



Faith & Immigration Justice



JUSTFAITH
ministries

FACILITATOR MANUAL

For In Person Groups



JUSTFAITH

ministries

www.justfaith.org
(502) 429-0865

JustFaith Ministries is a 501(c)3 nonprofit.

This program is made possible through the generous support of our partners, individuals like you, and congregations.

This document is for registered JustFaith groups,
per the licensing agreement.
Do not copy, share, or forward without permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

If you are viewing this packet on a digital device, tap/click on the session titles below to jump to the corresponding page.

FACILITATOR OVERVIEW — P. 4

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS — P. 15

SESSION ONE — P. 19

SESSION TWO — P. 39

SESSION THREE — P. 53

SESSION FOUR — P. 68

SESSION FIVE — P. 77

SESSION SIX — P. 86

IMMERSION — P. 95

SESSION SEVEN — P. 102

SESSION EIGHT — P. 120



FACILITATOR OVERVIEW

Welcome to Faith and Immigration Justice! This eight-session program facilitates holy and healthy dialogue around immigration, a highly contentious topic that is nevertheless intricately linked with our Christian faith. As a facilitator, you play a key role in nurturing respectful dialogue, active listening, and thoughtful reflection around immigration. We thank you for embracing this important work.

By fostering active listening, dialogue, and prayer, this program forms a group that is rooted in trust and compassion. Through articles, videos, and resource books (*Welcoming the Stranger* by Jenny Hwang and Matthew Soerens and *The Line Becomes a River* by Francisco Cantú), it lends new insights to participants' understanding of U.S. immigration policy and those affected by it. By encouraging new spiritual practices and informed action, it cultivates an expanding community of Christians who work for immigration justice in their respective contexts.

This process may challenge not only participants' — but also your own — thinking about immigration, its causes, and its impact, while helping you discern practical steps to work toward justice and extend hospitality. A large part of your role as a facilitator involves encouraging group members both to contribute to the conversation and to be open to new perspectives. Invite members to risk vulnerability by sharing their struggles and challenges. You may encounter participants who disagree with the reading, program materials, or what other participants say. This is natural and will serve as fuel for important conversation. Be open to the benefit of respectful dialogue that springs from personal experience.

This facilitator manual contains everything you will need to facilitate the program, from session schedules and scripts to lists of supplies. **This manual is designed for groups meeting in-person. You can find the virtual version in your online account.** Please read the session outlines well in advance of each session to help you prepare. They will provide information pertinent to the focus and flow of the session and the entire process. You will also have access to the Participant Packet in your online account (one of your first weekly assignments will be to read the introductory materials included in this packet).

This program should be led by two facilitators. Co-facilitators should meet before beginning the program to talk about the eight sessions; the preparation for weekly prayer, in-session activities, and immersion experience; and other details in the program. It is important for you and your co-facilitator to “check in” with each other throughout the process and, if necessary, address any concerns you may have. In addition, it is important to divide facilitation tasks between the two of you ahead of time. You could divide tasks within a session or take turns leading entire



sessions. Even when you are not “on” as facilitator, be flexible and ready to support your co-facilitator (see below for more information on facilitator training).

Getting Started: First Steps

After identifying your co-facilitator, here are the steps you should take:

1. Identify a starting date.
2. Invite participants into your group. We recommend 8-12 participants for virtual groups and 8-14 for in-person groups (including facilitators). The Promotion Kit contains tips and tools for making these invitations, such as promotional text for church newsletters, graphics for social media, and talking points for in-person invitations. You can find the Promotion Kit on the program page of the JFM website.
3. Order books. We recommend that you use our JustFaith Ministries bookstore, which supports our nonprofit ministry. If you have questions about books, email jfmbooksandvideos@justfaith.org. Access the JFM bookstore with this link: <https://justfaith.org/resources/bookstore/>
4. To gain access to their Participant Packet and other important information about the program, all participants in your group will need to register through the JFM website. If you have any questions about the registration process, reach out to the JustFaith Ministries staff at info@justfaith.org.
5. Schedule a 15-minute check-in with JFM staff member Leila Oakley: <https://justfaith.org/calendly/>. Leila can assist with the above listed steps. If assistance isn't needed, she will verify your group's start dates and can provide additional resources that may be helpful to your particular community and selected program. Email Leila with any questions before or after your check-in: leila@justfaith.org.

Facilitator Training

- On our facilitator training page (<https://justfaith.org/resources/facilitator-training/>) you will find several training videos on topics such as “how to invite group participants to create online accounts,” “how to facilitate difficult conversations,” and “planning a successful immersion experience.” On this page you will also find dates for upcoming New Facilitator Trainings, which are live training sessions in which you can ask questions, receive support, and learn best practices for effective facilitation.
- We highly encourage facilitators of all programs – not just our racial justice series – to view our anti-racist facilitation training. This training will help you to cultivate an environment of inclusion and belonging, which is essential for healthy dialogue, spiritual



transformation, and faith-rooted action. It is relevant to all facilitators, regardless of your group's racial demographics. <https://youtu.be/-6IJnNEUwoo?si=6cMcJtOkybrT63V>

The anti-racist facilitation training was designed for you to view with your co-facilitator. You could watch the training together in-person or on a video conferencing platform by sharing your screen. If you are unable to view the training with your co-facilitator, bring a pen and paper so that you can journal about the discussion prompts.

Session Facilitation and Dialogue Principles

Preparation will make a huge difference in how the process unfolds. Familiarize yourself with the materials, including the online videos, before the program begins. It is helpful to go over each session ahead of time and have a clear plan (decide who will say what, who will set up the A/V equipment and run the technology, etc.). Before the session begins, pull up video links and play through the ads ahead of time.

You do not have to be an expert on the topic or have years of experience working in groups to be a good facilitator. You *do* need to consider what is best for the group and remind group members of their shared responsibility to each other. Continually refer back to the Community of Trust Guidelines, which are introduced during Session 1. Do not hesitate to pause to review them during a session whenever participants need a reminder.

Faith and Immigration Justice, like all JustFaith Ministries processes, involves [cultivating a deep respect for dialogue](#). Dialogue is distinct from debate: its purpose is to open each person to the perspective and wisdom of the others. Dialogue involves respectfully listening to the story or perspective of another without judgment, without counterargument, without analyzing, and without succumbing to the temptation to fix or to comment. As mentioned above, the first session contains a set of guidelines for you to review with participants, who also have them in their Participant Packet.

Your role as facilitator includes drawing out those who speak little and ensuring that no one dominates the conversation. Use gentle reminders or invitations to participants to help ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute. These phrases may help move the conversation:

- "Let's be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before speaking a second time."
- "We are looking here for a number of short 'popcorn' style responses to these questions."
- "I'm looking for phrases or one-minute or less responses."
- "I would like the group's permission to wrap up this discussion."
- If discomfort becomes overwhelming, you might say: "Let's pause to pray in silence."
- "We've come to the end of our allotted time. Let's just pause for a moment of silence."



- Optionally, you can let the group know that you will hold up an index card (or another designated object) to gently let a speaker know that they should wrap up their point.

If there are people in your group who monopolize the conversation or struggle to be heard, you might try the Mutual Invitation Method of group dialogue, which can be applied in both in-person and virtual groups. It involves the following process:

A designated person shares first. After that person has spoken, [they invite] another participant to share. This can be anyone in the room and should not follow a pattern, [such as] the person next to the speaker. After the second person has spoken, that person invites another participant, who has not yet spoken, to share. This process continues until everyone has been invited to speak. People may choose to pass if they wish. After everyone has been invited to speak, anyone who has passed is given another opportunity to respond prior to going to a second round.

Note that the total amount of time allotted to answer a question is divided among the participants so that all can be assured of some time to share. The first time you use this technique with the group may feel awkward. The tendency is to give up on the process and go back to the "whoever-wants-to-talk-can-talk" way. Being persistent in using this process can help the group to eventually get used to it and even have fun with it. This process addresses differences in the perception of personal power among the participants. Some people will be eager for their turn, while others will be reluctant to speak when they are invited. If a person speaks very briefly and then does not remember to invite the next person, do not invite for them. Simply point out that this person has the privilege to invite the next person to speak. This is especially important if a person "passes." By ensuring that the person still has the privilege to invite, you affirm and value that person independent of that person's choice to share or not share at this time. Source: Eric Law, The Wolf Shall Dwell with the Lamb, St. Louis: Chalice Press, 1993, p. 106.

Throughout the course of the program, people may suggest activities (e.g., "We should read X." or "Let's have a discussion about Y issue."). We encourage you to keep a running list of these suggestions and ideas and make them available during the final session when the group discusses possible next steps.

Note: If your group needs more discussion time, you might consider dividing into smaller groups, rather than attempting a large-group dialogue.



Navigating Difficult Conversations with Sensitivity and Care

There may be participants in your group who experience the effects of the injustices your group will be discussing. In some cases, you may not realize the extent to which the program material intersects with participants' personal experiences unless they choose to share this information with the group. For example, maybe someone in your group is undocumented, or maybe their family has been separated due to unjust immigration policies. Below are three ways you can facilitate tough conversations with sensitivity and care:

- If conversations become emotionally and spiritually heavy or close-to-home, invite participants to pause to breathe, pray, or simply be silent.
- Let participants know that they are welcome to step out of the room — or away from their computers — if they need a break from the conversation. (Although the group guidelines encourage participants in virtual groups to turn on their cameras, exceptions can certainly be made here).
- When entering group dialogues around a sensitive topic, ask participants if they would like to break into affinity groups, which are small groups consisting of those who share a similar background. Affinity groups can create spaces of trust and mutual support for those affected by injustice; they can also allow for participants with privilege to help one another work through their assumptions and biases without causing harm to those who do not share their privilege. Though affinity groups are commonly misconstrued as perpetuating segregation, when used appropriately they can help meet participants' unique needs, ultimately preparing the group for a more robust, healthy conversation when the large group reconvenes.

In this program, facilitators might break into affinity groups according to race and ethnicity, or whether participants are immigrants or the children of immigrants. Each group should contain three or more participants (if you cannot create a group of three or more, affinity groups should not be used). Before dividing up, explain what affinity groups are and ask the group's permission to use them (always prioritize the preferences of those most affected by injustice). When the large group reconvenes, invite each affinity group to share with the large group a summary of their conversation.

If participants express uncertainty around what affinity groups are and how they can be useful, consider mentioning that affinity groups based on gender are already common, especially within faith communities (women's book studies and men's groups, for example). Like gender-based affinity groups provide constituents with a comfortable space to address the specific needs they hold in common, affinity groups based on other characteristics can provide a similar means of support and empowerment.



Hospitality

Prior to all sessions, arrange the room to be as comfortable as possible in order to convey hospitality. Here are a few suggestions:

- Have comfortable chairs suitable for all body types. Arrange the chairs in a circle where everyone can see each other.
- Instead of turning on fluorescent overhead lights, use lamps and natural lighting.
- Play soft music as people enter (silence can feel intimidating as participants are just getting to know each other).
- Have a pitcher of water and cups on the table.
- Have name tags available.
- In order to convey a sense of belonging and spiritual family, your group may enjoy having a separate space for the opening and closing prayers: after all, the word “sacred” means “set apart.” Perhaps set up another circle of chairs in a corner of the room, and place a candle and Bible on a small table in the middle. You can also decorate the table with a tablecloth and cross or other symbol. Begin and end your sessions in this circle.
- As each person leaves the session, offer sincere gratitude for their presence in the group.

As each person enters your meeting room, take a moment to silently and intentionally give and receive welcome as you acknowledge that they bear the image of Jesus himself. The art of hospitality is a spiritual practice, but it starts with seeing others as God sees them.

Timing

While sessions are designed to last two hours, some groups may prefer to extend their sessions in order to allow for more dialogue or community-building. It is always in the purview of a facilitator to ask whether the allotted time is working for everyone. With the group’s permission, you could add more time to the reading dialogue. For example, you could say: “Sometimes we are having to cut the discussion short. Would you prefer to wrap up the discussion or to extend the meeting time?” Or, in order to build trust and make room for personal check-in time, you could also expand the break time for informal conversation and fellowship while participants eat their snacks. **However, we strongly discourage condensing the material to less than two hours.**

Prayer

The call to a quiet, reflective, prayerful space is an integral part of all JustFaith Ministries programs. Each session includes an opening and closing time of guided prayer. This provides a transition from participants’ daily routine into a place of deep listening, vulnerability, and



sharing. Create a welcoming space that fosters a posture of reverence. Invite everyone in the group to put aside other things and enter the prayer as a place where the group becomes one community — unhurried, fully present, and attentive. Set up the space, including the prayer table (we recommend a tablecloth, a meaningful symbol such as a cross, and a pillar candle and matches) early, so that you are ready to welcome participants as they arrive. Make the closing prayer the last activity of each session; avoid making additional announcements or continuing with business or group discussion after it. The closing prayer is intended to bring the session to a prayerful completion. Be attentive to the ending time and avoid overlooking or short-changing this time of prayerful togetherness.

Inviting a Guest Speaker

A key aspect of all JustFaith Ministries programs is the opportunity to enter into the story of others' lives. In this program, you do this in part by hearing from people who are working toward immigration justice. Session Five includes a guest speaker; between Session Six and Seven is an immersion experience for the group.

For your guest speaker, reach out to an advocate for immigration justice in your own community. You could also invite a pastor or priest who serves a congregation of mostly immigrants, or ask them if they know anyone who may be willing to share their immigration story. Once you have identified a speaker, take the time to orient them to the program so they are aware of the larger context of the conversation. Offer these questions as guidance for the speaker:

- Why is immigration justice important to you and central to your vocation?
- How does your faith inform your work?
- What are the biggest joys and challenges of your work?
- How can churches and individuals support you and your work?

Allow approximately 45 minutes for your guest, including a Q & A segment. Either prepare a thank you card in advance to give to the speaker or send one after their visit. Optionally, you can also encourage participants to contribute toward an honorarium in order to thank your guest speaker for their time.

Immersion Experience

The immersion experience is an essential part of this program. It is designed to invite participants to an encounter — and possibly a relationship — with a group, agency, or church that is already involved in immigration justice work. This will help to bring important new perspectives to your discussion, as well as give participants ideas for how they might plug into



the work of seeking justice in their communities and in our nation. The overall flow of the immersion is as follows:

1. Gathering together to reflect on Scripture to provide a prayerful context for the session.
2. Removing the group from its regular meeting place and intentionally traveling to a location that may be, for some, unfamiliar and even a little uncomfortable. This voluntary displacement may not be a common occurrence for some group members.
3. Conversing with people who are engaged with immigration justice work or welcoming their immigrant neighbors, hearing and sharing stories, building common ground, learning about the systemic challenges involved in their work
4. Returning to the group's meeting place to process and draw insights from the experience.

As your immersion experience, we recommend that you visit an agency that is working toward immigration justice, or one that offers solidarity with and service for immigrants. Alternatively, you may visit a church in which most of the congregation are immigrants.

Just like with the regular sessions, there is a facilitator outline for the immersion experience, which contains opening and closing prayer, as well as discussion questions and other instructions. Both the Facilitator Outline notes and the Participant Packet contain "do's and don'ts" for how to engage in meaningful interaction during the immersion experiences.

From Insight to Action

Insight without action is of little or no value. Therefore, this process encourages participants to commit to specific actions after the program as a result of their experience. At the end of each session, participants will name potential ways to respond to their learning, and you will record their answers on a "Now What?" poster or white board. In Session Eight, the group will return to the "Now What?" poster (or white board) and discern together which actions you might take individually or as a group.

Request a Virtual Program Commissioning for Your Final Session

JustFaith Ministries is offering a new opportunity for the final session of every program: a Participant Commissioning from a JFM staff member. You can invite a JFM national staff member to join your final session to offer a special commissioning to participants, as well as share ways graduates can continue their social justice mission after their program is completed.

To request a Program Commissioning, please reach out to Andrea Martin Gaddis, andrea@justfaith.org, at least one week prior to your final session. You can also [complete this form](#) to schedule your Program Commissioning.



