be our roots—to the Earth and to each other—and may their strength help us weather the storm.*

*May we care for each other and be the protectors and champions of each other's hopes and dreams.*

*May the solidarity we witnessed today be a foundation for our movement. May it weave our stories together, and make our movement real.*

If you choose to do the ritual around a living tree in your community or churchyard, it can become an ongoing and organic local activity, involving school groups or individual passersby.

If you are facilitating a large ritual such as with an entire congregation or conference assembly, you may wish to gather a group of volunteers or "guardians" to help "hold the space" at your ritual. They might dress in all white or wear a colored arm band to be easily recognizable. They can welcome folks into the ritual, staff the ribbon-making table, answer questions if asked, usher people up to the mike or stage to read ribbons, help tie ribbons to people's wrists, be there in case someone needs support, and in general make sure the ritual space is "breathable," safe and inviting.

### **Exhibiting your ribbons or adding them to the Global Project**

After your ritual, you may have many ribbons left over. You can leave them on display in your church or community center with an explanation and invitation. Or you can add them to our global project by mailing them to us. Like the AIDS Quilt, The Climate Ribbon Project brings thousands of ribbons together at big climate mobilizations, and in between mobilizations, we send them on traveling exhibits.

Please mail your ribbon to us at:

The Climate Ribbon  
139 Norfolk St #3D  
New York, NY 10002

### **Whatever you do...**

Please share your Climate Ribbon photos, reflections and experiences with us by email at [climateribbon@gmail.com](mailto:climateribbon@gmail.com).

*"We are tied together in the single garment of destiny, caught in an inescapable network of mutuality. And whatever affects one directly affects all indirectly."*

*—Dr. Martin Luther King*

The Climate Ribbon is a project of [Beautiful Trouble](#) and has a growing [list](#) of partnering organizations. If your group would like to be added to our list of partners, or if you have questions about creating a Climate Ribbon, contact us at [climateribbon@gmail.com](mailto:climateribbon@gmail.com).

[www.theclimateribbon.org](http://www.theclimateribbon.org)

## Sample Ritual Guide & Full Script

Length of ritual will vary (20 minutes+)

The ritual can happen in two ways:

1. as a facilitated activity within a prayer service, group meeting, conference, or other gathering
2. as a stand-alone ritual incorporating a tree in the community, as was done at the People's Climate March

This script is based on #1. For a stand-alone ritual (#2), you'd likely have a ribbon-making table where volunteers would pose the question, rather than a facilitated meditation or pair share. Just adapt the script below.

**Opening**     *Time: 2-5 minutes*  
*Excerpt as needed from the points below*

### **Introduction**

Welcome to the Tree of Life. Today we are participating in a global project called the Climate Ribbon.

When it comes to climate change, everything is at stake for us, everything we love is on the line. If I had to sum up what our movement is about in one phrase, it would be: Love vs. Climate Change.

### **Our Shared Past**

All the great successful movements — whether Gandhi and the Indian Independence movement, Mandela and the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, or our own civil rights movement here in the US -- were not just about the head, and feet (in the streets), but about the heart and the soul. If we are to survive climate change and make our way to a post-carbon future, our movement must also be great. It's got to be global, stay strong for decades, and we've got to carry it deep in our hearts. That's what we're about today.

### **Our Shared Future**

To honestly face the facts of climate change is not easy. The scale of potential devastation is so great that we feel overwhelmed. We switch off. For many of us the worst is yet to come—it's still abstract, so we put it out of our minds. Here today we have created a safe space to open our hearts to the reality of what is happening to us and our planet.

### **Our Shared Commitment**

The UN is supposed to be making a climate treaty that will save the planet, and protect those most impacted by climate change. But they have so far failed to do so. As usual, the people must show the way. So, what we're doing here today, at this gathering and with these ribbons, is to make a People's Treaty. A treaty we all make publicly with each other, a process that actually has its origins in Native American traditions of the Northeast, where for centuries quahog and whelk shell wampum belts were used to signify the mutual exchange of trust that takes place when commitments are made between peoples.

[Add some text here that is relevant for your faith community]

**Reflect**     *Time: 3 minutes*

Please take a moment to reflect on this question: What do you love and hope to never lose to Climate Chaos? What's at stake for you? Be specific and personal.

We'll take a silent moment to think about this, and then we'll share with each other. When I ring this bell, please turn to someone sitting next to you and share your thoughts.

[Facilitate pair sharing and bell ringing if you have time, if not, go straight from silent reflection to ribbon writing.]

Think of a phrase or string of words to describe what is at stake for you. Please write that on to your ribbon. Include your name and where you live—and, if you want, your age.

[Give out materials + let folks write!]

**Share**            *Time: 5 minutes - ongoing*

### **Tie Ribbons to Tree**

Please tie your ribbon to the Tree (if no Tree, place it on a table or just share it around the room).

When you add your ribbon, your ribbon becomes a leaf, or branch, or root of the Tree of Life. And as the Climate Justice Alliance tells us, "It takes strong roots to weather the storm."

After you add your own ribbon, take some time to read through the many other ribbons on the Tree. Choose one that speaks to your heart. By taking it, you're making a pledge to protect a stranger's hopes and loves from Climate Chaos.

**Witness**        *Time: 10 minutes - ongoing*

*Note: depending on number of people present, could take much longer.*

We will now name aloud the mixture of love and grief and hope that people have shared at the Tree. I'm going to begin.

[Model one sequence of ribbon-reading so people get the idea. Here's how it goes:]

Individual: "Andy, age 52 from the Lower East Side wrote, 'The coastline of Manhattan.' Andy, I've got your back."

Group: "We've got your back."

Individual: [Ties ribbon on wrist with help from a guardian or friend.]

[In a small group, you may have time for everyone to share the ribbons they chose. In a larger group, you can facilitate just a handful of ribbon readers, as time permits.]

[The sequence of "I" affirmation and then the "we" affirmation is really important. People tend to forget the "I" and just fall into echoing the "we" affirmation of the whole group. Modeling, or reminding people periodically or having a written sign near where people are speaking can help.]

**Affirm**            *Time: 2-5 minutes*

### **Closing**

We have said together "We are with you."

May these ribbons be our roots -- to the Earth and to each other -- and may their strength help us weather the storm.

May we care for each other and be the protectors and champions of each other's hopes and dreams.

May the solidarity we witnessed today be a foundation for our movement. May it weave our stories together, and make our movement real.

Together, our commitments weave a giant ribbon among all of us for a healthy, sustainable planet.

May we commit ourselves to roll back Climate Chaos in the world and in our communities.

[Mention now a specific project that the community or congregation is focused on.]

Thank you for participating.



**“MY APARTMENT. MY BOOKS,  
MY TOYS. MY BEST FRIEND. MY MOM.”**

AJ, NYC, AGE 8  
Displaced by Hurricane Sandy

**What do you love, and hope to never lose to Climate Chaos?  
ADD YOUR CLIMATE RIBBON TO THE TREE OF LIFE**

[www.theclimateribbon.org/make](http://www.theclimateribbon.org/make) #climateribbon



# THE CLIMATE RIBBON



[www.TheClimateRibbon.org](http://www.TheClimateRibbon.org)