



The Call to Kinship November 9, 2021

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this offering will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

Our bi-monthly resources are sent the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month; you can access an archive of past resources by logging into your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via video conferencing. If you are new to video conferencing, Zoom tutorials are available on our YouTube page – [Click here to access.](#)

While we hope that these twice-monthly resources will inspire and sustain your community while distancing, now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs. This resource highlights themes to be found in JustFaith Ministries' *JustFaith* programs; click [here](#) and look for the "JustFaith Series."

Note: If you are doing this resource with a small group, be sure to send out this [link](#) to the video to be discussed in this resource and invite members of your group to watch the video before you come together. Alternatively, you can decide to watch the video together as part of the session.

Last but not least, all of our work is a collaboration with people like you. When you donate, your gift helps us sustain and equip individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out.](#) Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

With gratitude,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you. Today we'll begin with an opening prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around the article we read, before closing in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening prayer. In advance, assign someone to read aloud the following prayer:

Prayer to Be One

Holy God,
God of One,
God of Oneness,
God of Communion,
Maker of a universe that is all connected,
A universe in which everything is a part of everything,
Holy God, make US one.
We, who would rather go solo, walk away, stay away,
Disconnect, hide our eyes, hide away, be individual,
Work over our hearts until they function again,
To know that the blood that they pump is the same stuff
That flows in the heart of our neighbor, keeping us both alive.

Help us dismantle the walls to oneness.
Help us expose the lies of separateness,
hiding in the messages of blame and shame,
lurking in the lies of race and wealth and power,
embedded self-righteously in our religions and morality.

Instead, give us arms for welcome,
Hearts for hospitality, time for strangers,
Patience for inconvenience, and a tithe for the ones out of our view.

Let the web of joy, compassion, solidarity and kinship



**Be the fruit of our lives, connected, linked, absorbed
Into a world of wonderful oneness.**

**We pray this in the name of a God who is
Above, below, around, within.**

Amen.

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

Ask these open-ended questions. If you are by yourself, journal about them.

Note: If you are with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.

- **Before we begin this our reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?

Reflection (25 minutes or so)

Members of your group should have watched this video: ["Compassion and Kinship"](#) or you can watch the video together as part of this session.

Invite responses to a few (not all) of these questions:

- 1. What did you find most compelling about the video?**



2. Boyle observes, “no kinship, no justice; no kinship, no peace.” Your response?
3. Boyle notes that the thought that we’re separate is an illusion. What do you think makes that illusion so tempting?
4. How does the video challenge you personally?
5. Boyle offers that “People can’t demonize people they know.” Share an example of this from your own life.

Announcements (5-10 minutes)

- This resource touches on the topics of poverty and abandonment and gives just a taste of a much larger exploration that is possible. For a more robust experience, consider our JustFaith programs, found [here](#). Also, we just released a new program on civil dialogue entitled “Want to Talk?” See our website for details.
- On Thursday, November 18, 7:00 p.m. ET, JustFaith Ministries’ “Acting for Justice” Series will continue with guest speaker, Tom Ulrich, author of ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: Organizing Social Justice Ministry in Faith Communities. Tom, a veteran of social justice ministry, will give a presentation entitled “A Spirituality for Social Justice Ministry.” You can register [here](#).
- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. To support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- Are there any opportunities for action or advocacy happening in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways to support the work of local groups working for justice or care for the environment.

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Then say: **Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.**

Pause for 30 seconds. Then share the reflection below.

The Arabs used to say,



When a stranger appears at your door,
Feed him for three days
Before asking who he is,
Where he's come from,
Where he's headed.
That way, he'll have strength enough
To answer.
Or, by then you'll be such good friends you don't care.

Let's go back to that.
Rice? Pine nuts?
Here, take the red brocade pillow.
My child will serve water to your horse.

No, I was not busy when you came!
I was not preparing to be busy.
That's the armor everyone put on
At the end of the century
To pretend they had a purpose
In the world.

I refuse to be claimed.
Your plate is waiting.
We will snip fresh mint
Into your tea.

Naomi Shihab Nye

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

We are disciples on a journey.
We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.

We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.
If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.

Pause

We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world.

Amen.