

Introducing your group to  
*Join the Band*

Join the Band is a New Community Project initiative to invite people to make commitments to live sustainably with God's earth and seek justice for people everywhere. While participation is open to all, joining the Band is meant to be a serious commitment not entered into lightly. The following items are offered as a means of introducing JTB to your group while conveying both the invitation to join and the significance of participating.

First vignette

One: Hey, cool wristband! Cancer awareness? Violence against women? Discount at the grocery store?

Two (continuing about business): None of the above.

One: So, what is it!?

Two (nonchalant): You wouldn't want to know.

One: How do you know I wouldn't want to know?! That's presumptuous of you—assuming you know what I want to know or don't want to know!

Two: Trust me.

One: I don't think so! You're hiding something from me, aren't you. Got a little secret that you don't want to tell, because you don't think I can handle it. Well, I'm a big girl (boy)! Go ahead, hit me with your best shot. Tell me what the stinking wristband is about!

Two: O.K., "big girl." It's a commitment to live sustainably with the earth and justly with our neighbors. It recognizes the hurt we're putting on God's earth and the gross inequities among God's people. And it says the wearer is willing to do their part to try to change this.

One (stunned silence, then...) Th-that's very nice.

Two: Any other questions?

One (weakly): Where'd you get it?

Two: It's made by the Siona people of the Ecuadorian Amazon of sustainably harvested rainforest materials. The New Community Project sends them to people who Join the Band.

One: I'm afraid to ask.... But what's "Join the Band"?

Two: It's a group—or "band"—of people who have made the commitments I just told you about. They agree to try to live more responsibly, and for a small donation they get one of these wristbands as a reminder of their commitment. The money goes to the Siona, and the wristband goes...on your wrist.

One: O.K., so I just pay the money and get this cool wristband, right?

Two: Wrong. You have to seriously think about your commitment, then write out how you plan to live out your commitment, then sign the commitment form in front of a witness, then send your commitment

to the NCP office. They sign the commitment form and send it back, and then put your commitments up on a special page of their website.

One: That's a lot of "commitment."

Two: It is indeed—but not too much for a big girl like you. Are you up to it?

One: I'll think about it. I'd rather just give money.

Two: Wouldn't we all.

### Second Vignette

Introduction: Join the Band is a program of the New Community Project that invites us to think about our world, its people, its other living things, and how we can live responsibly as Christians in a world like this. Consider this:

*One: We share this planet with over six billion other people. What about them?*

Two: Three billion of them live on less than \$3 a day. One billion on less than \$1 a day.

Three: A billion don't have clean water.

Two: Two billion either don't have enough food or the right kinds of food.

*One: What about the world's children?*

Two: 700,000 die from malaria every year. 2 million die of disease from drinking unclean water. 2 million are trapped in the sex trade.

Three: 100 million are not in elementary school. Lots more than that are not in high school.

Two: 250 million children 15 and under are working—when they should be in school.

*One: And what about us?*

Three: People in the United States typically earn 100 times more than people in the world's poorest areas. We have so much, we don't know what to do with it.

Two: We'll spend \$46 billion this year on diet products—and \$13 billion on chocolate.

Three: 65% of children here have a TV in their room.

Two: An average adult will buy 48 items of clothing per year.

Three: Our government ranks last among rich nations in the proportion of our wealth we give in aid to the world's poor—

Two: And first (more than the rest of the world combined) in military spending.

*One: What's a Christian to do?*

Two: There's charity—asking what can we do to meet the need of the moment.

Three: There's development—asking how can we work together to learn skills to live.

Two: There's justice—asking why are people poor, and what needs to be done to remove the yoke of poverty.

Three: There's caring for the earth—asking how to have a livable planet—now and in the future.

Two: And there's discipleship—asking what it means to follow Jesus in a world like this.

*One: Ask...and you shall receive. And so will they.*

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