

SKIT KIT



“Climate at the Dinner Table”

YOU Can Do This Skit

Are you looking for ways to talk about climate that are positive and engaging? This toolkit is for you and anyone passionate about using the power of performance to move climate action forward. No matter your experience level or background, this toolkit will help you create an entertaining performance that models productive climate conversation and action on solutions.

Whether you're in the drama club, a theater director, a religious congregation, a summer camp counselor, or just putting on a show for family or friends, this toolkit provides you with the resources to stage a skit that makes talking about climate change both fun and successful.

It's designed for people who want to take the drama out of climate conversations and, instead, put it on the stage! Empower your community to find common ground, build understanding, and work together toward solutions.



Skit Synopsis

An extended family sits down to dinner. The topic of climate change comes up and explodes into argument. The skit is paused to reflect on what went wrong and how to do it right. The conversation starts over with lessons applied for better outcomes. Running time: 12 minutes.

Get Inspired

Watch a recording of the original performance of this play for inspiration!

Watch Now

Steps to Do This Skit

1

Read Through the Toolkit

Begin by reading the toolkit in its entirety to familiarize yourself with its contents, objectives, and resources.

2

Determine Scale

Decide if you are going to do a simple skit with few props or whether you want to build out a more involved production. Secure the venue and skit date.

3

Assemble Your Team

Gather a group of interested participants. This should include your actors, and, depending on scale could also include a director, stage crew, and other volunteers (outreach, costumes, etc).

4

Assign Roles and/or Hold Auditions

Assign roles to your team members or hold auditions to find the right actors for each character. Consider inviting your local community theater actors to take part.

5

Review and Customize the Script

Read through the script and discuss it as a group. Use it “as is”, or customize it to fit your community’s context, incorporating local stories, examples, or cultural references that will resonate with your audience.

6

Make it Immersive

Consider hosting a post-performance discussion or Q&A session to engage the audience, encouraging them to share their thoughts and ideas on the themes presented in the skit.

7

Plan Rehearsals

Schedule rehearsals, including table reads (each character reading their part), “blocking” (movement on the stage), and full skit run-throughs.

8

Design Sets, Costumes, and Props

You can do this skit with a very simple set including a chair for each actor. You can also enhance the sets by adding lighting, costumes, and props. Be sure the audience will be able to see and hear the actors.

9

Promote Your Performance

Utilize the promotional toolkit (see below) to attract an audience. Depending on your venue and audience, you can utilize social media, community bulletin boards, school/congregation/event websites and newsletters, local newspapers, and partnerships with local organizations to spread the word. Note that some channels require 2 or more months of time to include your promotion.

10

Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse

Conduct dress rehearsals to fine-tune the performance, ensuring everyone is comfortable with their roles and the timing of the skit.

11

Perform the Skit

Stage your skit in a local venue, such as a community center, school, park, or place of worship. Be sure to take pictures and videos and share them with us! After the performance, facilitate a conversation with the audience about climate change, finding common ground, and taking action.

12

Gather Feedback and Share Your Success

Collect feedback from the audience and participants. Share the success of your event with us, the community, and other groups interested in staging the skit. Email: info@ecoamerica.org



“Climate at the Dinner Table”

The first step is downloading and reviewing the script. Make notes on places where customization, if any, would work better for your community.

DOWNLOAD THE SCRIPT

Licensing and Credit

This work, including the script and toolkit, is licensed under [Creative Commons \(BY-SA-NC\)](#). You are free to use, produce, and adapt the material, provided that you give appropriate credit to Jonathan Parfrey as the playwright and ecoAmerica as the toolkit creator. You may not use the material for commercial purposes.



Ideas for Script Customization

Change the Occasion

The original skit is set around a Thanksgiving table, but that doesn't mean this can only be staged at one time of the year. Consider adapting the script to be set at a Fourth of July barbecue, family reunion, birthday party, school event, religious celebration, or another relevant event for your audience and community.

Adapt for Local Context

Ensure that the skit resonates with the widest audience possible by adapting the script to reflect the cultural beliefs and lived experience of your audience. For example, the original skit includes a prayer in the Christian tradition, but can be adapted to other faith contexts or be made secular to reach a general audience.

