

Just Faith NETWORK



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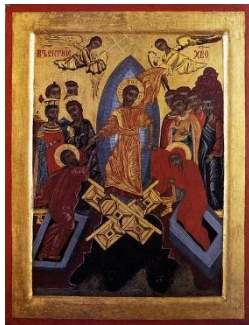
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In partnership with:



breadfor**theworld**
HAVE FAITH. END HUNGER.

April 2019



This year, Western Christianity will celebrate **Easter** on April 21! In preparation for Easter, this April resource focuses on hope as a Christian virtue that nourishes us in our struggle for justice. Hope invites us to imagine a different world, to dream, and to work towards change.

Jack Jezreel, the Founder of JustFaith Ministries, offers his reflections on hope in a short exclusive video, starting with the words of Paul in 1 Corinthians 13:13: “And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.” (*NIV*)

This resource offers **an outline for a one-hour meditation on the topic of hope** and is designed for a small group. In preparation for Easter, gather a few friends and/or members of your community to reflect on the role of hope in your life, spirituality, and work of justice.

If you prefer, you can use this outline for your own individual use; we encourage you to meditate and journal as you go through the material.

Additional Resources:

-Jack Jezreel, *A New Way to Be Church*, Orbis Books 2018.

-Wikipedia article on 1 Corinthians 13: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1_Corinthians_13

-Article Britannica on hope in Christianity: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hope-Christianity>

-Article from the Taizé community on hope: https://www.taize.fr/en_article343.html

If you are interested in exploring further the relationship between spiritual grounding and work of justice, consider signing up for our new JustMatters module, **Just Engagement: The Power to Change**, that addresses the role of advocacy from a faith perspective. Visit our [page](#) to learn more and to register your community for this journey of action!

Hope That Matters

Items Needed for Small Group Use:

- For prayer:
 - A pillar candle and matches or lighter;
 - A tablecloth and a Bible to set on a table open to 1 Corinthians 13:1-13;
 - A cross, an icon, an inspirational image, flowers... choose a symbol or object you feel comfortable bringing.
- Laptop, speakers, and screen for video and music.
- Copies of the **Participant Handout**.
- Some brochures and flyers for JustFaith Ministries' programs and network (contact our staff at info@justfaith.org).

Schedule for this Session

Activity	Minutes
Gathering & Prayer	10 minutes
Biblical Reading	10 minutes
Video & Discussion	30 minutes
Closing Prayer	10 minutes
Total	60

Gathering and Prayer (10 minutes)

Gather your group and welcome everyone with these or similar words:

Welcome to this gathering. As we prepare for Easter, we want to set some time aside to reflect on hope and how, as we are about to celebrate Jesus' victory over death, hope can be the foundation of our faith, our struggle for justice, and our love for each other. Let us start by listening to a Taizé song: "Through your cross and your passion, free us, Lord. Through your holy resurrection, free us, Lord."

Light the candle.

Listen together to Taizé song (3'42") "Per Crucem:"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dvYZW0zKPxI&index=26&list=RDpm6Zr3EqIhE>

Per crucem et passionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine.

Per crucem et passionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine.

Per sanctam resurrectionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine

English:

Through your cross and your passion, free us, Lord.

Through your holy resurrection, free us, Lord.

Biblical Reading (10 minutes)

Invite the group to read together 1 Corinthians 13:1-13:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Invite everyone to some quiet reflection time.

Repeat the last verse aloud:

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

Jack Jezreel's Reflection and Discussion (30 minutes)

Set up your laptop and speakers to watch the short video (6 minutes) by Jack Jezreel on the theme of hope: <https://youtu.be/-hz25Gc5eFM>

After watching the video, begin the conversation with one or two of the following or similar questions:

1. How do you understand the interaction between faith, hope, and love? How do they support each other?
2. What is the reign of God for you? Where do you see it at play?
3. How do you understand the difference between hope and optimism?
4. How is your faith community answering the question of "how to live well?"

To conclude, go around the circle and ask each person to express in a few words what they are hoping for as they are approaching Easter.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Invite everyone to a moment of prayer with these or similar words:

As we are ascending to the Golgotha, reading ourselves to remember Jesus' passion, death, and resurrection, let's equip ourselves with hope for the world, for God's kingdom to come through our acts of justice and love. Let us pray.

Invite the group to share the following prayer/poem written by Susie Tierney, JFM's Executive Director:

"Be Dazzling" by Susie Tierney

Reader 1: Please don't doubt
 you can change
 the world;
 even weeds know
 they have the power
 to alter your
 Bleeding Hearts

and weekend plans.

Reader 2: Please don't doubt
you lack the potential
to be awe-inspiring;
even a jellyfish
can mesmerize
a holiday weekend
mob with its translucent charm.

Reader 3: Please don't lose
your propensity for hope;
even a slobbery
Saint Bernard
knows how to wait
with wild expectation
for tiny bits of delight
to fall within reach.

Reader 4: Please don't doubt
your ability to effect peace;
even a toddler knows
the weight of "please"
and "thank you;"
"excuse me" and "I'm sorry."

Reader 5: Instead, become
the moon
with its audacity
to let go of the sky
to make way
for the illumination of the world.

Conclude by listening to Taizé song (3'18") "Cruce[m] Tuam:"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FRrYRORosgo>

*Crucem tuam adoramus Domine,
Resurrectionem tuam laudamus Domine.
Laudamus et glorificamus.
Resurrectionem tuam laudamus Domine.*

English:

We adore your cross, Lord.
We praise your resurrection.

Invite everyone to exchange a sign of peace.

Extinguish the candle.

Participants Handout

1) Taizé Song “Per Crucem:”

Per crucem et passionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine.

Per crucem et passionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine.

Per sanctam resurrectionem tuam.

Libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, libera nos Domine, Domine

English:

Through your cross and your passion, free us, Lord.

Through your holy resurrection, free us, Lord.

2) Biblical Reading 1 Corinthians 13:1-13:

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. For now, we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

—From the *New International Version (NIV)*

3) Closing Prayer/Poem:

“Be Dazzling” by Susie Tierney

- Reader 1: Please don't doubt
you can change
the world;
even weeds know
they have the power
to alter your
Bleeding Hearts
and weekend plans.
- Reader 2: Please don't doubt
you lack the potential
to be awe-inspiring;
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- Reader 5: Instead, become
the moon
with its audacity
to let go of the sky
to make way
for the illumination of the world.

4) Taizé song “Crucem Tuam:”

*Crucem tuam adoramus Domine,
Resurrectionem tuam laudamus Domine.
Laudamus et glorificamus.
Resurrectionem tuam laudamus Domine.*

English:

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