About JustFaith Ministries

Overview

JustFaith Ministries (JFM) is a nonprofit organization that serves the work of justice, community-building and reconciliation by creating small-group educational programs that transform hearts, deepen commitment, inspire engagement and equip for action. Over 70,000 people across the country have participated in JFM programs! Our work is crafted and customized for both those who belong to a Christian community as well as those who approach the work of justice from a more broadly spiritual perspective.

Programs for Christian Communities

JustFaith Ministries has a long history of serving churches and small faith communities to empower and expand their work on behalf of justice. Drawing from the heart of the Gospel, our faith-based programming allows participants to explore the intersection of faith and social mission, study an important issue intensively, build community, and discern next steps (faith-in-action). These small group programs include:

- JustFaith Series: this series explores the Gospel's call to respond to poverty, equipping participants to take action in a way that is effective, sustainable, and reflective of their Christian vision. The ecumenical version of this series (JustFaith) consists of three 8-session programs, while JustFaith Catholic comprises four.
- Racial Justice Series:
 - Faith and Racial Equity: Exploring Power and Privilege
 - Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice and Restoration
 - Faith and Racial Justice: Changing Systems and Structures
- Eco-justice Series:
 - Sacred Land: Food and Farming
 - Sacred Air: Climate and Energy
 - Sacred Water: Oceans and Ecosystems
- Youth for Justice: Invites youth to explore contemporary social issues through the lens of the Christian tradition.
- Faith and Immigration Justice
- Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice
- Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times
- The Land Is Not Our Own: Seeking Repair Alongside Indigenous Communities
- Preventing Gun Violence: From Rhetoric to Real Solutions



Programs for Broader Audiences

JustFaith Ministries also offers programs that are designed for broader audiences that may not define themselves as religious. Those who are unaffiliated with a church or religious tradition or who identify as “spiritual but not religious” will find these programs relevant and meaningful. These programs may also resonate with an interfaith audience. These programs include:

- Spirituality and Racial Equity: Exploring Power and Privilege
- Spirituality and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice, and Restoration
- Spirituality and Racial Justice: Changing Systems and Structures
- Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times

Impact

The best testimony to our work are the outcomes: JustFaith participant involvement in justice and social ministry is vast. Participants report bringing more affordable housing opportunities to their communities; reforming the criminal justice system; advocating for hunger relief at the local, national and international levels; standing in solidarity with our immigrant siblings; becoming ambassadors for Fair Trade and micro-businesses; engaging in anti-racism efforts; advocating for the end of the death penalty; working for sensible gun laws; and many other commitments. The true measure of our work is what happens after the programs are done!

Welcome

Welcome to the JFM community! We can’t do this without each other. We are honored to walk alongside you in advancing peace, racial equity, economic justice and a sustainable world, and we hope that you will find as much love and liberation along this journey as we have. Please keep in touch: let us know how your life has been transformed, the ways you are taking action for justice, and how we can best support you in your spiritual growth and work for justice. Most of all, know that we, the JustFaith Ministries staff, are holding you in our hearts and praying for you throughout your journey.

Join the JustFaith Network

The ultimate goal of this program — and all our JustFaith Ministries programs — is to invite participants into a deeper commitment to the work of love and justice. To support program graduates, we created the JustFaith Network to provide lively and current resources that can sustain you spiritually and equip you with the tools you need for your work to be effective. By joining the Network, you will have access to reflections, small group guided conversations, speaker events, blogs, best practices, and an expanding list of items.

The JustFaith Network is free and open to anyone. You can sign up at:

<https://justfaith.org/get-involved/justfaith-network>



Support Justfaith Ministries - And Inspire More People To Work For Justice

JustFaith Ministries is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. We rely on donations from graduates like you to help us create and distribute our high-quality programs. We hope you consider making a donation, and joining with us in building a more just, peaceful, and equitable world. To learn about ways you can donate (online; by check; through an IRA, donor-advised fund; and more), visit: <https://justfaith.org/donate>

Special Thanks!

A huge thanks to the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church for allowing us to extend their Church Between Borders materials, which you will find in Sessions 2 and 3, to our audience. In addition to contributing their teaching tools, we are grateful for the OSJ's leadership in immigration advocacy, and we encourage Faith and Immigration Justice participants to get involved with their work.

Thank you to the Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice, a statewide immigration legal service and advocacy organization who collaborated with us in updating this program. We encourage Iowan participants to get involved with their work: <https://www.iowammj.org/>

A special and continued thanks to the Maryknoll Office of Global Concerns for providing prayers that have been in several iterations of our migration program. We continue to be thankful for Maryknoll's witness for peace and justice in Central America, even during times of war, and we are honored to include their prayers, as well as pieces of their stories, in this program.



WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS

Session and Theme	Readings <i>Plan to have these readings completed by the date of the session specified in the left column. Some readings will help you prepare for the session; others will give followup information to topics introduced in-session.</i>	Spiritual Practice <i>Engage in this practice the week prior to the corresponding session.</i>
Session 1: Introductions—To Each Other and to a Theology of Migration		N/A
Session 2: History of Immigration to the U.S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the "Introductory Materials" in this <i>Participant Packet</i>. • <i>Welcoming the Stranger</i>: Forward, chp 1-2 (p. 1-42) • Pope Francis: "Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees 2019." 	<p>Become aware of the migrant communities in your context. Do you know who lives in your city/town/state? Are there refugees or immigrants? Where do they live? Where do they come from? Where do you meet them? Every day, set aside time to uphold migrant communities in your prayers: name the people you may know, name their country of origin, and pray for safe journeys.</p>
Session 3: "Why Don't They Just Get in Line?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Welcoming the Stranger</i>: chp 3 (p. 43-66) • Refugee Screening Process (World Relief)-- (To learn more, click the green star and numbers in the middle of the infographic. Even 	<p>The World Council of Churches maintains an Ecumenical Prayer Cycle that encourages Christians to pray for specific countries every week. Go to the WCC's website and find out what countries are on the Ecumenical Prayer Cycle's list this week. Then locate each of them on the world map. If someone were to immigrate to the U.S. from one of these countries, what would their journey look like? Can you imagine some of the steps they would</p>



	<i>though the U.S. has mostly paused its refugee resettlement program, it is still important to understand this process in order to advocate for policies that reflect our faith.</i>	need to take and challenges they would very likely face?
Session 4: Why do People Migrate? Part 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Welcoming the Stranger</i>: chp 4,6,7 (p. 67-84, 102-149) • Watch the first 38 minutes of Harvest of Empire. (You will watch the rest of the video during session 4). • Optional: "No Queda De Otra: An Exploration of the Root Causes of Forced Migration to the Southern Border" (Hope Border Institute) 	<p>Where does your food come from? See if you can trace the origins of a single meal. For example, who harvested the vegetables for your salad? Where was the dressing bottled, and who works there? How was it transported? Pray for those who contributed to bringing food to your table.</p> <p>In addition, do some research around Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta, and give thanks for their lives and witness. How can you advocate for the rights of farmworkers today? (hint: jump ahead to page 133 in <i>Welcoming the Stranger</i>).</p>
Session 5: Guest Speaker, Why do People Migrate, Part 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Line Becomes a River</i>, Prologue and Part 1 (p. 1-77) • Read Session 4 Attachment C: "Why Do People Migrate?" • Optional: J. Hoffmeyer: Torture and the Theology of the Cross • Optional: "What Happened at Dos Erres" podcast by <i>This American Life</i> 	<p>For centuries, Catholic migrants have found hope and refuge in Our Lady of Guadalupe. This week, read more about her by exploring this article about Our Lady of Guadalupe by Justice for Immigrants. Pray for those crossing borders right now.</p>
Session 6:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Line Becomes a</i> 	Read Psalm 46:1-3 . Then reflect on who/what serves as



Current Issues in Migration	<i>River: Part 2</i> (p. 81-160) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual Research — See Session 5 Attachment B 	your refuge in times of hardship. Give thanks for those who have been there for you, and for the people and places that have welcomed you. Pray for all the migrants and refugees who are seeking refuge. Listen to Warsan Shire reciting her poem, "Home" .
Immersion Experience	N/A	N/A
Session 7: Advocating for Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Welcoming the Stranger: chp 8</i> (p. 150-180), Appendix 5 (p. 236-7) <i>The Line Becomes a River: Part 3</i> and Epilogue (p. 163-247) 	Romans 13 provides important instructions regarding our Christian relationships to law and the government. However, this chapter is frequently quoted to justify xenophobic policies. First, read Romans 13:1-7 and then read this article . (Note: though this article calls out one particular political figure, politicians on both sides of the aisle throughout history have misinterpreted this passage). Then journal about the following questions: What is my personal Christian responsibility in regard to unjust laws? How can I discern whether a law is unjust? Over the next week, set aside two minutes each day to listen silently for the Spirit's guidance around these questions.
Session 8: Turning to Action	<p>Important: Complete Session 7 Attachment C. Plan about 45 minutes to complete the activity.</p> <p><i>Welcoming the Stranger: chp 10</i> (p. 202-216)</p> <p>Session 8 survey for facilitators: https://justfaith.org/facilitator-post-program-survey/</p> <p>Session 8 survey for participants: https://justfaith.org/participants-survey/</p>	Included in Session 7 Attachment C



	<p>nt-post-program-survey/</p> <p>Consider supporting JustFaith Ministries in order to inspire more people to work for justice: justfaith.org/donate</p> <p>JustFaith Network Sign-up: https://justfaith.org/get-involved/justfaith-network</p>	
--	--	--



SESSION ONE

INTRODUCTIONS- TO EACH OTHER AND TO A THEOLOGY OF MIGRATION

Activity	Minutes
Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Welcome Video	5 minutes
Introductions to Each Other	15 minutes
Discussion of Group Guidelines	20 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
The Bible and Migration	40 minutes
Church Statements on Migration	15 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes

Items Needed for this Session:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle (or something similar, evocative of immigration themes, such as those that emerge from Latinx communities).
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Equipment to show the opening video (it's important that you don't skip over this video, as it will inform the rest of your group's discussions)



- Ask participants to bring their Participant Packet, which can be found in their online account. They can either print the Participant Packet or they can bring a laptop or tablet and pull it up there. You will need to email participants ahead of time to let them know.

Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

- "Welcome Video": https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KK_5poDnMNQ

Session 1 Notes to the Co-Facilitators

"I was a stranger, and you welcomed me."

Usually Jesus's words from Matthew 25:35 are used in reference to mission and service. They are a countercultural call to embrace outsiders as if greeting Jesus himself. However, in this case, there are likely members of your group (or maybe even you!) who have been treated like strangers — or simply *felt* like strangers — in significant social spaces in their lives. Maybe there is someone in your group who has been hurt by the church but has mustered the courage to try out this JustFaith Ministries program because they long to talk about God and justice. Maybe there is a Person of Color who has been dismissed, talked over, and put down in White spaces, and they are not sure if this group will be one more rejection. JustFaith Ministries programs are more than a curriculum; they are a community. It is for this reason that the first point from the Community of Trust Guidelines, "give and receive welcome," will be particularly important during your first session.

The facilitator overview at the beginning of this facilitator manual contains guidelines for creating a hospitable meeting space. Be sure to read these guidelines carefully. One important component of hospitality is ensuring that all voices are heard. It may feel awkward at first to ask someone to wrap up their point, but doing so will help maintain a space of safety and inclusion for the rest of the group. Suggestions for what to say in this situation can be found in the "session facilitation and dialogue principles" section of the facilitator overview. You may want to consider bringing a card to hold up to indicate that a speaker should wrap up their point so that others can have a turn to speak.

This session also includes a short time for introductions. Different groups may have different needs, depending on if/how well they already know each other. Optionally, you can consider extending the first session by 30 minutes in order to make time for lengthier introductions (let



the group know a week or two in advance). Regardless, participants will have an opportunity to get to know each other better throughout the course of the program.

Most importantly, while it is critical that participants feel welcome in your group, remember to *receive* welcome as well. As a facilitator, you are not expected to say all the right things (you won't) or have all the answers (you don't). You are loved, always and unconditionally, and there is nothing you can do — or forget to do! — to change that fact. Just as you welcome the presence of the living Christ who is manifested in each participant, the living Christ receives you, too. You are loved. You are enough. You belong.

Throughout your time together, remember that the JustFaith Ministries staff is a phone call away to answer questions and provide facilitation support. We hope this process will be as heartbreaking, hope-filled, and transformative as it has been for us. Most importantly, know that you are in our prayers: after all, we are all disciples on a journey, the body of Christ, broken for the world. Blessings on your time together.

Sincerely,

The JustFaith Ministries board and staff

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Find volunteers to assist with the opening prayer, which can be found at the end of the introductory materials in the Participant Packet. Begin the session with these words:

Welcome to this JustFaith Ministries program called Faith and Immigration Justice! We are here to prayerfully engage in a conversation about migration and learn more about those who are crossing borders to seek a better life. As with many important issues facing us today, immigration is a complex topic. For the sake of doing one thing well rather than many things poorly, we'll focus primarily on immigration across our southern border. However, we will certainly touch on global migration, as the ultimate hope is that a better understanding of immigration to the U.S. from Latin America will help us to better understand immigration in general.

Each week, we will read the same opening prayer, which was written for JustFaith Ministries by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti. Each week, you are encouraged to



hear these same words in a new way as you grow, learn, and form new relationships — both with our immigrant neighbors and with one another.

Before we begin our time together, let's take a moment of silence to center ourselves in this space, so that we might better hear the voice of God's Spirit.

Light the candle, as you pause for 30 seconds of quiet reflection.

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.*

All: Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.



Welcome Video (5 minutes)

After the opening prayer say:

Before we begin with introductions, I am going to show a video about JustFaith Ministries, the authors of this Faith and Immigration Justice program. This video will preface today's session, as well as set the tone for our time together.

Show the video: https://youtu.be/KK_5poDnMNO

Introductions to Each Other (15 minutes)

Introduce yourself and ask participants to take about a minute to introduce themselves by stating their name and giving a brief statement as to why they chose to participate in this journey and what they hope to gain from it. Keep an eye on time and, if necessary, remind participants that the process of getting to know each other will be an ongoing process over the next eight sessions and immersion.

Discussion of Group Guidelines (20 minutes)

Introduce the next activity with the following words (read slowly):

All JustFaith materials are intended to be guides for *holy conversation*. Holy conversation is more than a discussion — it is an act of worship in which, through seeking to know and understand one another, we experience the Divine Presence. Every one of us is created in God's image. For this reason, when we truly see one another, we see a glimpse of God. It is an incomplete and imperfect glimpse, but it is a glimpse nonetheless. It is for this reason that we enter into dialogue with the same reverence as if we were entering into a time of worship.



Invite participants to take turns reading aloud the Community of Trust Guidelines (see Participant Packet Session 1 Attachment A), which were compiled by JustFaith facilitators Anne and Tom Johnson from Greenville, SC.

Ask participants:

- If they have any additional guidelines they would like to add.
- Which guideline presents the biggest opportunity for growth.

Note: You may want to post a copy of the Community of Trust Guidelines in your meeting space, so that participants can be reminded of them each session.

At the end of your conversation about the guidelines, say:

It can be difficult to talk about immigration, especially in today's polarized world. However, these guidelines can help us navigate difficult and important conversations around immigration and other topics we care deeply about. Though they seem simple, living out the guidelines requires life-long practice. As we continue in our time together, I will continue to remind us of these guidelines, both to re-center our own conversations, as well as to practice having important conversations like these outside this group. As the facilitator, my role is to simply to keep the time and to be sure that everyone's voice is heard. I am not a teacher or expert but am walking on this journey alongside the rest of the group. There may be times when I need to be reminded of the guidelines, and I encourage you to hold me accountable to them as well.

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to take a break and share refreshments.

Announcements (5 minutes)

-
1. Participants should bring a copy of the Participant Packet to each session.
 2. If you ordered the books for participants, distribute them to the group.



3. Remind participants of the reading for the next session, which can be found in the Weekly Assignments chart in the Participant Packet.
4. Let participants know that there will also be a spiritual practice each week, which can also be found in the Weekly Assignments chart. It will be important to read the instructions for the spiritual practice early in the week.
5. Circulate the sign-up sheet for bringing refreshments to share during each session's break time. Check with the group for dietary needs. Encourage participants to minimize both food waste and trash.
6. Let participants know that there will be an immersion between sessions 6 and 7, and that you will share more information about that either over email or during an upcoming session. (See Facilitator Overview for more information about how to plan your immersion experience).