Broaden the Characters

Consider adapting the script to reflect character names or family structures that may be more familiar to your audience. This could include adapting or adding characters to portray a blended or multi-generational family, changing social context entirely to a group of friends, or other character adaptations to represent your community.

Other Customizations

You know your community best. The skit will be most successful if the audience can see themselves in it. Add in local cultural references and adaptations that will resonate with the people you're performing for. Also, consider improvisation to respond to and engage your audience.



List of Roles

Staging a simpler performance? No problem. Combine roles or omit those you don't need.

Actors

Tara: Calm, reasonable, and focused on bridging the family's differences. Mother of Bess and Sam, sister of Joe.

Nick: Passionate about climate change and willing to engage in debates. Tara's husband, father of Bess and Sam.

Joe: Combative but family-oriented. Tara's older brother, a skeptic of climate change.

Lisa: Open to being persuaded by Tara's arguments, mediates between Joe and the others. Joe's wife.

Bess: Playful and knowledgeable. Child of Tara and Nick.

Sam: Energetic and playful. Child of Tara and Nick.

Backstage (Optional)

Director: Oversees the production, guides the actors' performances,

and ensures the play's vision is realized.

Stage Manager: Manages the logistics of the production, including rehearsals, props, and set design.

Lighting Technician: Controls the lighting effects, creating mood changes and highlighting specific scenes.

Sound Technician: Manages sound effects and background music to enhance the play's atmosphere.

Costume Designer: Designs or selects appropriate costumes for the characters to reflect their roles and personalities.

Publicity Manager: Handles marketing and promotion of the play to attract an audience.

Facilitator: Leads the post-performance discussion to engage the audience in conversations about climate change.



Set Description

The set is an inviting home, centered around a large dining room table adorned with a simple, tasteful tablecloth, a decorative centerpiece, and place settings for a family meal. There should be chairs for each character around the table.

The backdrop suggests a cozy, lived-in home, with warm lighting to create a welcoming atmosphere and small details like framed family photos or seasonal decorations.

The set should be flexible to allow for movement around the table and quick changes in lighting to emphasize key moments and monologues.



Props & Equipment

Select props and stage elements that are right for your budget, venue, and vision. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Dining Table and Chairs: You can keep it simple with a chair for each of the actors arranged around an invisible table. Or, you can add a large table, set for dinner.

Costumes: Clothing appropriate for the dinner, whether it is Thanksgiving or an event of your choosing, reflecting each character's personality.

Optional Additional Props

Table Settings: Plates, utensils, napkins, glasses, and a tablecloth.

Centerpiece: A decorative centerpiece for the table, such as flowers.

Food Dishes: Props to represent a bountiful meal that is culturally relevant to your audience. Be sure to include serving utensils or have the actors mime them.

Room elements: Should be relevant to your setting,

e.g. family photos, holiday decorations, other furniture.

Pitcher or Beverage: A pitcher of water or another beverage for serving.

Video Projector: Instead of settings, centerpiece, food, and serving utensils, consider projecting an image of a set table on the wall above the scene to help the audience imagine what is on the table.

Sound Effects: Background sounds for clattering utensils, plates, and general dining ambiance.

Lighting: To create different moods (e.g., warm lighting for the dinner scene, red or harsh lighting for the argument, a spotlight for Joe's monologue)



Audience Discussion

To make the performance more immersive, consider adding a facilitated conversation to the end of the skit. If you do this, be sure to select a skilled facilitator to guide a constructive and engaging conversation with the audience. Ensure this facilitator is familiar with the play and the [5 Steps to Effective Climate Communication](#) from ecoAmerica.

For the discussion, aim to create a safe space where different perspectives can be shared. Begin by thanking the audience for attending and encouraging everyone to participate openly and respectfully. Ask open-ended questions that prompt reflection on the themes of the skit. Keep the conversation focused on practical tips for talking about climate change. Note: the 5 Steps to Effective Climate Communication guide is included in the theater program template.

If you or anyone in your cast or crew would like further training on communicating on climate, you can take ecoAmerica's free online [Climate Ambassador Training](#). It takes just a few hours and can be completed at your own time and pace.



Scan for Help!



Discussion Questions

After the performance, pose these questions to your audience to start a discussion

Did any of the characters or dialogue remind you of conversations you've had in your own life? How so?

