



This interview is offered as supplemental material to the publication, *Listen to the Children: Justice Worship Resource with Reference to Epiphany Year A* (2019).

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Sophia Mathur Interview

Interviewer's Name: Amelia Berot-Burns

Interview Date: August 2019

Child's Name: Sophia Mathur (Pronouns: she/her)

Child's Age: 12 years old

Child's Relationship to KAIROS: youth climate activist

Can you tell us a little bit about who you are or introduce yourself?

My name is Sophia Mathur. I was born in April 2007. I have known about the climate crisis ever since I could speak. I have always been in awe of nature and animals and always had a big heart for those suffering from poverty. The climate crisis is making everything worse. Heatwaves, storms, droughts, floods and fires are getting worse.

I wanted to be a part of a youth movement to help solve this crisis. In the late summer of 2018, I heard of Fridays for Future and Greta Thunberg and how she strikes every Friday to protect the climate and to show the government that we want change. Greta empowered me to start striking on November 2, 2018, initially one Friday a month but at least four days a month starting in May 2019.

I have also been lobbying on Parliament Hill since I was seven and Capitol Hill since I was nine years old.

What does "peace" mean to you? What does "freedom" mean to you? What does it mean to be safe?

"Peace" and "freedom" and to be safe to me mean not having to worry and suffer, not having to think of something all the time till you're overly stressed out. Just being free and protected because you know everything is going in the right path.

What do you as a child/youth need for the above to happen?

We need all politicians to follow expert advice such as the IPCC [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change], the Paris agreement, Noble prize economists and the Lancet Countdown and create a climate plan based from what the experts say. The Pope is following the expert advice and so are most mainstream Canadian churches and religious groups. My parents have taught me that we are God's hands on Earth. Humans must do the work of protecting the poor and the planet.

Why is justice work important? Why is climate change an issue that you care about?

In my opinion, the climate crisis is the world's number one problem. It will affect EVERYTHING. It's even worse for youth like me because we will have to live in this world long after the generation that did most

of the damage are dead. Justice is needed. Youth want to live a normal life. That's why we need to act now.

Children are supposed to have the freedom to play, to choose their own friends, and to express themselves. Does that always happen? Why or why not?

Because of the climate crisis, no, I don't have the freedom to play. I cannot go on with my daily life knowing my future is at risk. In the past year, I have experienced tornado warnings while camping, forest fire smoke for weeks on end and record-breaking snowfall of over 13 feet this winter. The climate crisis is super scary, is happening now and adults are not doing enough.

What is your message for children in Canada?

Your future is at risk. Adults are not doing enough to fix it. Join or start a Fridays For Future strike or if you can't miss school wear anything green to school and tell friends and classmates about the climate crisis. Ask adults in your life to vote for the climate. Perhaps ask your parents and grandparents to let you cast their ballot for them.