The Bible and Migration (40 minutes)

Migration and Scripture: a Brief Overview (10 minutes)

Invite the group to turn to Session 1 Attachment B, entitled "Biblical References to Immigrants and Refugees," a list which was compiled by the United Church of Christ. Invite participants to take about 3-4 minutes to look it over (they can read it more thoroughly after the session).

Then ask:

- What stands out to you from this list?
- What are some common themes or key points that are addressed in these verses?
- Can you think of any verses or stories that were left out?

Biblical Focus: Ruth's Story (30 minutes)

Then have the group turn to Session 1 Attachment C, entitled Ruth 1-18, 4:13-17. Go around the room and take turns reading, paragraph by paragraph. Then ask:

- What is a word or phrase that stands out to you from this passage?
- How do you think Ruth and Naomi's story might relate to the stories of modern-day immigrants?

Then say:



We will now prayerfully read an excerpt from Pastor Deb Richardson-Moore's sermon entitled "Minority Report." Pastor Deb is the pastor of Triune Mercy Center in Greenville, South Carolina. Triune is a worshiping community where the homeless and affluent come together to alleviate poverty, seek justice, and embrace one another in love and mutual support. We will take turns reading around the circle. As we read, let us receive Pastor Deb's words as a blessing and a prayer.

Invite participants to turn to Session 1 Attachment D. Take turns around the circle, each person reading one paragraph at a time.

Then ask:

- What resonates with you from this excerpt of Pastor Deb's sermon?
- Pastor Deb says: "it can take courage to make sure our minority reports are heard today."
 - Why is it important that "minority reports" are heard?
 - Think about the news you read and the voices you listen to on a daily basis. How often do you seek out the "minority reports" of our society? How might you seek out alternative perspectives to the "majority opinion"?

Church Statements on Migration (15 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to Session 1 Attachment E, entitled Sample Church Statements on Migration/Immigration, which are statements made by various denominations on migration. Invite the group to silently read the statements.

Then ask the following or similar questions:

1. Is your faith tradition represented in these statements? If not, do you know what your church says about migration/immigration?
2. Is there one statement that resonates with you more than the others?
3. What do you think about these types of statements? Are they helpful?



Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to re-center themselves for the closing prayer. Pause for 30 seconds. Then re-read Ruth 1:16-18:

But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord do this to me and more so if even death separates me from you." When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with them, they stopped speaking to her about it.

Then say (you might want to have the other co-facilitator to read this part):

This prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Theresa Baldini, who founded contemplative communities among the Navajo people in New Mexico and in South Sudan. Let's pray.

O Gracious One, You remind us to welcome strangers always, for by doing this some people have entertained angels without knowing it! (Hebrews 13). We see this as more than just the hospitality of an open door. It is a readiness to be open to the unexpected in human relationships and events. It is to entertain mystery and to make room for You in the many ways You reveal the Christ to us, especially through the stranger. It is the discovery of Your hidden presence in everyone and in all of creation! May our prayer for each other deepen this gift in our lives. May it be so!

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Attachment A: Community of Trust Guidelines

Adapted by Anne and Tom Johnson from:

- *Circle of Trust® Touchstones developed by Parker J. Palmer and the Center for Courage & Renewal www.couragerenewal.org (primary source)*
- *JustFaith Group Guidelines www.JustFaith.org*

1. **Give and receive welcome.** People learn best in hospitable spaces. In this community, we support each other's learning by giving and receiving welcome.
2. **Be as fully present as possible.** Be here with your doubts, fears, and failings, as well as your convictions, joys, and successes, your listening as well as your speaking. Listen intently in order to fully understand different points of view. Honor the space between "no longer" and "not yet."
3. **What is offered in our community is by invitation, not demand.** Share what your soul calls for, and know that you do it with our support. Commit to ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak. Invite others to speak before speaking again.
4. **Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.** Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one's truth in our community does not mean interpreting, correcting, or debating what others say. Knowing that we are each created uniquely, and have different backgrounds, experiences, and views, we commit to honoring differences, knowing they add to the richness of the community's experience.
5. **No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting.** This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to "help." But it is vital to welcoming the soul, to making space for the inner teacher.
6. **Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions....** Instead of counsel or corrections. With such questions, we help "hear each other into deeper speech." Commit to respectfully seeking clarification of others' perspectives to add to our understanding.



7. **When the going gets tough, turn to wonder.** If you feel judgmental or defensive, ask yourself:
 - “I wonder what brought her to this belief?”
 - “I wonder what he’s feeling right now?”
 - “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?”Set aside judgment to listen to others — and to yourself — more deeply.
8. **Attend to your own inner teacher.** We learn from others, of course. But as we explore prayer, readings, questions, and silence, as well as engage with people both inside and outside our community, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. So pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, which are your most important teacher.
9. **Trust and learn from the silence.** Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.
10. **Observe deep confidentiality.** Our community of trust depends on knowing that whatever we say will remain with the people to whom we choose to say it — whether in small groups or in the large circle — and will never be passed on to others without our explicit permission.
11. **Know that it’s possible....** To leave a meeting of our community with whatever it was you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead.



Attachment B: Biblical References to Immigrants & Refugees

(This list is taken from [The United Church of Christ website](#), and it is not exhaustive of all Bible verses referring to immigrants. All quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.

Genesis 3:22-24 – Adam and Eve are forced out of the Garden.

Genesis 7 and 8 – Noah builds an ark and takes refuge from the flood.

Genesis 12:1 – The call of Abram: “Go from your country and your kindred and your father’s house to the land that I will show you.”

Genesis 12:10 – “Now there was a famine in the land. So Abram went down to Egypt to reside there as an alien, for the famine was severe in the land.”

Genesis 19 – Lot takes his family and flees Sodom.

Genesis 23 – Abraham is a stranger and an alien in the land of Canaan.

Genesis 46:1-7 – Jacob moves his family to Egypt to escape the famine and reunite with Joseph.

Genesis 47: 1-6 – Joseph brings his brothers to Pharaoh and they are welcomed and given jobs.

Exodus 1:8-14 – Joseph’s generation is gone, and the Egyptians oppress the Israelites. “Therefore they set taskmasters over them to oppress them with forced labor.”

Exodus 1:15-2:10 – Pharaoh orders all the Hebrew boy babies to be killed, but Moses is hidden and is saved by Pharaoh’s daughter.

Exodus 12:37-39 – The Israelites were driven out of Egypt so fast they had no time to make provisions and had to bake unleavened cakes of bread.

Exodus 12:49 and Leviticus 24:22 – “There shall be one law for the native and for the alien who resides among you.”

Exodus 22:21 – Moses gives God’s law: “You shall not wrong or oppress a resident alien; for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”

Leviticus 19:9-10 and 23:22 – Moses gives God’s law: “You shall not strip your vineyards bare...leave them for the poor and the alien.”

Leviticus 19:33-34 and 24:22 – When the alien resides with you in your land, you shall not oppress the alien. The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.”

Leviticus 24:23 – Moses receives God’s law: “With me you are but aliens and tenants.”

Numbers 9:14 and 15:15-16 – “...you shall have one statute for both the resident alien and the native.”

Numbers 35 and Joshua 20 – The Lord instructs Moses to give cities of refuge to the Levites so that when the Israelites must flee into Canaan they may have cities of refuge given to them.

Deuteronomy 1:16 – “Give the members of your community a fair hearing, and judge rightly between one person and another, whether citizen or resident alien.”

Deuteronomy 6:10-13 – The people of Israel are made aware that the land had come to them as a gift from God and they were to remember that they were once aliens.

Deuteronomy 10:18-19 – “For the Lord your God...loves the strangers, providing them food and clothing. You shall also love the stranger, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt.”

Deuteronomy 14:28-29 and 26:12-13 – Tithing was begun, in part, for resident aliens.



Deuteronomy 24:14 – “You shall not withhold the wages of poor and needy laborers, whether other Israelites or aliens who reside in your land...”

Deuteronomy 24:17-18 – “You shall not deprive a resident alien...of justice.”

Deuteronomy 24:19-22 – Leave sheaf, olives, grapes for the alien.

Deuteronomy 26:5 – A wandering Aramean was my ancestor...

Deuteronomy 27:19 – “Cursed be anyone who deprives the alien...of justice.”

I Chronicles 22:1-2 – Aliens were important in building the temple.

I Chronicles 29:14-15 – David praises God: “We are aliens and transients before you...”

II Chronicles 2:17-18 – Solomon took a census of all the aliens and assigned them work.

Psalms 105 – Remembering their sojourn: “When they were few in number, of little account, and strangers in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people...”

Psalms 137:1-6 – “By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down and wept...How could we sing the Lord’s song in a foreign land?”

Psalms 146:9 – “The Lord watches over the strangers...”

Ecclesiastes 4:1 – “Look, the tears of the oppressed—with no one to comfort them.”

Isaiah 16:4 – Be a refuge to the outcasts of Moab.

Jeremiah 7:5-7 – “If you do not oppress the alien...then I will dwell with you in this place...”

Jeremiah 22:3-5 – Do no wrong or violence to the alien.

Ezekiel 47:21-22 – The aliens shall be to you as citizens, and shall also be allotted an inheritance.

Zechariah 7:8-10 – Do not oppress the alien.

Malachi 3:5 – The messenger will bear witness against those who thrust aside the alien.

Matthew 2:13-15 – Jesus and parents flee Herod’s search for the child.

Matthew 5:10-11 – “Blessed are those who are persecuted.”

Matthew 25:31-46 – “...I was a stranger and you welcomed me.”

Luke 3:11 – “Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none...”

Luke 4:16-21 – “...Bring good news to the poor...release to the captives...sight to the blind...let the oppressed go free.”

Romans 12:13 – “Mark of the true Christian: “...Extend hospitality to strangers...”

II Corinthians 8:13-15 – “It is a question of a fair balance between your present abundance and their need...”

Ephesians 2:11-22 – “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God.”

Hebrews 11 – “By faith Abraham...set out for a place...not knowing where he was going.”

Hebrews 13:1-2 – “...show hospitality to strangers, for by doing that some have entertained angels...”

James 2:5 – “Has not God chosen the poor in the world...”

James 2:14-17 – “What good is it...if you say you have faith but do not have works?”

I John 3:18 – “...Let us love, not in word or speech, but in truth and action.”

I John 4:7-21 – “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God...” We love because God first loved us.”



Session 1 Attachment C: Ruth 1:1-18 (CEB)

1:1 During the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land. A man with his wife and two sons went from Bethlehem of Judah to dwell in the territory of Moab. 2 The name of that man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They entered the territory of Moab and settled there.

3 But Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died. Then only they were left, along with her two sons. 4 They took wives for themselves, Moabite women; the name of the first was Orpah and the name of the second was Ruth. And they lived there for about ten years.

5 But both of the sons, Mahlon and Chilion, also died. Only the woman was left, without her two children and without her husband.

6 Then they arose along with her daughters-in-law to return from the field of Moab, because while in the territory of Moab they had heard that the Lord had paid attention to his people by providing food for them. 7 They left the place where they had been, and her two daughters-in-law went with her. They went along the road to return to the land of Judah.

8 Naomi said to her daughters-in-law, "Go, turn back, each of you to the household of your mother. May the Lord deal faithfully with you, just as you have done with the dead and with me.

9 May the Lord provide for you so that you may find security, each woman in the household of her husband." Then they kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

10 But they replied to her, "No, instead we will return with you, to your people."

11 Naomi replied, "Turn back, my daughters. Why would you go with me? Will there again be sons in my womb, that they would be husbands for you? 12 Turn back, my daughters. Go. I am too old for a husband. If I were to say that I have hope, even if I had a husband tonight, and even more, if I were to bear sons— 13 would you wait until they grew up? Would you refrain from having a husband? No, my daughters. This is more bitter for me than for you, since the Lord's will has come out against me."

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth stayed with her. 15 Naomi said, "Look, your sister-in-law is returning to her people and to her gods. Turn back after your sister-in-law."



16 But Ruth replied, "Don't urge me to abandon you, to turn back from following after you. Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. 17 Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May

the Lord do this to me and more so if even death separates me from you." 18 When Naomi saw that Ruth was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her about it.

Session 1 Attachment D: An excerpt from Pastor Deb Richardson-Moore's sermon "Minority Report"

Today's Scripture passage in the Old Testament book of Ruth addresses the minorities among us. And I find its presence in the Hebrew Scripture as brave as I find the presence of four separate gospels in the New Testament.

The early church made a conscious decision to include four versions of the gospel: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Four different reports that give us four different pictures of Jesus. That give us reports that are not exactly the same, any more than four of our descriptions of a wreck in front of the church would be exactly the same.

It would have been SO tempting to put just one story about Jesus in the Bible, to take all four gospels and make them agree. Indeed, there was a book called the Diatessaron that an early church father wrote in the second century that harmonized all four versions. But the church didn't include that in the Bible. Instead, it included four gospel versions of the story of Jesus. And those versions vary in ways both great and small.... Well, the Old Testament does the same with the book of Ruth.

The Old Testament, or more accurately, the Hebrew Scripture is filled with stories about other nations and other cultures encroaching upon Israel. More than 400 years after the rise of King David, the Jews were taken captive in Babylon. It was the lowest point for the Hebrew people....

When the Jews were allowed to come back to Jerusalem, their Scripture reflected a need to purify their people from those foreign influences. The books of Ezra and Nehemiah talk about the sin and shame of intermarrying with other nations. The Jews vowed to intermarry no more. (Ezra 9-10; Nehemiah 10: 28-30; 13: 3, 23-30). And then they went a step further. Ezra had all the Jewish men banish their non-Jewish wives and children. (Ezra 10) They believed God wanted them to build a new nation, undefiled by foreigners. And then comes the book of Ruth. *Then comes the book of Ruth.*



Ruth is a delightful little story that some scholars believe was written as a “minority report” to the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. On our Supreme Court, a dissenting judge often writes a minority opinion. It doesn’t stand as law as the majority opinion does, but it follows our democratic practice of giving a respectful hearing to the minority. As does the story of Ruth.

....The books of Ezra and Nehemiah give the majority line: *Purify the people by sending away the foreign wives you have married and the half-breed children you have produced.* The book of Ruth gives the minority opinion: *But wait. Let’s look at another side.* And that other side is this: Ruth is a Moabite. She is a foreign wife, or worse, a foreign widow. But her impact on the future kingdom of Israel is wondrous.

Ruth’s story is set in the time of the Judges, before Israel was a kingdom. Naomi’s Jewish family moved from Bethlehem to the foreign country of Moab because of famine. While there, Naomi’s two sons married Moabite women. Foreign women. But Naomi’s husband and two sons died, and she wanted to return to Bethlehem, where the famine had lifted. She tried to leave her daughters-in-law back in Moab, where they might remarry. Orpah stayed. But Ruth insisted upon coming with her. In the ancient world, there was absolutely no one more vulnerable than widows with no male children to care for them. As Naomi and Ruth re-entered Bethlehem, they were in a terrible position economically.

..... But what is important for us this morning are the repeated references to Ruth as a foreigner, a Moabite. The author of this story never misses a chance to remind us that Ruth is not an Israelite, not a Jew. In later verses, we read:

“So Naomi returned from Moab accompanied by Ruth the Moabite....” (1: 22)

“And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, ‘Let me go to the fields....’” (2:2)

Boaz asks his foreman who Ruth is, and the foreman replies, **“She is the Moabite who came back from Moab with Naomi.”** (2: 6)

Ruth asks Boaz why he is favoring her, **“a foreigner,”** with safe work in his fields. (2: 10)

Boaz answers that he is keeping her safe because she left her **“homeland and came to live with a people you did not know before.”** (2: 11)

Do we get it yet? *Ruth is a foreigner.*

Let’s now turn to the story’s ending in chapter 4.....

13 So Boaz took Ruth and they became their wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and they bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may their name be renowned in Israel!’