How did the characters attempt to find common ground during their discussion? Were they successful?

What strategies did you notice that helped or hindered productive conversation about climate change among the characters?

How might you apply these strategies in your own conversations about climate change with family, friends, or coworkers?

What challenges do you anticipate when trying to discuss climate change with others who may have different opinions? How could these be addressed?

What is one step you can take after today to engage others in a conversation about climate change?



The Program

Offering a program helps your audience follow the storyline, and provides a way for you to share additional information or resources. A customizable template of a sample program is available on Canva. The program contains helpful additional guidance for the audience to communicate about climate change more effectively, including a simple 5 Step guide and some Easy Actions they can take to help solve climate change.

Instructions:

1) Click on the link to access the template, 2) Make a copy of the template, 3) edit the details to suit your performance, 4) download and save as a PDF, then 5) print for your audience.

[ACCESS THE PROGRAM TEMPLATE](#)

Promotional Toolkit

Whether you are performing this skit for a small group or making it a more professional event, promoting it can ensure you get good attendance and participation.

Promotional Content

Whether for use in social media, on a website, or in newsletters or newspapers, these customizable posts are designed to help you spread the word about your skit and build excitement and attendance. Personalize these posts with your production details and unique style. You can also include graphics and images, such as photos from rehearsals, set design, cast member profiles, and behind-the-scenes moments to create interest.

For social media:

Leverage hashtags like #ClimateConversation, #ClimateAction, #LetsTalkClimate, #CommunityTheater and #LocalTheater. Tag your theater group, cast members, local organizations, and @ecoAmerica. Ask questions, run countdowns, and invite followers to share your posts in order to boost your reach.

Announcement

Short:

Excited to bring 'Climate at the Dinner Table' to [venue], [city] on [date]! Join us for a dramatic and humorous evening exploring effective ways to talk about our climate 🌍🗣️ #LetsTalkClimate [ticket link]

Long:

We're excited to announce our upcoming production of 'Climate at the Dinner Table' on [date] at [time] at [venue] in [city]! 🗣️ Join us for an

[immersive] evening of family drama and humor as we explore and model effective ways to talk about climate change. Let's find common ground and explore solutions together!

Save the date and invite your friends! 🌍 #ClimateConversation #LetsTalkClimate [ticket link]

Image: Poster or photo of the cast

Meet the Cast

Short:

Meet the cast! 🗣️ Say hello to [actor's name, actor's @] who plays [character] in 'Climate at the Dinner Table!' #LetsTalkClimate [ticket link]

Long:

Meet the cast of 'Climate at the Dinner Table!' 🗣️ Say hello to [actor's name, actor's @] who plays [character], a [character description] Come see them in action on [date] at [venue] in [city]!

Don't miss this unique chance to watch our local talent dramatically fail and then heartwarmingly succeed in conversing about climate change with family 🗣️ Get your tickets now! [ticket link]

#LetsTalkClimate #SupportLocalArt

Image: Portrait of cast member with bio and character name.

Sneak Peek

Short:

Rehearsals are in full swing for 'Climate at the Dinner Table!' Can't wait to see you there on [date] 🗣️ #BehindTheScenes #LetsTalkClimate [ticket link]

