



## Low Carbon Diet Guide

After building bonds of community, deepening our understanding of ourselves and each other and strengthening our commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through study and reflection during the first four sessions, your “Carbon Ring” should now be ready to begin the second part of the course – the carbon “diet”. As this phase requires research, discussion, and negotiation with family and housemates, we have found it useful to have more time between sessions and to meet every other week.

The Low Carbon Diet: A 30 Day Program to Lose 5000 Pounds by David Gershon includes a guide of each session. After working with this workbook and a number of groups, we found that a simpler session guide is more natural and effective for us. Feel free to use this session guide, or the guide presented in the Low Carbon Diet. You might even make some improvements of your own!

**Ring Leader:** The group will need a facilitator to lead the discussions and make sure that everyone has an opportunity to be heard. You don’t need to be an “expert,” you just need to be doing the Low Carbon Diet yourself, or have completed it already.

**Materials needed:** Each person will need a copy of Low Carbon Diet by David Gershon, a printed copy of the Carbon Calculator from the UULM-CA website ([www.uulmca.org](http://www.uulmca.org)), and a printed copy of the Action Plan worksheets (pages 47-50 in the workbook). The Ring Leader will need a copy of the opening and closing reading, the song, and a candle and match for the chalice.

### Session I: Carbon Calculator + Workbook

The Focus of the first session is reviewing and asking questions about the Carbon Calculator. This is also the time to review the Low Carbon Diet workbook.

- Chalice lighting, opening song and/or reading (see attached) – 3 minutes
- Opener shares - 5 minutes
- Each person says why they want to be part of a Carbon Ring – 15 minutes
- Hand out materials.
- Review the carbon calculator. Discuss how to find the most complete data – 20 min.
- Review the workbook: Section One, Section Two, & Action Plan pgs 48-49 – 10 min.
- Set any remaining dates for carbon ring if they are not already set. – 5 minutes.
- Come up with a fun name for your “Carbon Ring.” - 10 minutes

- Remind people to keep ALL calculation notes for comparison in the future.
- Closing circle – song and blessing (see below) – 5 minutes

**Homework:** Complete your carbon calculator. It is important to be as thorough as possible. (*It takes most of us a good two hours or so.*) Look over the Action Plan, and start picking some of your actions. Actually start doing some of the actions so you can share about how they went.

## **Session 2: What Happened and Goals**

In the second session, share about what you found when you did your carbon calculator, any revelations, feelings, questions. Also, some things you're planning because of what the numbers on the calculator revealed.

- Chalice lighting, opening song and inspirational reading – 3 minutes
- Opener shares - 5 minutes
- Share about the Carbon Calculator. How did it feel to do it? Did you learn anything new about yourself? Make sure everyone gets a chance to talk. – 30 minutes
- Share about preliminary action plans, questions, and any action already taken. – 20 minutes
- Closing Circle – song and blessing – 5 minutes

**Homework:** Flesh out your Action Plan, and do more of the actions and research needed to complete your plan.

## **Session 3: What Happened and Goals**

The third session is a time to discuss how you plan to lose 5,000 lbs. What is working for you? Do you have things that your Carbon Ring can help you solve?

- Chalice Lighting and opening song and/or reading – 3 minutes
- Opener shares - 5 minutes
- Each person share one thing that is working for you, & one thing that is not – 15 min.
- Each household shares how they plan to meet their goal (their Action Plan). – 20 min
- Use the final time for any questions and discussion or sharing – 10 minutes
- Closing Circle – song and blessing – 5 minutes

**Homework:** Complete your action plan worksheet including what you've done and will do, with your pledge dates. If you want, make a copy of your worksheets so you can give a copy to your "Ring Leader."

## **Session 4: Report Your Data, and Celebrate**

The final session is an important time to celebrate the real difference that your group made. Maybe you lost more pounds than you thought you would, or maybe you lost fewer. Collect the data, send it in, and be part of something real.

- Chalice Lighting with song and/or reading – 3 minutes
- Opener shares - 5 minutes
- Each person shares how they feel, or what they think about their Low Carbon Diet. – 15 minutes

- Discuss helping others to start a Carbon Ring. How can you support that? Would anyone like to be a “Ring Leader” to help another Carbon Ring get started? – 20 min
- Collect the final numbers from each household, add them, and celebrate your success – 15 minutes
- Remind people about the anniversary potluck. Tell everyone to keep their records – 5 min
- Short reading – 2 minutes
- Closing song and blessing – 5 minutes

**Homework:** Everyone file your Carbon Calculator and calculations in a handy location in case you need to refer to them in the following months. Ring Leader – send the data for the Carbon Ring UULM-CA.

## **One Year Anniversary Potluck and “Weigh-In”**

The anniversary meeting is where you compare your current carbon footprint to where you were when you started the Low Carbon Diet, one year ago. (*Note: We have not had a chance to do this yet, but we are planning to.*)

**Prepare:** Contact everyone three weeks before to remind them of the potluck. Everyone - complete a new Carbon Calculator. Do the math: are you carbon emissions higher or lower than they were a year ago?

Watching the numbers go down can make this a very fun and satisfying experience.

- Chalice lighting and opening song and/or reading – 5 minutes
- Everyone check in about your progress on the Low Carbon Diet. - 25 minutes
- Just for fun, add up total number of pounds the group lost in the last year. – 15 min
- Share any other Low Carbon actions you are involved in or would like to do. - 15 min
- Closing Circle with song and blessing – 5 minutes

## **Suggested Closing Blessing**

Join hands. The leader reads each line one at a time, and the group says the line together in response (done for each of the four lines).

May faith in the Spirit of Life  
 Hope for the Community of Earth  
 And love of the Sacred in one another  
 Be ours now and in all the days to come.

Unitarian Universalist Legislative Ministry ♦ California  
 717 K Street, # 514, Sacramento, CA 95814 (916) 441- 0018

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