15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne them.'16 Then Naomi took the child and laid them in her bosom, and became their nurse. 17 The women of the neighborhood gave them a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.' They named them Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Did you hear the “gotcha” line? Ruth the foreigner, Ruth who has been described over and over and over as a Moabite, is the great-grandmother of King David. King David, the symbol of Israel’s most glorious days, would never have been born without this foreigner.

This is a real kick in the teeth to those insisting that the Jews returning from Babylon cast off their foreign wives and children. Because look: The great-grandmother of King David *was a foreigner!* What if these policies had been in place back then? No King David.

This is courageous stuff, including both majority and minority reports in the Bible. And it can take courage to make sure our minority reports are heard today. Because, believe me, it’s easier to hear them from controversies 2,500 years ago than those we currently face.....

.... Some rabbis way back in antiquity listened to the minority voice represented by the book of Ruth -- and welcomed her into their Scripture. Now it’s our turn to decide how we will treat the minorities in our midst. Amen.

Session 1 Attachment E: Sample Church Statements on Migration/Immigration

United Methodist Church: “At the center of Christian faithfulness to Scripture is the call we have been given to love and welcome the sojourner. We call upon all United Methodist churches to welcome newly arriving migrants in their communities, to love them as we do ourselves, to treat them as one of our native-born, to see in them the presence of the incarnated Jesus, and to show hospitality to the migrants in our midst, believing that through their presence we are receiving the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ.” ([Book of Resolutions, 3281](#))

U.S. Catholic Church: “The Catholic Church in the United States is an immigrant Church with a long history of embracing diverse newcomers and providing assistance and pastoral care to immigrants, migrants, refugees, and people on the move. Our Church has responded to Christ’s



call for us to 'welcome the stranger among us,' for in this encounter with the immigrant, the migrant, and the refugee in our midst, we encounter Christ."

([USCCB statement on Catholic Social Teaching](#))

Episcopal Church: "Scripture and tradition call us to welcome the immigrant and the stranger. Abraham and Sarah's travels in Genesis, including their hospitality to three strangers by the oaks of Mamre, and the Holy Family's flight into Egypt in the Gospel of Matthew remind us that God protects those who seek safety in foreign lands. Scripture also calls people of faith to provide refuge: 'The alien who resides with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt' (Leviticus 19:34). The undersigned clergy of The Episcopal Church are making a shared statement of values about the presence of immigrants and refugees in our communities. Our congregations are diverse. We are high church and low church, big and small, from red states and blue states. Our parishioners hold points of view across the political spectrum. We share a common commitment to honor immigrants, refugees, and neighbors from different religions and we are deeply disturbed by the current swell of fear and scapegoating which seeks to criminalize and unfairly deport undocumented immigrants in our communities." ([Episcopal churches statement in 2017](#))

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.): "This concern with immigration lays at the heart of who Presbyterians are as a people of faith. We believe in a God who migrated to the human condition in the person Jesus and we adhere to the Judeo-Christian tradition of providing hospitality and doing justice. Further, the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) has several provisions that address specific needs of immigrant fellowships/congregations." ([PCUSA 220th General Assembly in 2012](#))

United Church of Christ: "In a world becoming increasingly globalized, more people are leaving their homelands to seek better lives and opportunities in new countries. Their reasons for leaving are diverse and complex: economic necessity, war, or persecution. The U.S. has long been a nation of immigrants and we have consistently been conflicted about this. We gratefully welcome immigrants and their contributions, and we exclude them, discriminate against them and, at times, inflict grave harm upon them. As Christians, we are called to love our neighbors. The Bible is unambiguous in calling us to welcome aliens and strangers in our land, and to love them as we love ourselves. In these times, let us listen to the voice of the still-speaking God. We will learn how to respond to these new sisters and brothers residing among us." ([UCC Current Statement](#))

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America: Immigration is an ever-present topic at our dinner tables and in our congregations as Congress continues to discuss long-overdue protection for thousands of our community members who lack permanent legal status. Scripture calls us to welcome the sojourner. God commanded of the Israelites: "The stranger who resides



with you shall be to you as the citizen among you; you shall love the stranger as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 19:34). Today, I renew my call to all of us as Christians to recognize our neighbors as made in the image of God, and to our nation's elected leaders: Enact policies that provide a pathway to citizenship for undocumented young people who arrived in the U.S. as children, known as Dreamers, and do so without harming other vulnerable immigrants. As Lutherans, we live out our biblical calling by serving in ministries with migrants and refugees in our communities and advocating for laws that reflect this commitment. I am troubled that policies under consideration will protect some of our community members while, at the same time, harming others. While recognizing the right of all countries to control their borders, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) social teaching affirms that "border policies should always respect the human dignity of all persons." ([Statement by the ELCA Presiding Bishop in 2018](#))



SESSION TWO

HISTORY OF IMMIGRATION TO THE U.S.

For Prayer Table:

- A white pillar candle
- Matches or lighter
- Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle (or something similar, evocative of immigration themes, such as those that emerge from Latinx communities).
- Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.

Supplies:

- **Print ahead of time:** Church Between Borders immigration timeline (set printer to single-sided). Cut pages in half.
<https://justfaith.org/app/uploads/2025/06/Session-2-Timeline-.pdf>
- Whiteboard/Easel Pad, markers. Draw a line down the middle of the whiteboard/easel pad to create two columns. Label one column "Hopes" and the other side "Fears."
- Poster board or large sheet of paper (you can take a blank sheet from the easel pad). Write the heading "Now What?" at the top. You will bring this poster to each session, as your group discerns action steps.
- Painters tape or sticky tack (to stick timeline cards to the wall without tearing the paint off). Alternatively, you can simply plan to lay them down on the table or around the edge of the room.
- Sticky notes
- Participants will need their Participant Packets

Before the session begins:

- Break up the timeline cards. Depending on the number of people in your group, participants can either work as individuals or in pairs.
 - Group/individual 1: cards 3-4
 - Group/individual 2: cards 5-9
 - Group/individual 3: cards 10-12
 - Group/individual 4: cards 14-18
 - Group/individual 5: cards 19-21
 - Group/individual 6: cards 22-24
 - Group/individual 7: cards 25-29
 - Co-facilitators present cards 1-2, 13, 30-34.



Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

None

Schedule for the Session:

Activity	Time
Welcome and Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Reading Discussion	35 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Immigration Storyline	55 minutes
Now What?	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes

Notes to the Co-Facilitators

In this session, your group will learn about the history of immigration to the United States. The purpose of this exercise is to better understand the fears and hopes underlying immigration policy, so that we might avoid the mistakes of our past, as well as create policies that are rooted in love and justice, rather than fear and greed.

Especially if you have a diversity of political and theological perspectives in your group, it may be helpful to post the Community of Trust guidelines in a visible place in the room, as well as review them at the beginning of the session. These guidelines will be helpful not only for conversations within your group, but they are also a tool for engaging in conversation around all kinds of important issues in participants' external community. You can let participants know that, although the guidelines seem simple, reviewing and practicing them in *all* conversations will better equip them to both have important discussions around immigration, and to more deeply engage with those from different countries and cultures.



As a facilitator, don't feel pressured to have all the answers. In fact, conversations will flow better when you engage as a fellow participant, rather than as a teacher. If someone holds a viewpoint you feel is harmful to immigrants, resist the need to correct, advise, or save. You can offer your own viewpoint and invite others to do so as well ("what does everyone else think about that?" "does anyone have a different perspective on the matter?"), but attempting to "fix" group members will simply breed embarrassment, which inevitably leads to anger and defensiveness. Though it may be difficult, leave it to the Spirit to cultivate compassion in the hearts of everyone at the table.

As you plan for upcoming sessions, don't forget to invite a guest speaker to Session 5, as well as plan an immersion experience between Sessions 6 and 7 (see more information about these in your Facilitator Guide). Also, Session 3 will require that you print out materials ahead of time, so be sure to plan plenty of time for that (if your printing supplies are limited, ask a volunteer in your group to do the printing for you).

Blessings on your time together!

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to the opening prayer in their Participant Packets (which they should have brought with them), and invite four volunteers to assist with the opening prayer. Begin the session with these words:

Welcome back, friends! During the first half of our session, we'll discuss the reading, and then we'll spend the second half of our session exploring the history of immigration into the United States. I hope that we'll leave this session with a better understanding of the hopes and fears behind U.S. immigration policy in the past, so that we can better advocate for just, practical, and compassionate immigration policy in the present and future. Most of all, though, I hope that our time together will draw us closer to the Holy One, and to each other.

Before we begin our time together, let us take a moment of silence to center ourselves in this space, so that we might better hear the voice of God's Spirit.

Light the candle, as you pause for 30 seconds of quiet reflection.



Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.*

All: Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.

Reading Discussion (35 minutes)

Participants will have read: *Welcoming the Stranger*: Forward, chapter 1-2 (p. 1-42), Participant Packet, p 1-10.



Be sure to watch the time, as you will need the entire 55 minutes allotted for the Immigration Storyline exercise. You may not have time to get to all of the questions — that's okay!

Ask:

- What is one thing that stood out to you from the readings? Before participants respond, invite them to pause for a minute of silence to think about it. Then take turns around the room.
- How was your experience with the spiritual practice this week? Where do immigrants live in our community or state?
- Pope Francis states: “But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight” (Lk 10:33). It is not just about migrants: it is about our humanity. Compassion motivated that Samaritan – for the Jews, a foreigner — not to pass by.”
 - So that everyone is on the same page, ask a volunteer to recap the Good Samaritan story.
 - Samaritans were despised because of their ethnicity and religious practices, yet in this passage it is the *Samaritan* who models love of neighbor (even breaking religious law in order to do so!) In your own life, have you ever received help or compassion from someone you didn't like or were afraid of?

Then say (this is important) —

During this program, we'll be learning about obstacles that many immigrants face. However, let's remember that: 1. God has a history of choosing great leaders from among the most marginalized of society (Moses, David, Ester, Mary, just to name a few), and that 2. When teaching us how to live, Jesus most frequently points to people experiencing poverty and oppression, such as the Samaritan in this story.

Throughout our time together, let's remember that immigrants are *not* charity cases deserving of our pity, and that speaking of anyone in this way is disempowering and hurtful. Immigrants have skills, strengths, and spiritual wisdom that many of us do not have, and many are already leaders in their own churches and communities. However, regardless of what immigrants have to offer, they are first and foremost children of God, worthy of our



respect. Let's be sure to keep this in mind as we continue to engage in conversation!

Now let's turn to our reading from *Welcoming the Stranger*.

Guide participants in a conversation around the following questions:

- In this chapter, the authors have shared their backgrounds and experiences with immigrants. Spend some time sharing your own experiences with immigrants. Where did you see God in these relationships or encounters?

If there are a few participants who are doing most of the talking, it may be helpful to say — "For this question, let's wait for everyone to have a chance to speak before sharing for a second time."

- Chapter one states that "it is these 'easy' issues that often prove to be the most complex and the hardest to resolve, since our presumptions keep us from hearing the other side."
 - Do you resonate with this statement? If so, what presumptions have you held around immigration?
 - Do you have any techniques you use for remaining open to new ideas, especially around charged topics like immigration?
- During our time together, what is one question concerning immigration that you'd like to see answered in your study of this issue?

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to take a break and share refreshments.

Announcements (5 minutes)

Remind participants about the reading assignments and spiritual practice (which can be found in the Weekly Assignments chart in the Participant Packet).



Also let participants know about the immersion experience between Sessions 6 and 7, if you haven't already. (You can tell participants that you'll email out the details, so that the logistical discussion doesn't take up too much of your time together).

Immigration Storyline (55 minutes)

Open with the following words:

We will now engage in an exercise put together by the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church, which offers a wealth of opportunities for education and advocacy. We will also use their immigration simulation next week, when we learn the basics of immigration policy. During both of these activities, be thinking about how you can introduce them to new audiences, as the materials are free, easy to use, and accessible to folks of a wide variety of theological and political perspectives.

Pause. Then say:

One thing that is important for creating just, effective, and compassionate immigration policy is having a common memory about the past. In the United States, as a result of the diversity we enjoy, it can be a challenge to cultivate a common memory about immigration. The purpose of this exercise is to work toward a shared understanding of immigration history and the values that have shaped our evolving laws. We'll take into account memories that different groups may have, and together we'll form a more holistic combined understanding. We often hear the statement "My grandparents came legally, and other people should too." This session will help explain how immigration policy has changed and hasn't changed, and how it has prioritized some immigration seekers over others for hundreds of years.

Intro Exercise (10 minutes)

1. **(You might have already done this):** On a whiteboard or easel pad, draw a vertical line to create two columns. Label one column "Hopes" and the other column "Fears."
2. Ask participants: **A country's laws and policies often reflect the hopes and fears present within that country. What are some hopes that inspired new**



immigration policies throughout United States history? Record participants' answers in the chart.

3. Share some examples to help the group begin: a hope for a transcontinental railroad (which created the need for railroad workers), a hope for wealth, a hope for more humanitarian policies, etc.
4. Ask participants to brainstorm fears that sparked new immigration policies throughout U.S. history, and record their answers in the chart.
5. Share examples to help the group begin: racism and xenophobia, fear of high unemployment rates, etc.

Immigration Storyline (30 minutes)

1. Split the [timeline cards](#) into seven sections (you may have already done this) and distribute them. Depending on the number of people in your group, participants can either work as individuals or as pairs.

Group/individual 1: cards 3-4

Group/individual 2: cards 5-9

Group/individual 3: cards 10-12

Group/individual 4: cards 14-18

Group/individual 5: cards 19-21

Group/individual 6: cards 22-24

Group/individual 7: cards 25-29

Co-facilitators present cards 1-2, 13, 30-34.

2. Explain the instructions:

In your hands, each of you has a section of the U.S. immigration storyline. During the next 10 minutes, read your cards. When you're done reading, jot down your answer to these two questions: "What were the hopes or fears of the American people that characterized this period in U.S. history? How did those hopes and fears inform political opinions on the topic of immigration?" (If participants are working in groups, they can discuss their answers together. It may also help to write these questions on the whiteboard or on a new page of the easel pad).



Then say:

You will then prepare a 1-minute summary of what happened during the time period, as well as the hopes and fears you identified. When you share with the large group, you will simply provide a summary, rather than reading all of the cards.

Give participants no more than 10 minutes to complete this exercise.

Then reconvene the group.

3. Invite participants to respond in historical order. Write their responses in the appropriate places on the Hopes/Fears chart. (NO MORE THAN 1-2 min/respondent).

Example: "In the 1930s, during the Great Depression, almost a million people were deported to Mexico. Americans feared a slowing economy and were afraid of losing their jobs" (i.e., Fears: job shortages, slowing economy).

4. As facilitator, do the first time period as an example (using cards 1-2):

a. You could say this: "From the late 1500s until the 1700s, Europeans colonized the land we now know as the United States. A majority of Native peoples were killed or displaced. From the early 1600s until the mid-1800s, Africans were trafficked into the United States, and their labor contributed to half of U.S. export earnings."

b. Hopes: land expansion, free labor, economic growth

5. **Important:** As the groups present, refer to the "Important Moments to Point Out" section in Attachment A and mention important historical moments if presenters don't.

6. After each presentation, have participants hang their cards on the wall or lay them down somewhere so that they are visible in chronological order.

Personal Connections (15 minutes)

If you have time, hand out a sticky note to each participant. Then say:

We will now take a few minutes to walk around and review the storyline. As you walk, consider the timeline cards that evoke a personal connection or a question. On the sticky note, jot down a few words to sum up your thoughts, and then place your sticky note on the storyline.

When everyone has finished, take turns sharing aloud.



Now What? (5 minutes)

Turn to the poster board or large sheet of paper, which you have labeled "Now What?". Then say:

During each session, we will brainstorm possible ways to turn learning into action. We'll record our answers on this poster. You can go ahead and get started with your action items now if you want, but during Session 8 we'll use the list to help discern how we will take action.

What actions (large or small) could you take in response to what you have learned, whether from the reading, the storyline activity, or our conversation?

(Clarify that naming a potential activity doesn't mean that participants are committing to doing it. Participants are merely helping one another brainstorm. Also, be sure to include "facilitate storyline activity with other groups we are part of" on the chart. You can find facilitation materials [here](#) or through the "Program Links" document in the online account).