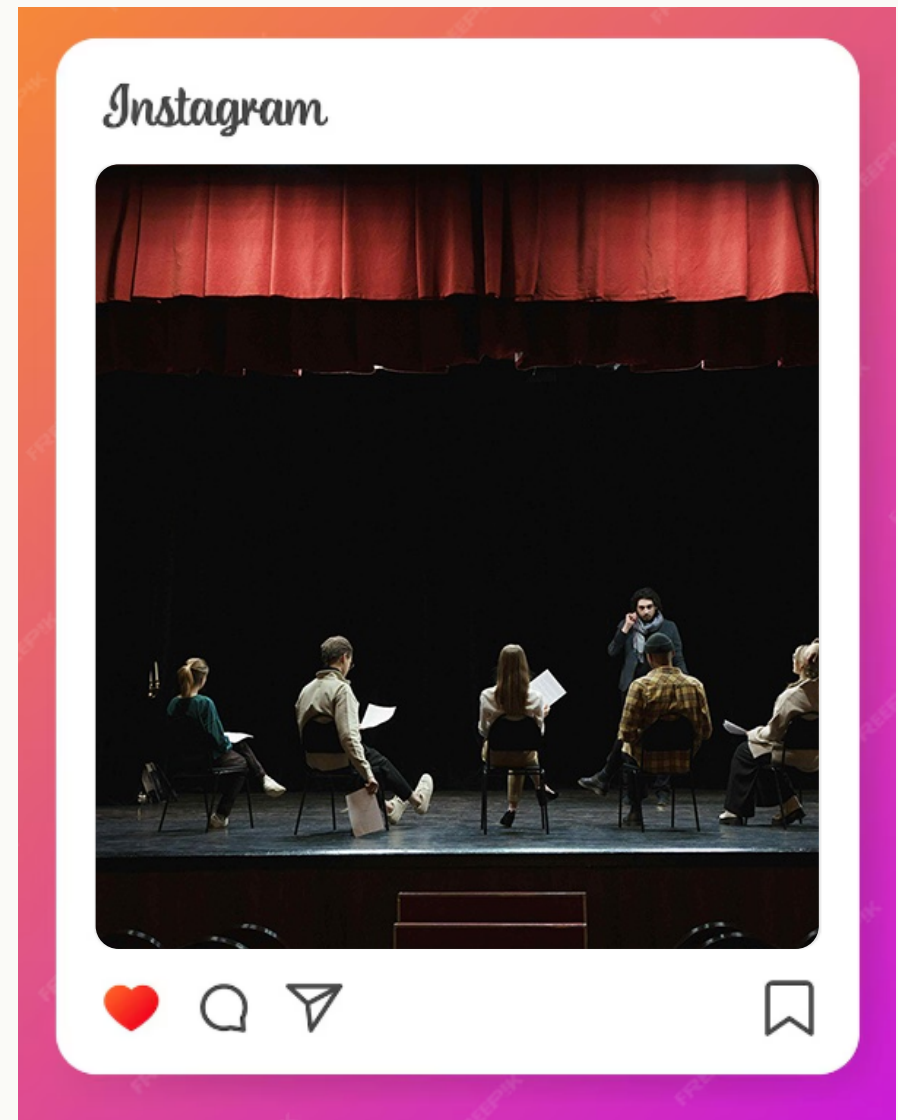
Promotional Toolkit

Long:

Behind the scenes of 'Climate at the Dinner Table!' Here's a sneak peek of our cast in rehearsal, preparing to bring you an entertaining conversation about climate change 🗣️🌱

Catch the performance on [date] at [time], [venue], [city]. Watch as they dramatically fail, then heartwarmingly succeed at climate conversation with family [ticket link] #ClimateAction #MakingADifference

Image: Candid photo of actors, short video clip of rehearsal, photo of set design or costumes.



Promotional Toolkit

Event Reminder

Short:

Don't miss 'Climate at the Dinner Table', [date] at [venue], [city]! An evening of drama, humor, dialogue, and climate action awaits! 🎭 [ticket link] #LetsTalkClimate

Long:

Just [number] days left until 'Climate at the Dinner Table' opens! Have you marked your calendars yet? 📅 🎭

Join us at [venue] on [date] at [time] for an evening of humor, conversation, and connection on climate change. Tickets are going fast, so grab yours today! 🎫 [ticket link] 🌍 🤝

#CountdownToCurtain #LetsTalkClimate

Image: Countdown graphic, photo of cast on stage

Email Template

Subject: Join us for 'Climate at the Dinner Table'

Body:

Dear [recipient's name],

We are thrilled to invite you to our upcoming production of 'Climate at the Dinner Table' on [date] at [time] at [venue] in [city].

This skit takes a playful and humorous approach to explore and model how to have conversations about climate change. Set around [the Thanksgiving dinner table], watch as our actors dramatically fail, then heartwarmingly succeed in talking about climate change with family. Rife with colorful characters, family drama, and familiar tropes, this skit will make you laugh while you learn we share more common ground than you think.

Bring your friends and family for an evening of entertainment and reflection. Tickets are available here: [ticket link].

We look forward to seeing you there!

Best regards,

[your name / organization]