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to Session 2 Attachment B and to re-center themselves for the closing prayer. Pause for 30 seconds.

- Reader 1: I want to welcome the stranger
 I need help Lord not to see differences but instead to see the face of God
 I need help Lord not to judge based on clothes, language or customs
 I need help Lord not to walk away pretending I don't see them
- Reader 2: I want to welcome the stranger
 Help me Lord to delight in the variety and diversity of all people
 Help me Lord to see the spark of the divine in their eyes
 Help me Lord to take the risk and offer compassion
 Help me impart the dignity they deserve as children of God
- Reader 3: I want to welcome the stranger
 I can't imagine living in a refugee camp or leaving everything in life behind
 I can't imagine not having enough food or water
 I can't imagine running for my life to escape war or gang conflict



I can't imagine being totally vulnerable
Help me to understand

Reader 4: I want to welcome the stranger
Allow me to meet their glance and offer a smile
Allow me to give a wave or nod of acceptance
Allow me to help them navigate their new life

Reader 5: I want to welcome the stranger
I want them to believe that they can start over
I want them to believe in love not fear
I want to acknowledge their gifts and know more about their lives

Reader 6: I want to welcome the stranger
By doing so I know I will receive more than I give
By doing so I know that I will be connected to the oneness of God

Leader: Infinite source of all, draw us closer to each other and to you- it is only with your help that we may one day truly be in communion together. Amen.

Prayer written for JFM by Santa Orlando,
a member of the Albany, New York,
Chapter of the Maryknoll Affiliates.

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?



Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Attachment A: Important Moments to Point Out

Native Americans, colonization: People often say we are all immigrants, or we are a country of immigrants. While it's true that a majority of people in the U.S. have an immigrant history—and perhaps most within the past century—it's important to recognize that there were Native Americans here before European colonization. Africans were also forced to immigrate—what we would today call human trafficking. So while saying we are all immigrants is often intended to unite us, this statement can be dismissive of the experience of Native American and African American stories.

Asian exclusion: Point out that Chinese immigrants made up only 0.002% of the U.S. population at the time of the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882). People of Chinese descent were excluded from immigrating to the U.S. from 1877-1952, and many other Asians were also excluded within this time period.

World Wars I and II era: Growing isolationism and nativism led to two immigration restriction acts that set ethnic quotas on non-western European countries. The quotas established in the Immigration Act of 1924 led the U.S. to reject German/Jewish refugees aboard the steamship St. Louis in 1939. A quarter of those 900 refugees later died in the Holocaust. During this time, 87 percent of visas went to immigrants from western Europe.

Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965: This legislation changed the immigration system from being nationality-based and allowed for increased immigration from non-western European countries. Prior to 1965, our immigration system strongly favored western European immigrants, providing them an open, fast track to legal entry. (Ask participants if they've heard the statement "My family immigrated here legally, and other people should too!" How could this moment in history inform that opinion?)

1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act: Under President Reagan's administration, there was a two-pronged approach to immigration efforts: (1) over 3 million undocumented immigrants were given amnesty (granted legal, permanent status in the U.S.), and (2) proposals for enforcement of labor and border policies that did not come to fruition. No changes were made to the legal immigration system.

Formation of Department of Homeland Security (DHS): It's telling to track how the government shifted immigration enforcement to various departments over time. First, immigration was housed in the Department of Treasury (economic issue!). Then it moved to the



Bureau of Labor (jobs issue!), then to the Department of Justice (public safety issue!), and then to the Department of Homeland Security (national security issue!).



SESSION THREE

"WHY DON'T THEY JUST GET IN LINE?"

Note: Preparation will take a little longer than usual!!! Be sure to plan plenty of time to print and set up.

Print ahead of time: (if you don't have access to a printer, ask someone in your group to print and bring them)

- [Church between Borders Identity Cards \(single sided\)](#)
- [Employment Visa Form](#) (5 copies)
- [Family Visa Form](#) (5 copies)
- [Diversity Visa Form](#) (5 copies)
- [Refugee and Asylum Seeker Form](#) (5 copies)
- [4 Doors Signs](#) (1 copy, single sided)
- [Identity Card Answers](#) (1 copy)

Note: Printing instructions are for groups of 15 or less.

Before the session begins:

- Cut out the identity cards you printed.
- Set out the four visa forms on a table at the front of the room or at stations around the room. Post each visa station sign with the matching form.

Other supplies you'll need:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle (or something similar, evocative of immigration themes, such as those that emerge from Latinx communities).
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Everything you printed (see above)
- "Now What?" poster
- Participants will need their Participant Packets



Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up: *None*

Schedule for the session:

Activity	Time
Opening Prayer and Introduction	10 minutes
Immigration Simulation	50 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Reading Discussion	35 minutes
Now What?	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	10 minutes

Notes to the Co-facilitators

In this session, your group will learn about basic immigration policy in order to better understand the citizenship process: Who is eligible for citizenship? How do they apply? How long does the process take? The overall goal of this session is to equip participants to both combat harmful misinformation, as well as to develop compassion through a deeper understanding of what undocumented immigrants face.

Please do not feel intimidated by this session. The first half of your session will consist of an immigration simulation created by the Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church. The simulation is extremely effective in educating a wide range of audiences of a variety of political and theological perspectives. It is included not only as a tool to educate your group, but also as an action opportunity for each of your group members to introduce to the social circles of which they are a part. (The Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church has made this simulation available online for free, and it is extremely easy to facilitate).

All you need to do to prepare for this session is to print everything listed on page 2 (above) and follow the instructions listed under the heading "Before the session begins." For everything else in this session, you can literally just read the script — don't feel pressured to improvise or



memorize the instructions. Also, there is no need to answer participants' questions about the immigration process; in fact, there is never a time during your time together that you must step into the "teacher" role. (As a facilitator, you are simply tasked with ensuring that all voices are heard). Consider writing participants' questions on the white board, easel pad, or even just a sheet of paper. Encourage participants to find out the answers themselves and to share them with the group the following week (many of their questions will probably be addressed in chapter 4 of *Welcoming the Stranger*).

If you have any additional questions or facilitation concerns, don't hesitate to reach out to us at JustFaith Ministries — know that we are here to support you as your group learns and grows together.

Blessings on Session 3!

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Begin with the following words:

Welcome, everyone! The title of this session is "Why Don't They Just Get in Line?", referring to the frequently-asked question about why undocumented immigrants do not simply complete the legal process of becoming citizens. During our time together today and through our reading for next week, we will explore the complex answers to that question. Our hope is that, through understanding basic immigration policy, we can: 1. be better able to show love and compassion toward our immigrant neighbors, 2. help combat misinformation, and 3. advocate for immigration policies that are just and practical.

Light the candle. Then ask participants to pause for a moment to center themselves in this space. Pause for 30 seconds.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to



escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

All: Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.

Immigration Simulation (50 minutes)

1. Introduce the next activity with the following words:

We will now engage in a simulation that will help us to better understand the basics of what it takes to gain citizenship status in the United States. This simulation, like last week's immigration storyline, was put together by the



Office of Social Justice of the Christian Reformed Church, who provides high-quality and accessible tools for education and advocacy. JustFaith Ministries strongly encourages us to consider introducing this simulation to the various social circles of which we are a part. This simulation is an incredible opportunity for effective action; as you participate, be thinking about with whom you might share this learning tool.

Opinions tend to run high about the issue of immigration, but often our shared set of facts runs low. If we're going to think faithfully about immigration, it's important that we share an understanding of how immigration works today—and maybe dispel some myths or misunderstandings that we didn't even know we had. In this session we will discover together how a person can legally immigrate today. We often hear the question, "Why don't undocumented immigrants just get in line?" Together we will learn what the lines are, who can get in them (and who can't), and how long it can take to get through those lines.

There won't be time to cover every detail about immigration in this session, but our reading assignment for this week will help answer many of our questions. Also, if anyone wants to see source materials backing up the simulation's claims, check out the [source list](#) listed on the Church Between Borders website.

2. Allow each participant to choose an Identity Card.¹ Note aloud that:

- Each person has received a unique identity card describing the true story of someone hoping to immigrate to the United States. Each participant will step into the shoes of a person trying to navigate our immigration system to see if they can successfully obtain a visa to immigrate under our current immigration laws.
- "To immigrate" means to legally move to the U.S. to live and work permanently. We are not talking about people who come under "nonimmigrant" or temporary visas, such as students or tourists.
- All individuals are seeking an "immigrant visa." This means they are seeking permanent legal residence (green card) and eventual citizenship, if desired.

¹ JustFaith has added three



3. Then say:

There are four ways, or four different visa categories, in which individuals can attempt to apply to enter the U.S. We call these the “four lines.” Based on their immigrant’s story, each participant should select which “line” would work best for their immigrant. Explain the options below:

- **If the person in your story is hoping to work, you might try the EMPLOYMENT visa.**
- **If the person in your story is hoping to join family members in the U.S., try the FAMILY visa.**
- **If you’re fleeing persecution, try the REFUGEE/ASYLUM visa.**
- **If you’re from a country that doesn’t already have a lot of immigrants in the U.S., try the DIVERSITY visa.**

Clarify: **The paperwork that you see at each station is not the real paperwork used by the government, but it will help you identify what kinds of individuals have access to these means of entry. All the described standards and wait times are real.**

4. Then say:

You are invited to move around, pick up a visa form, and return to your seat to fill it out and see if you qualify for that visa. This process should not take more than 5-7 minutes. Some people will qualify and others will not, and all the information you need is indicated in their story. You are welcome to try more than one form if your first attempt doesn’t work.

Pause and allow 5-7 minutes for participants to complete this part of the activity. If there are participants who are confused and have questions — that’s part of the point of the simulation! The immigration process is complicated and confusing.

Encourage participants to share visa forms if there aren’t enough copies.

5. Draw the group back together. Ask each participant to share their answers to the following questions:

- **What is one word that describes what the experience was like personally, or what it felt like to go through the process. (Examples: sad, frustrating, difficult)?**



- **Were you able to immigrate legally?** (Compare participants' answers to the [Identity Card Answers](#) sheet).

6. Then ask:

- **Who tried to fill out the family-based visa? What surprised you as you tried to go through this "line," or what did you learn about it?**
 - Share the points of emphasis about family-based visas in Attachment A.
- **Who tried to fill out the employment-based visa? What surprised you as you tried to go through this "line," or what did you learn about it?**
 - Share the points of emphasis about employment-based visas in Attachment A.
- **Who tried to fill out the refugee and asylum-based visa? What surprised you as you tried to go through this "line," or what did you learn about it?**
 - Share the points of emphasis about refugee and asylum-based visas in Attachment A.
- **Who tried to fill out the diversity-based visa? What surprised you as you tried to go through this "line," or what did you learn about it?**
 - Share the points of emphasis about diversity visas in Attachment A.

7. Ask the group:

After going through this simulation, how would you respond to someone who asked, 'Can you help me understand why some people don't get in line and come the legal way?'"

Most likely, participants will have answers and explanations that debrief the themes of this lesson. If not, here are a couple of suggestions:

- For many individuals who want to immigrate to the United States, there is no "line" to get into.
- There are no legal channels for most people to enter the United States, and once they are in the U.S. without legal status, there is no opportunity to "get in line."
- Wait times are often very long, even longer than some individuals' remaining lifetime.



Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to take a break and share refreshments.

Announcements (5 minutes)

Remind participants about the immersion experience between sessions 6 and 7.

Discussion of the Readings and Spiritual Practice (35 minutes)

Introduce the reading dialogue with these words:

We will now divide into small groups of 3-4 to discuss the reading. I invite you to turn to Attachment B in your Participant Packet, as you will be discussing the questions that are listed there. Assign a facilitator to read the instructions and facilitate the conversation.

You will have 25 minutes to engage in conversation. I will call you back to the large group when 25 minutes are up.

Break participants into small groups. When the groups reconvene, ask each group representative to share **1-2 sentences** about a key point from their group's discussion (you only have ten minutes for large group sharing, so encourage representatives to be brief).

IMPORTANT: Before turning to the closing prayer, say:

This program mentions, but does not spend much time on, the experience of Africans who were trafficked into the United States aboard slave ships. This is an incredibly important topic that is essential to understanding who we are as American Christians. JustFaith Ministries has a program called [Faith and Racial Healing: Embracing Truth, Justice, and Restoration](#), which gives this



topic the attention it deserves. You can find out more about Faith and Racial Healing on JustFaith Ministries' website. Please consider participating in or facilitating this program.

Now What? (5 minutes)

Refer to the "Now What?" poster. Ask: **What ideas do you have regarding how you or the group might respond to what we learned today?** Add suggestions to the list.

If someone doesn't think to suggest it, be sure to add "facilitate Immigration Simulation" to the list, and ask participants to name groups with whom they could share this simulation.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to Session 3 Attachment C and to re-center themselves for the closing prayer. Pause for 30 seconds.

Then invite one participant to read the following prayer or read it yourself:

God of our Wandering Ancestors,
 Long have we known
 That your heart is with the refugee:
 That you were born into time In a family of refugees
 Fleeing violence in their homeland,
 Who then gathered up their hungry child
 And fled into alien country.

Their cry, your cry, resounds through ages:
 "Will you let me in?"

Give us hearts that break open
 When our brothers and sisters turn to us
 with that same cry.

Then surely all these things will follow:
 Ears will no longer turn deaf to their voices.
 Eyes will see a moment for grace instead of threat.



Tongues will not be silenced but will instead advocate.
 And hands will reach out—
 working for peace in their homeland,
 working for justice in the lands where they seek safe haven.

Lord, protect all refugees in their travels.
 May they find a friend in me
 And so make me worthy
 Of the refuge I have found in you. Amen.

Source: Catholic Relief Services

Leader: **Help us, God, to go in peace from this place, willing to allow what we have learned to continue to transform our hearts and lives. Amen.**

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Attachment A: Points of Emphasis on the Visa Forms

Family

- The family member in the U.S. does the work of petitioning the U.S. government for their family member who wishes to immigrate. The family member in the U.S. must be a citizen or a legal permanent resident.
 - A person without legal status cannot petition for family members.
 - A person on a temporary visa cannot petition for family members.
- Highlight that the family member in the U.S. must meet certain financial requirements in order to petition for a family member.
- Emphasize that the family member in the U.S. must be 21 years old in order to petition for a family member to immigrate to the U.S.
- Your family member must be an immediate family member.
 - An immediate family member is a spouse, child, parent, or sibling.
 - Extended family relationships (aunts, uncles, cousins, grandchildren, grandparents) do not qualify.
- You may or may not be able to enter, based on the status of your U.S. family member.
 - If the family member is a U.S. citizen, they can petition for all immediate family members.
 - If you are a legal permanent resident (green-card holder) you can petition only for your spouse and unmarried child (minor or adult).
 - A majority of legal permanent residents can apply for citizenship after five years of living legally in the United States.
- Highlight the wait times. The forms show averages, but wait times are based, country of origin, family relationship, and how many applicants are in the line ahead of you.
 - There is a maximum number of family-sponsored preference visas that can be issued to citizens of any one country in a single fiscal year. No country can receive more than seven percent of the visas available for the year. This results in significant backlogs for high-volume immigration countries, like China, Mexico, and the Philippines.
 - Unlike all the other visa categories, Congress does not place a limit on the number of visas it will give annually for spouses and minor children. Therefore,



they tend to experience shorter wait times, but there is no guarantee that these visas will be granted.

Employment

- The following individuals can obtain a visa to immigrate to the U.S. within 12 to 18 months: (Such individuals find this out at question one on the employment visa form and do not need to proceed to the other questions.)
 - People investing \$800,000 in a job-creating enterprise that employs and preserves at least 10 full-time U.S. workers.
 - “Persons of extraordinary ability” in the arts, science, education, business, or athletics; outstanding professors and researchers, multinational executives and managers.
- Otherwise, you must be a skilled worker to enter through this visa.
 - Individuals must have a permanent, full-time job offer from a U.S. employer, so this involves much more than being willing to work.
 - Before officially offering the job, the employer must go through a Department of Labor certification process to prove to that:
 - There are no other qualified U.S. citizens who want the job – this is to prioritize hiring U.S. citizens.
 - The employer must also prove that hiring a foreign worker will not negatively impact U.S. workers’ wages or working conditions.
 - The employer must petition for the prospective immigrant. As the visa form demonstrates, the employer may have to wait six to 10 years for the immigrant to receive their visa and typically pay \$5,000 to \$15,000 in legal and filing fees, so the employer has to really, really want this person.
 - A majority of immigrants coming through the employment “line” must have a college or advanced degree or two years of experience in the field in which they are seeking to work.
- Wait times for all employment visa categories are based on the annual limit on the number of visas given and the number of applicants for each visa.
- The U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the U.S. Farm Bureau estimates that 40-60 percent of all farm workers in the U.S. do not have legal immigration status. This demonstrates a major injustice of our immigration system—we have jobs that need to be filled but our broken system doesn’t give enough visas to allow people to come do the work.



- There are visa shortages for high-skilled workers. So, many tech companies are strong advocates for immigration reform.
- Congress sets the annual visa limits for each category. For example, there are only 5,000 permanent low-skilled worker visas allowed per year, and seasonal workers do not qualify. Only Congress can change these numbers.
- Congress also sets the requirements. For example, if someone is working on a farm today and does not currently have legal status, there is basically no way for that person to get legal status without returning to their country of origin and entering through one of the four “lines” we have discussed. Congress created this requirement, and only they can change it.
- There are no temporary visas that lead to legal permanent residency (green card). If someone on a temporary visa wants to apply for a green card, they must apply to enter through one of the four doors.

Refugee and Asylum

- A person may qualify for refugee and asylum status if they are fleeing a well-founded fear of persecution based on race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a specific social group.
 - Meeting this legal definition is a requirement for someone to be considered a refugee or an asylum seeker.
- **The United States currently is not resettling refugees except in certain specific cases.**
- Difference between refugee and asylum status: Refugee status is processed overseas, and recipients arrive to the United States with legal status. Asylum status is requested when someone arrives in the U.S. and then applies for status while on U.S. soil. The criteria are the same for both categories.
- You are five times more likely to receive asylum status if you have legal representation, but a majority of individuals, including children, do not have access to legal counsel.
- There is a common perception that a “refugee” is a generic term for a desperate individual who cannot safely stay in their home country. It is critical to understand that the criteria is much stricter than this, and there is a high burden of proof required.



- A person fleeing persecution will often leave their home country and find safety in a United Nations-sponsored (U.N.) refugee camp or an urban center in a neighboring country. The U.N. will do initial screenings and give refugee status to individuals. Only the most vulnerable individuals will be recommended to a third country for resettlement.
 - There are about 30 countries that participate in refugee resettlement - one of them being the United States (**although the resettlement program is currently suspended**).
 - Less than 1 percent of the over 21 million refugees will ever be resettled into a new country.
- Refugees are the most thoroughly vetted individuals to enter the United States (security checks can take up to two years).
 - There is very little evidence to connect refugees and the threat of violence. The Cato Institute reports that the chance of being murdered in a terrorist attack caused by a refugee is 1 in 3.64 billion per year.
- There are currently 65 million displaced persons worldwide, but because of the strict definition, not all are given refugee status (for example, economic migrants fleeing northern Africa to Europe).
 - 21 million of these displaced persons have refugee status.

Diversity

- This visa category was created in 1990 to dedicate a channel for immigrants from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.
- This visa acts as a lottery system. You must meet the criteria to be granted a visa, but selection for this visa is random.
- Each year only 55,000 diversity visas are available and in 2015 over 9 million individuals applied.
- This visa isn't for the poor: you have to meet certain education and job experience prerequisites, and there is a \$330 fee if you are selected.
- Being selected through the lottery does not guarantee a visa; you must also fill out online forms, go through an interagency screening process, receive a medical form, and travel to an interview.



Attachment B: Reading Dialogue Questions for Small Groups

Instructions: You will have 25 minutes to discuss the questions below in your small groups. You might not have time to get to every question, and that's okay. Choose a facilitator to read the questions and facilitate the conversation. Ask a representative to share with the large group 1-2 sentences about key points your group discussed.

Readings for this week were: Welcoming the Stranger: chapter 3 (p. 43-66); [Refugee Screening Process \(World Relief\)](#)

- How was your experience with the spiritual practice this week?
- What is one thing that stood out to you from any of the readings?
- What surprised you from the information you read about refugees?
- What lingering questions do you have about refugees? What can you do to find the answers to your questions?

Questions from *Welcoming the Stranger*

- What are two or three goals that you find immigrants of the past and present share?
- If someone asked you: "my family came to the United States through Ellis Island in 1907, and they came the legal way..... Why can't immigrants today do the same?" how would you respond?
- What does the ebb and flow of historical sentiment toward immigrants reveal about our country? Is it an encouragement or a discouragement to read the brief historical immigration summary of our nation?
- How might an understanding of our country's history regarding immigration help someone to better understand immigration today?



SESSION FOUR

WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE?: PART ONE

Items Needed for this Session:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Participants will need their Participant Packets
- Laptop and screen for video.

Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

- *Harvest of Empire*, beginning at 38:00": <https://youtu.be/5gW84cAN2Pw?t=2278>

Schedule for this Session:

Activity	Minutes
Welcome and Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Harvest of Empire	55 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Discussion of Video	35 minutes
Closing Prayer	10 minutes



Notes to the Co-Facilitators

During Session 4 and the second half of Session 5, your group will be considering the question “why do people migrate?” This question pulls the topic of immigration down from the realm of intellectual debate to the level of story and empathy. While your next session will mainly focus on personal story, this session prompts participants to think critically about international politics and policies that greatly influence the reasons why people migrate.

Most of your time during this session will be spent watching a documentary called *Harvest of Empire*. This documentary is quite heavy, and it presents a historical perspective that is not well-known or popular. Its content may be met with skepticism, sadness, or even anger. However, understanding this side of history is crucial to answering the question “why do people migrate?” The ultimate goal of watching this film is to inspire participants to ask difficult but important questions about our self-identities, and about our Christian responsibility to speak truth to power even when there is risk. Challenge participants to remain in conversation, even if they disagree, and to use this documentary as a foundation for asking further questions.

One last reminder: Don’t forget that you’ll be hosting a guest speaker during the first half of Session 5. See your Facilitator’s Guide for more details on how to plan.

We hope your time together is challenging yet hope-filled. Blessings on Session 4.



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Begin with the following words:

Welcome, everyone! The title of this session is “Why do People Migrate?: Part 1.” During this session and the second half of the next session, we’ll be exploring reasons why people leave their homes to come to the United States. During this session, we’ll finish watching the documentary Harvest of Empire, which will highlight how international policies have played a role in mass migration from Latin America. While this session will guide us in a big-picture analysis, the second half of the next session will allow us to zoom in on the more personal reasons why families and individuals journey to the United States. We won’t discuss the reading or talk about possible action steps this week, so hold onto your thoughts about both until next week.

As we begin, let’s take a moment to take a breath, and to feel God’s presence in the quiet which surrounds us.

Light the candle. Pause for 30 seconds.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: ***Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.***



Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.*

All: Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.

Video: Harvest of Empire (55 minutes)

Before starting the second half of the documentary, take a few minutes to refresh everyone's memories about the first 38 minutes of Harvest of Empire, which they watched for "homework." Invite participants to briefly summarize key points that stood out to them.

Then introduce the second part of Harvest of Empire with the following words:

The reasons why people migrate can be very complex. Often these reasons have to do not just with personal and family circumstances, but also with international policies and politics. *Harvest of Empire* focuses on immigrants coming from Latin America, but let's also remember that immigrants come from all over the world, and for many different reasons. For example, in 2017, the second largest origin group was those from China, and the third was from India.



Some of you may be new to the history this documentary introduces, and it might be a bit unsettling. If you need to take a break by leaving the room, please don't hesitate to do so. This video is included in this program in order to help us ask important questions around international and economic policies, so that we can better advocate for immigration reform that is practical, compassionate, and just. It may be helpful to jot down key words to research later so that you can explore your questions more thoroughly.

At the same time, let's remember that this topic is more than an intellectual discussion — we'll be talking about real lives and real stories.

Display *Harvest of Empire* on the screen, and begin the film at 38 minutes:

<https://youtu.be/5gW84cAN2Pw?t=2278>

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to take a quick break. They can eat their refreshments during the video discussion.

Announcements (5 minutes)

Remind participants about the reading assignments and spiritual practice (which can be found in the Weekly Assignments chart in the Participant Packet).

Remind participants of the upcoming immersion experience, and let them know that the guest speaker will be visiting during Session 5.

Discussion of the Video (35 minutes)

After you reconvene, invite the group to spend a few minutes in silent reflection and to jot down a few notes in answer to these questions:



- When you think of the film you have just seen, what are the first scenes that spring to mind?
- What did you find most striking, revelatory, painful, or inspiring about the film?

After this time of reflection, invite participants to share with the group some of their insights, impressions and feelings. The following questions may be useful for this conversation:

1. Did any of the moments of emotional intensity you identified change the way you perceive the problems and political struggles around immigration policy?
2. What seems to you the most important take-away from this film – that is, the insight, reminder or new information that feels most crucial?

Conclude the discussion, and let participants know that this discussion guide is drawn from [a guide written by the Unitarian Universalist College of Social Justice](#). If participants decide to film this documentary for another audience, they can access the discussion guide for free online.

Transition into the closing prayer by asking a volunteer to read the following poem (Attachment A):

Prayer for Travelers

This is a prayer for all the travelers.
 For the ones who start out in beauty,
 who fall from grace,
 who step gingerly,
 looking for the way back.
 And for those who are born into the margins,
 who travel from one liminal space to another,
 crossing boundaries in search of center.
 This is a prayer for the ones whose births
 are a passing from darkness to darkness,
 who all their lives are drawn toward the light,
 and keep moving,
 and for those whose journeys
 are a winding road that begins
 and ends in the same place,



though only when the journey is completed
do they finally know where they are.
For all the travelers, young and old,
aching and joyful,
weary and full of life;
the ones who are here, and the ones who are not here;
the ones who are like you (and they're all like you)
and the ones who are different (for in some ways, we each travel alone). This is a prayer
for traveling mercies,
And sure-footedness,
for clear vision,
for bread
for your body and spirit,
for water,
for your safe arrival
and for everyone you see along the way.

— Angela Herrera

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Ask participants to turn to Attachment B. Let participants know that the closing prayer was written for JustFaith Ministries by Maryknoll Lay Missioner Rick Dixon of El Salvador.

Then invite participants to repeat the refrain after each prayer.

Sweet, Spirit of Jesus, teach us 'I am' relationships, relationships in the present moment, relationships which belong to all humanity, in which all things have their being and come into being.

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

The immigrant child becoming flesh the moment I see her, believe in her, reach out to her. Of her presence, full of grace and truth, have we all received.

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

The barefoot child selling bread on the streets of San Salvador. The moment I gift her a smile and something to eat,

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.



The child of poverty who cannot go to school. The moment I buy a book and help find a way,

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

The teenager who dies in a hail of gunfire. The moment I mourn and weep,

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

A family fleeing war and violence. The moment I give them shelter,

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

A child finding a word of life. The moment I imagine and care,

R: The light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it.

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Session 4 Attachment C: Push & Pull Factors of Migration²

"Migrants are our brothers and sisters in search of a better life, far away from poverty, hunger, exploitation and the unjust distribution of the planet's resources which are meant to be equitably shared by all. Don't we all want a better, more decent and prosperous life to share with our loved ones?"

— Pope Francis, Message for the World Day of Migrants & Refugees, 2016

Across the globe, people migrate for a wide variety of reasons. Most of these reasons can be categorized in two ways: ***push*** factors, which *push* people out of their home countries, and ***pull*** factors, which *pull* them into a different country. Push and pull factors can be economic, political, social, or environmental.

On the one hand, push and pull factors can be helpful in identifying broad, underlying factors that spur migration so that we can make informed decisions around immigration policies. On the other hand, push and pull factors do not capture the specific and personal reasons that someone chooses — or is forced — to migrate; it is crucial to honor each person's unique story.

Through the readings and videos, you have heard several stories about immigrants. During Session 5, you will be asked to recall these stories and name the push and pull factors that contributed to their decisions to cross borders.

PUSH

Persecution
Violence
War

Poor wages
Lack of jobs

Crop failure and famine
Pollution
Natural disaster

Limited opportunities
Lack of services
Family separation



PULL

Safety
Stability
Freedom

Higher wages
Job prospects

Food availability
Better environment

Better quality of life
Availability of services
Family reunification

² This attachment draws from a 2016 handout created by Justice for Immigrants: <https://justiceforimmigrants.org/>



SESSION FIVE

WHY DO PEOPLE MIGRATE?: PART TWO

Activity	Minutes
Welcome and Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Guest Speaker	45 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Check-in	20 minutes
Why do People Migrate?	25 minutes
Now What?	5 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes

Items Needed for this Session:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Large piece of poster board, an easel pad, or whiteboard.
- Markers
- "Now What?" poster
- If using poster board, you'll also need painters tape to hang it on the wall.
- Participants will need their Participant Packets

Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

None



Notes to the Co-Facilitators

Today you'll hear from your guest speaker, as well as follow up on the question "why do people migrate?"

For more instructions about inviting a guest speaker, see the notes in your Facilitator Overview. You may want to bring a blank thank you card to this session for participants to sign during the break.

After the break, you will first do a general check-in to help the group process what they're learning and feeling. While the first four weeks provided background information on immigration, the second half of your journey transitions into modern-day immigration issues and opportunities for action. The check-in time is intended to guide participants in making that transition.

Following the check-in time, the group will talk about the "push" and "pull" factors that push people out of their native countries and pull them into the United States. This section is also meant to help participants to integrate not just what they read last week, but *all* that they've been reading and talking about over your past five weeks together.

If the discussion is dragging out longer than the allotted time, don't hesitate to say something along the lines of "we have time for one more comment before we need to move to the next question." In this particular session, it is important that you at least touch on all of the material.

We hope your time together and with your guest speaker is energizing, despite the weightiness of the issue. Blessings on Session 5.



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Find volunteers to help read the opening prayer. Begin with the following words:

Welcome, everyone! During this session, we will hear from our guest speaker (state their name and *briefly* explain a bit about their work). **They will introduce themselves in a few minutes.**

Then, during the second half of our session, we'll use what we've learned from the videos and readings to answer the question "why do people migrate?". We've covered a lot of information during Sessions 1-4, and this will also be a time to process what we've been learning and thinking about over the past month together. First, let's begin with prayer.

Light the candle.

Ask participants to pause for a moment to center themselves in the space. Pause for 30 seconds.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning



about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: ***Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and sisters.***

All: **Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.**

Guest Speaker (45 minutes)

Ask the guest speaker and each participant to share their name. Then, invite the guest speaker to start by sharing some of their background and work activity related to migration. Give the speaker about 30-35 minutes, leaving 10-15 minutes for questions. At the end of the presentation, thank the guest speaker for their time. Offer a quick prayer, if you wish, to bless their work and show gratitude for your time together.

Guiding questions include (these are optional):

- Why do you do what you do?
- Why is justice for immigrants important to you and central to your vocation?
- How does your faith inform your work?
- What are the biggest joys and challenges of your work?
- How can churches and individuals support you and your work?



Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to share refreshments. This might also be a good time to informally debrief about the guest speaker.

Announcements (5 minutes)

Be sure that everyone is aware of the logistics for the immersion experience between sessions 6 and 7. To avoid spending too much time on this, email everyone the details.

Preparing an Immigration Briefing: Introduce this “assignment” with the following words:

In addition to the reading and spiritual practice, next week we'll be discussing current issues relating to immigration. Because information on these topics is always changing, part of your “homework” for next week will be to do some research about the current status of your assigned topic.

We'll divide up into small groups by topic, but each person will do their at-home research individually. At the beginning of the next session, small groups will convene to compare notes and prepare a “briefing” for the rest of the group.

Further instructions for this assignment can be found in the participant packet (Session 5 Attachment B).

A few topics to consider starting with might be: Asylum, DACA and DAPA, TPS (Temporary Protective Status), or Family Separations.

If there is another topic in which your group is particularly interested, add it to the list.

Select the three or four topics, and assign 2-3 participants to each topic.



Check-in (20 minutes)

- We've covered a *lot* over the past several weeks. What is something you've learned that has moved or inspired you?
- In Session 2, we reflected on this sentence from chapter 1 of *Welcoming the Stranger*: "It is these 'easy' issues that often prove to be the most complex and the hardest to resolve, since our presumptions keep us from hearing the other side." How have your initial thoughts on immigration been challenged during our time together?

Why do People Migrate? (25 minutes)

On the paper, poster, or white board, draw a line down the middle to create two columns. At the top of one column, write "PUSH." At the top of the other column, write "PULL."

Say to the group:

In order to process what we've been learning about the reasons why people migrate, we'll frame our conversation around the "push" and "pull" factors of migration, as explained in the Justice for Immigrants article we read. So that we are all on the same page, can someone summarize what "push" and "pull" factors of immigration are?

(If the group has a hard time remembering, read aloud the first paragraph of Session 4 Attachment C, which says: "*Across the globe, people migrate for a wide variety of reasons. Most of these reasons can be categorized in two ways: **push** factors, which push people out of their home countries, and **pull** factors, which pull them into a different country. Push and pull factors can be economic, political, social, or environmental.*")

Then say:

In *The Line Becomes a River* and *Welcoming the Stranger*, as well as in the videos we've watched, we heard several stories about immigrants. Can you recall any of these stories, and name the push and pull factors that contributed to their decision to cross the border? (you may want to give



participants a few minutes to flip back through their reading before asking them to respond).

As each person responds, write the “push” and “pull” factors in the appropriate column on the chart.

If the group needs an example to get started, you can use the story of Guillermo (Welcoming the Stranger, p. 122-123), who came to the United States to provide his family a better life. The “push” factor is lack of economic opportunity in Mexico, and the “pull” factor is the need for grape pickers in the United States.

Then ask if participants can think of any additional push or pull factors not mentioned in the readings.

Then say:

***Harvest of Empire* adds some bigger-picture reasons for immigration to the United States. With this documentary in mind, what additional factors would you add to our “push” and “pull” list?**

After your group finishes discussing “push” and “pull” factors, say:

We also read in *Welcoming the Stranger* that migration is not always a choice. What stood out to you from the short reading about human trafficking? Take a few minutes to flip through pages 132-133 and pick out a few words or a sentence that impacted you.

When everyone has finished, take turns around the circle sharing passages from the reading that participants found impactful.

To close the conversation, invite the group to pause for a moment of silence to pray for those who are victims of human trafficking.

Now What? (5 minutes)

Refer to the “Now What?” poster. Ask: **What ideas do you have regarding how you or the group might respond to what we learned today?** Add their suggestions to the list.



Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Ask the group to turn to Session 5 Attachment A, and then to take a moment to quietly re-center themselves in the space. Then invite participants into the closing prayer with the following words:

This prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Father Paul Masson, who served for ten years in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, just across the Rio Grande from El Paso, Texas.

All: Merciful God,

Our history as human beings, and even before, has been a history of life on the move. As your sons and daughters, we continue to search for a place to sleep, food to eat, and families and communities to support us. We are a people on a journey.

We are grateful for the earth that sustains us, but we do not always take time to thank you. Also, we lack compassion for our brothers and sisters who have been uprooted by violence, natural disasters and poverty.

Help us to remember that we are always on a journey with them and with You, to a new way of life in abundance. Amen.

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.



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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.

Attachment B: Preparing your Policy Briefing (Preparation for Session 6)

Immigration policy is constantly changing. For this reason, you'll help to update your group on the status of important issues. Here are the steps for completing your research:

1. In Session 5, your facilitator assigned you with a topic to research this week (it could have been Asylum, DACA and DAPA, TPS (Temporary Protective Status), Family Separations, or another topic. If you don't know your topic, contact your facilitator.
2. Using the internet, find out some basic information about your topic. Try to find perspectives from a variety of sources and choose recent information. Be careful of [fake news](#)!
3. Jot down a few notes about your topic:
 - What's the historical background behind your issue? (answering who, what, when, where, and why/how could be a helpful way to approach this question.)
 - What are the latest updates on your topic?
 - Is there controversy around your topic? If so, what are popular perspectives on the issue? (Do your best to accurately represent these perspectives, even if you disagree.)
4. In session 6, you'll convene with other group members who researched your same topic, compare notes, and give a brief presentation to the rest of the group.



SESSION SIX

CURRENT ISSUES IN MIGRATION

Items Needed for this Session:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Laptop and screen for video
- Participants will need their Participant Packets

Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

- "What is Your Place in the World?":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CB2OuSjMxps>

Schedule for this Session:

Activity	Minutes
Welcome and Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Immigration Briefings: Preparation in Small Groups	15 minutes
Immigration Briefings	50 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Reading Discussion	20 minutes
Video and Now What?	10 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes



Notes to the Co-Facilitators

Today's session gets at the "hot topics" related to immigration. However, these current events and policies are more than just topics for intellectual contemplation (or Thanksgiving dinner disputes), as they affect thousands, and sometimes even millions, of people. For this reason, it is important that your group remain up-to-date on these issues, equipped to speak love and truth into a world of fear and polarization.

Remind your group that, if they feel that they have more questions than answers at this point, that is okay. Questions are the foundation for open, respectful dialogue, as well as a healthy appreciation for the complicated nature of the subject matter. After all, anyone who seems to have all the answers on this topic is probably missing some important information!

Hopefully by now your group has become well-acquainted with the Community of Trust guidelines, but it is never too late to pull them back out, particularly if the discussion feels inappropriately tense. At any time in your conversations, you can also reintroduce curiosity and mutual respect back into your conversation by inviting the group to take a couple minutes of silent prayer and reflection.

Blessings on your time together, and, as always, please don't hesitate to let the JustFaith Ministries staff know how we can support you on your journey.



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Begin with the following words:

Welcome to Session 6! Today we'll take some time to learn about recent immigration events and legislation. It's important to stay up to date about these topics, so that we can advocate for more effective, compassionate, and just immigration policy. It's also important to understand how current policies affect our immigrant neighbors, so that we can better demonstrate our love and support.

Light the candle. Then ask participants to pause for a moment to center themselves in this space. Pause for 30 seconds.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.



All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

All: Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.

Immigration Briefings: Preparation in Small Groups (15 minutes)

Invite participants to convene with those who researched the same topic as they did. Then say:

We will now spend about 10-15 minutes comparing notes on the topics we researched this week. In your small groups, compare notes on what you learned. Then prepare a 5 minute "briefing" for the large group, which contains: 1. A summary of your topic 2. A discussion question.

Immigration Briefings (50 minutes)

Invite groups to take turns presenting on their topics. Groups should present for 5 minutes, and then take about 5 minutes to pose their discussion question. Be sure to keep an eye on time.... You might even want to set a 10 minute timer on your phone to let groups know when time is up.

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to share refreshments.



Announcements (5 minutes)

Remind the group about the upcoming immersion experience.

Reading Discussion (20 minutes)

Introduce the reading dialogue with these words:

We will now divide into small groups of 3-4 to discuss the reading. I invite you to turn to Attachment A in your Participant Packet, as you will be discussing the questions that are listed there. You will have 15 minutes to engage in conversation. Assign a facilitator to read the instructions and facilitate the dialogue.

Divide participants into small groups. When the group reconvenes, ask the group representatives to share a sentence or two about the insights that arose from their small group's discussion.

Video and Now What? (10 minutes)

Get out the "Now What?" poster, if you haven't already. Say:

We'll now watch a video by the founder of JustFaith Ministries, the organization that wrote this program. In the video, Jack inspires us to consider how our Christian faith calls us to action.

Play the video ["What is Your Place in the World?"](#) (4:12).

Then ask:

- In this video, Jack Jezreel says: "the whole point of the process is a commissioning: to go out into the community to meet and join hands with those already hard at work at building a more just and peaceful world." Do you know of any people or organizations who you could "join hands with" in order to address the issues we discussed today? (take notes on the "Now What?" poster).



Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to turn to Session 6 Attachment B and recentre themselves in the space. Pause for 30 seconds of silence.

Then say:

As our closing prayer, we will read an adaptation of Psalm 137, written by Joan Maruskin of the United Methodist Women. Psalm 137 is a hymn that describes the grief of God's people upon their exile to the land of their oppressors. In the original passage, the Israelites yearn for their home and for those they have been forced to leave behind, vowing to never forget who they are despite the taunts of their enemies.

Psalm 137 (adapted)

By the waters of the Rio Grande, there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion.

On the willows there we hung up our guitars, for there the border patrol asked us for songs and the vigilantes asked for laughter, saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" How could we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?

By the waters we weep and remember. We remember Mexico and El Salvador. We remember Honduras and Darfur. We remember Colombia and Bosnia. We remember Cuba and Haiti. We remember China and Romania. By the waters we remember.

On the willows we hung up our guitars. We hung up our hopes. We hung up our hopes, our land, our dreams. We hung up our poverty, our hunger, our thirst. We hung up our friends, our traditions, our culture. We hung up our family ties, our food, our language.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? We sing only the song of the homeless, the unemployed, the laments of hunger and thirst, of death and destruction, the songs of the songless, the hungry, the thirsty, the songs of the lonely, the songs of the dying.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land?



From *Immigration and the Bible: a Guide for Radical Welcome*
By Joan Maruskin, UMW, 2012
Used with permission

Pause for silence before moving to the Circle of Prayer (which is formatted differently than usual).

A Circle of Prayer

Begin the Circle of Prayer with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors. We name these concerns aloud or in our hearts.

Pause to allow participants to share.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Session 6 Attachment A: Reading Dialogue

Instructions: You will have 15 minutes to discuss the questions below in your small groups. You probably will not have time to get to all of the questions, and that's okay. Choose a facilitator to read the questions and facilitate the conversation. Ask a representative to share with the large group 1-2 sentences about key points your group discussed.

Note: For this session, you will have read The Line Becomes a River: Part 2 (p. 81-160).

- What is one thing that stood out to you from any of the readings?
- Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. famously stated many times that “whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. I can never be what I ought to be until you are what you ought to be, and you can never be what you ought to be until I am what I ought to be... This is the inter-related structure of reality.” At the same time, Cantú describes (especially on page 138) how our society has largely become ambivalent to the violence which prompts migration. Do you agree with King’s statement? If so, how do you feel that you are affected by the violence that many immigrants face?
- What do you think about David Wood’s commentary on moral injury, which Cantú discusses on pages 150-151? How might you be exposed to moral injury?
- On page 157, Cantú quotes Cristina Rivera Garza: “Pain not only destroys, but produces reality.” What do you think Garza means here?
- Will Willimon, in his book *Fear of the Other*, writes:

“Only an appropriately grateful fear of the Lord is sufficient to overcome the often deep divide between “people like us” and the mysterious, sometimes threatening, “them.” Love your neighbor—yep, your poor Black, rich White, Jewish, Muslim, NRA-conservative Republican, class-hating Democrat, atheist, homophobic, exuberantly lesbian—neighbor as yourself. Let’s be honest that our faith requires us to go toward the Other without regard for whether or not the Other steps toward us. The outcome of my step toward is not predetermined. Sometimes my gesture will be unreturned. I may discover that the Other is so angry at the hurt received from me and my kind that the Other will be unable to step toward me. Jesus does not promise that by moving toward the Other we will bring out the best in the Other. He commands us to act toward the Other as Jesus has acted toward us.



*In the light of Jesus, simply receiving the Other is not the full justice we owe. Jesus pushes us beyond the conventional invite and welcome toward nothing short of love. But asking God to give us the grace to receive the Other is an essential first step on that journey. I find it helpful to be clear: I take the step toward and open my arms, not primarily because of my enlightened redefinition of the Other but rather **because of Jesus's redefinition of me.***

How do Willimon's words challenge you?

- How was your experience with the spiritual practice this week? Where do you find refuge in times of hardship?

IMMERSION EXPERIENCE

Session Checklist:

- Large pillar candle and matches
- A tablecloth
- A Bible set on a table open to Luke 24:13-32
- Ensure that participants bring their Participant Packets.

Note: The schedule for this session is really flexible, as it depends on the host and encounter.

Section	Timing
Welcome and Opening Prayer	15 minutes
Immersion	120 minutes (though flexible)
Reflection on Immersion	20 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes



Notes to the Co-Facilitators

The immersion experience is an essential part of this program, and it is to be scheduled apart from the eight regularly-scheduled sessions. It is designed to invite participants into an encounter with those who extend hospitality toward immigrants, and/or are pursuing immigration justice efforts. The overall flow of the immersion is as follows:

1. Gathering together in the group's meeting place to reflect on Scripture to provide a prayerful context for the session.
2. Removing the group from its regular meeting place and intentionally traveling together to a location that may be, for some, unfamiliar and even a little uncomfortable. This voluntary displacement may not be a common occurrence for some group members.
3. Meeting with and conversing with people who are working within immigrant communities, hearing and sharing stories, building relationships, and learning about the systemic challenges involved in their work. The immersion may include sharing a simple meal together, if appropriate.
4. Returning to the group's meeting place to process and draw insights from the experience.

As your immersion experience, we recommend that you visit an agency that is working toward immigration justice, or one that offers solidarity with and service for immigrants. Alternatively, you may visit a church in which most of the congregation are immigrants.

You may plan the immersion for the time of a regular meeting (as an extra session) and may have to slightly extend the time of your meeting. Or you may need to choose a day and time that is more convenient for those who will host you. You will need to tailor the immersion to the needs of your group and the availability of your host. Review the steps below to ensure you have made all the necessary preparations for the immersion:

- Have a clear outline of the immersion itinerary, including directions to the location (if traveling in separate cars), available to everyone in your group.
- If visiting a nonprofit or other agency, ensure that your host organization has your immersion itinerary ahead of time.
- If you are attending a church service or mass, call ahead of time to let the pastor or priest know your group is coming. You may want to ask for a meeting with the priest or pastor before or after the service to ask about her/his vocational calling and experience

in the community (Sundays are busy days for clergy, though, and they may be unavailable).

- If your visit includes sharing a meal, arrange in advance what food items your group will bring to share, taking into account any dietary needs.

Immersion experience Do's and Don'ts:

- *Do* be sensitive about protecting your hosts' privacy and identity. Keep in mind that immigrant communities around the country are currently under a lot of pressure and may be fearful of any type of intrusion by unknown people.
- *Don't* take pictures unless you have clear permission.
- *Don't* ask about someone's documentation status or whether they are a citizen.
- *Do* try to speak the native language of someone you're talking to, if you know a little of their language, and if it's clear that the person does not speak English. Even if you butcher the language, vulnerable situations like these can be deeply spiritual! However:
 - *Don't* assume that all immigrants don't speak English. For many second and third generation immigrants, as well immigrants coming from English-speaking countries, English is their primary language.
 - *Don't* expect immigrants to think it's impressive or funny that you know words like *taco* or *cerveza*.
 - *Don't* say "you have really good English!" (this can come off as patronizing... for all you know, English may be their fifth language).
- *Don't* ask "...so where are you *really* from?" Many immigrants, and the descendants of immigrants, consider the United States to be their home.
- *Do* invite people to share their stories, but *don't* ask them to share things that are deeply personal or that might be connected to trauma. "Tell me about your friends and family," or "what do you like best about _____ (name your town or city)?" are a couple examples of icebreaker questions.
- *Do* treat everyone you meet with respect (rather than with pity), even if you hear stories of suffering and pain.

- *Don't* ask "are you grateful to be here?" This can minimize the pain that someone may be experiencing, or come across as if you're reminding them that they're indebted to the benevolence of the United States.
- To the best of your ability, leave stereotypes about who immigrants are at the door. Embrace an attitude of openness!

Welcome and Opening Prayer (15 minutes)

(This should take place in your normal meeting space or other designated location before carpooling together to the immersion site).

Find a volunteer to read Luke 24:13-32 in a few minutes. Greet participants with the following words:

Welcome to our immersion experience! Today we will journey to a place that may feel unfamiliar to some and familiar to others. We will be immersing ourselves in our community and getting to know our neighbors. I invite you to keep your eyes, mind, and heart open to all you experience today. Before we leave, we will first take a moment to quiet our thoughts and invite the Holy Spirit to go with us on our journey.

Light the candle. Then pause for 1 minute.

Facilitator: **We will now hear a Scripture reading from Luke 24:13-32, which tells the story of the disciples meeting Jesus in a place they hadn't expected.**

13 On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. **15** While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. **16** They were prevented from recognizing him.

17 He said to them, "What are you talking about as you walk along?" They stopped, their faces downcast.

18 The one named Cleopas replied, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who is unaware of the things that have taken place there over the last few days?"

19 He said to them, "What things?"



They said to him, "The things about Jesus of Nazareth. Because of his powerful deeds and words, he was recognized by God and all the people as a prophet. **20** But our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him. **21** We had hoped he was the one who would redeem Israel. All these things happened three days ago. **22** But there's more: Some women from our group have left us stunned. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** and didn't find his body. They came to us saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who told them he is alive. **24** Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women said. They didn't see him."

25 Then Jesus said to them, "You foolish people! Your dull minds keep you from believing all that the prophets talked about. **26** Wasn't it necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and then enter into his glory?" **27** Then he interpreted for them the things written about himself in all the scriptures, starting with Moses and going through all the Prophets.

28 When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. **29** But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. **30** After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. **31** Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. **32** They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"

Facilitator: Invite the group pause for silent meditation. Pause for one minute.

Then ask the group to join you in the opening prayer:

ALL: For the experience of today and everyone we shall meet, for another chance to live and serve you and serve one another, we are truly grateful.

Free us this day from:

- All fear
- All anxiety
- All bitterness toward others
- All cowardice
- All prejudice
- All laziness in our thoughts and actions.

Fill us with:

Love that knows no barrier

Courage that cannot be shaken
Faith strong enough for dark times
Strength sufficient for our tasks
Wisdom to meet life's complexities.
Be with us today and fill our hearts with love for all your people.
Amen.

Before departing, remind the group:

- Make sure they have directions to the immersion site, as well as the facilitators' cell phone numbers.
- Do not take pictures.

Immersion (120 minutes)

Be sure that everyone in the group introduces themselves to the host. After the immersion experience is over, thank the host and invite the group to return back to your meeting space.

Reflection on Immersion (20 minutes)

Invite the group to reflect on their experience. Remind participants to wait until everyone has had a turn before sharing twice.

- Let us reflect back on the story of the disciples meeting Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Where did you witness God's presence today in a place you might not have previously expected?
- What stories and insights had an impact on you today and why?
- What inspired you today and why?
- What challenged you today and why?
- What questions do you still have?
- What will you share with others about this experience?

Bring the discussion to a close by reading Luke 24:30-32 (CEB):

After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Invite participants to join you in the closing prayer.

Reader 1: **As people of faith** — we work not only to form a just society that is inclusive, but also to transform unjust structures that are exclusive.

Reader 2: **As people of change** — we work to hear the voices of those on the margins, joining our voices with theirs, listening to them for guidance and leadership.

Reader 3: **As people of hope** — Give us the courage not to remain silent in the midst of injustice, apathetic toward great need, nor paralyzed by the immensity of the problem.

Reader 4: **As a people of prayer** — May unceasing prayer accompany all of our actions, as we work together to bring about God's Kingdom of justice and peace.

All: Lord, you have given all people one common origin, and your will is to gather them as one family in yourself. Set our hearts on fire with the desire to ensure justice for all our brothers and sisters. Empower us to share what we have received from you, that we might "rejoice in that day and leap for joy" at the coming of your Kingdom. Amen.



SESSION SEVEN

ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE

Activity	Time
Welcome and Opening Prayer	5 minutes
Reading Discussion	40 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Announcements	5 minutes
Videos Discussions	55 minutes
Closing Prayer	10 minutes

Items needed for this session:

- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- Laptop and screen to show video
- "Now What?" poster
- Optional: Whiteboard or easel pad, marker
- Participants will need their Participant Packets

Links You'll Need to Have Pulled Up:

- "Live Justly Session 1: Biblical Justice" (3:41): <https://vimeo.com/103368651>



- “For Private Reasons, Detaining Immigrants is Big Business”:
<https://www.nytimes.com/video/us/100000006133806/private-prisons-immigrants.html?smid=url-share>

Notes to the Co-Facilitators

What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. — James 2:14-17

We at JustFaith Ministries hope that your group has learned a lot about immigration, grown closer to one another, and encountered the presence of God in the midst of prayer and conversation. However, as you near the end of the program, it's crucial that group members begin to seriously consider possibilities for action (otherwise, time will deem Faith and Immigration Justice just another program your church once offered!).

When it comes to committing to action steps, it is easy to confuse “taking time for spiritual discernment” with spiritual paralysis: those who commit only to waiting on a sign from God frequently end up in inaction. While the Spirit does indeed impart wisdom through quiet contemplation, remind your group that personal prayer is not the only method of discernment. After all, God often speaks to us through the people and places we encounter, by the life and energy we feel when engaged in an action to which we're called. Encourage group members to at least consider trying out various volunteer and advocacy opportunities, even if they aren't ready to commit to anything yet. When they find themselves experiencing deep joy while in service and solidarity, they'll know they've found their place.

This session is all about action through advocacy, as just and compassionate policies often lead the way to the most wide-reaching and sustainable change. While we realize that influencing public policy isn't everyone's cup of tea, we wanted to be sure that those called to advocacy had the resources they needed to help them to get started. However, regardless of whether participants seek to get involved through volunteering as an individual or by mobilizing communities of people, we hope the tools and organizations you discover during this session will provide you with the resources your group needs to begin discerning your role in welcoming our immigrant neighbors.



Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

Find volunteers to help read the opening prayer. Begin with the following words:

Welcome, everyone! During this session, we'll discuss the last section of *The Line Becomes a River* and then talk about some ways that we can work toward change. But first, let's pause to center ourselves in this space, so that we can hear the voice of God's Spirit more clearly.

Light the candle, and pause for 30 seconds of silence.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgements that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.



All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

All: **Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.**

Reading Discussion (40 minutes)

Small Group Dialogue (25 minutes)

Introduce the reading dialogue with these words:

We will now divide into small groups of 3-4 to discuss the reading. I invite you to turn to Attachment A in your Participant Packet, as you will be discussing the questions that are listed there. You will have 20 minutes to engage in conversation. Assign a facilitator to read the instructions and facilitate the dialogue.

Divide participants into small groups. When the group reconvenes, ask the group representatives to share a sentence or two about the insights that arose from their small group's discussion.

Optional: In response to the question about Appendix 5 in Welcoming the Stranger, consider making a group commitment to call your representatives this week concerning a particular issue your group is passionate about, or about your more general Christian commitment to welcoming your immigrant neighbors. You may want to work together to map out a loose script or talking points, in order to increase the likelihood that participants will follow through.

Large Group Dialogue (15 minutes)

Reflect on the following question:

- What did you think about Soerens and Yang's proposals for comprehensive immigration reform (p. 172-174)? What do you think immigration reform should look like? *Spend plenty of time on this question. You may even want to take notes on a whiteboard or easel pad. One critique of those who express compassion toward immigrants is that they*



tend to talk about problems with our immigration system but lack ideas for practical solutions.

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to share refreshments.

Announcements (5 minutes)

Let participants know that, during Session 8, the group will be discussing how they will respond through action to what they've learned during Faith and Immigration Justice. It will be extremely important that participants engage in prayer and discernment this week, in order to arrive prepared for this important conversation.

Video and Discussion (55 minutes)

Introduce the first video with these words:

There are a multitude of ways we can extend our love and support to our immigrant neighbors. We've named many of those possibilities already in our "Now What?" poster. Teaching English, volunteering in after school programs for kids whose second language is English, signing up to welcome a refugee family: these are all excellent ways we can plug in as individuals. At the same time, it is also important to address the policies and institutional structures that empower some and oppress others. You may have heard the expression "give a man a fish, and he'll eat for a day; teach a man to fish and he'll eat for a lifetime." But what if there are bigger reasons why the man is not able to fish, such as polluted water or a wall around the lake? While it is certainly important to ensure that immigrants have the services they need, it is also important to work *alongside* immigrants to address the larger structural issues which cause their needs to begin with.



Video Discussion 1: Advocating for Just Immigration Policy (30 minutes)

Introduce the video with the following words:

One way to integrate discipleship and justice is through advocating for immigration policy that is just and compassionate. First, we will watch a video on the connection between faith and advocacy. Then we will explore a way we can put these ideas into action.

Watch “Live Justly Session 1: Biblical Justice” (3:41): <https://vimeo.com/103368651>. Then ask:

- The speaker in this video describes how advocacy work overlaps with his Christian vocation. How does seeking immigration justice overlap with your own discipleship journey?
- Some argue that Christians should refrain from engaging in politics. How would you respond to this assertion?
- How do you reconcile welcoming undocumented immigrants with Scripture’s command in [Romans 13:1-7](#) to obey the governing authorities? (The spiritual practice instructions for last week suggested [an article](#) on this subject).
- Do you feel compelled to get involved in advocacy efforts to change immigration policy? If so, what are some first steps you might take? (Take notes on the “Now What” list).
- What organizations in your state or community are already organizing for policy change around immigration, and how can you get involved in their work? (Take notes on the “Now What” list. If you don’t know, assign a couple people from your group to research the answer to this question).

Optionally, invite participants to review the advocacy section on Session 7 Attachment D. If any of these suggestions are compelling to your group, write them on the “Now What?” list.

Session 7 Attachment D: Suggested Advocacy Action Steps

- **Take the [Faith in Action: Practicing Biblical Advocacy](#) online course:**
Contacting or meeting with your elected officials may feel daunting, but it can make a



real difference and bring about long-term changes to unjust systems. Created by the Christian Reformed Church (who also developed the timeline activity and immigration simulation), this workshop will help you learn how to navigate the U.S. political system and make your voice heard by policymakers. Enroll for free [here](#).

- **Make [5 Calls](#) to your elected officials:** 5 Calls is an easy, effective way for U.S. constituents to make a political impact by calling the offices of their elected officials about important issues. This platform is regularly updated with [relevant policy issues](#), including immigration, and equips people to make calls with up-to-date scripts. It's best to call your legislators' Washington, DC offices so that your concerns are shared with their legislative staff.
- **Email your elected officials and get action alerts sent to your inbox:** As part of their advocacy work for immigrants and refugees, Church World Service offers regularly-updated [action alerts](#) to equip people of faith to send emails to their elected officials about current policy issues affecting immigrants and refugees. View all of their action alerts [here](#) and sign up to receive the latest action alerts to your email inbox [here](#).
- **Write a [letter to the editor](#) or an [opinion piece](#) in your local newspaper:** An effective way to raise your voice, get your legislators' attention, and act on issues important to you is to write a letter to the editor (LTE) or an op-ed in your state or local news outlet. Learn how and where to write and submit an LTE [here](#) and an op-ed [here](#). You may consider using the issue descriptions provided on the [5 Calls](#) platform mentioned above—as well as your personal experience and perspective—to help you craft your argument.

Note: If you live in Iowa, the **Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice** can be a great way to get involved in advocacy. This membership-based organization provides immigration legal services and circles of solidarity among immigrant families, and its advocacy arm is driven by the stories and patterns they encounter in their work. To get involved, visit their website and contact their office: <https://www.iowammj.org/advocacy/>.

Then say:

JustFaith Ministries also has a program called [Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice](#), which guides small groups in taking sustainable, effective, and faith-filled action for justice. All JustFaith Ministries programs are designed so that anyone can facilitate them. Offering this program, with the intention of acquiring better tools for seeking immigration policy reform, could be one potential way to take action.

Add "Facilitate [Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice](#)" to the "Now What?" list.



Video Discussion 2: Advocating to End Mass Incarceration (25 minutes)

Introduce the video with the following words:

Another way to contribute to structural change is to advocate for an end to mass incarceration. Here is a short video about why that's important from an immigration perspective.

*Note aloud: **This video was created in 2018, but its content is still accurate. According to the ACLU, privately-run facilities still house over 90% of the average 30,000 people held daily in ICE detention centers.³ President Biden's 2021 executive order to phase out private prisons excluded ICE detention facilities.***

Play the video "[For Private Prisons, Detaining Immigrants is Big Business](#)" (9:50).

Then ask:

- What are your initial reactions to this video?
- What do you already know about mass incarceration and/or private prisons in the United States? What further questions does this video bring up?
- Have you considered getting involved with organizing for an end to mass incarceration?

Add action ideas to the "Now What?" poster.

Additional idea for getting involved:

- El Refugio is a nonprofit organization (started by JustFaith grads!) in Lumpkin, GA that accompanies migrants at Stewart detention center and their loved ones through hospitality, visitation, support, and advocacy. There are many ways to support their work. Visit their website to learn more: <https://elrefugiostewart.org/en/advocacy>.

Write these ideas on the "Now What?" poster.

³ Eunice Cho. "Unchecked Growth: Private Prison Corporations and Immigration Detention": <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/unchecked-growth-private-prison-corporations-and-immigration-detention-three-years-into-the-biden-administration>



Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

As the closing prayer, invite participants to read in silence the poem by Rev. Delle McCormick, “La Ruta de Mujeres” (Session 7 Attachment B). Then invite five participants to read it out loud:

- Reader 1: I walk the path that you took
 hours or days ago.
 Stones and slope and thorns
 threaten each step with
 danger.
- Reader 2: I see where you slept
 under the mesquite tree
 home to spiders, snakes, ants -
 familiar to coyotes, Gila monsters,
 God knows what.
 A piece of plastic,
 grass woven into the branches
 for shade against the merciless sun,
 a tuna can, toothbrush,
 tortilla cloth, used bus ticket -
 all part of your story,
 your life lost in this desert.
- Reader 3: Nearby a tiny silver spoon
 engraved, a love letter
 your bible, a pair of panties,
 a baby bottle, birth control pills,^[1]
 breast cancer medicine,
 diapers, one chancla,^[2]
 perfume bottle,
 a pair of pants with
 a name and number written in the inseam.
- Reader 4: O, what you leave behind
 haunts me
 I know you
 Sister, mother, friend,
 Lover, aunt.



Some day
we will all be held
accountable for
your suffering, your loss.

Reader 5: Some day, we will
 celebrate your courage,
 your story, your making
 your way to the Promised Land.
 Some day we will
 name this crossing Exodus
 and thank God that
 some of you make it
 Across.

Reproduced here with Rev. McCormick's
permission.

[1] Special note regarding the mention of birth control pills: Women on migrant trails are often sexually assaulted. For this reason, many take birth control pills on their journey in order to avoid getting pregnant. This decision, for many, defies their Catholic faith.

[2] Chancla means flip-flop.

A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group in the upcoming week?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.



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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.



Session 7 Attachment A: Reading Dialogue

Instructions: You will have 20 minutes to discuss the questions below in your small groups. Choose a facilitator to read the questions and facilitate the conversation. Ask a representative to share with the large group 1-2 sentences about key points your group discussed.

Note: This week, you will have read Welcoming the Stranger: chapter 8 (p. 150-180), Appendix 5 (p. 236-7); and The Line Becomes a River: Part 3 and Epilogue (p. 163-247).

Welcoming the Stranger

- What stood out to you from chapter 8?
- Do you think that the issue of immigration has been used for political gain by members of Congress and those running for president? If so, why do you think this political strategy has been effective?
- Work together to recall key points from the information in Appendix 5. Then ask: have you ever called your representatives? What was the experience like?

The Line Becomes a River

- What stood out to you from part 3 and the epilogue?
- What did you learn from José's story about legal proceedings regarding immigration cases?
- What do you think the wolf represents in this story?
- Turn to pages 190-193. What challenges do you imagine that second and third generation youth might face in regard to self-identity and belonging?
- On pages 230-231, Francisco's mother says: "What I'm saying is that we learn violence by watching others, by seeing it enshrined in institutions. Then, even without choosing it, it becomes normal to us, it becomes part of who we are..... You can't exist within a system for that long without being implicated, without absorbing its poison." Where else do you see this concept playing out, either in society or in your personal life?



- Cantú writes on page 163: “Jung went so far as to assert that it had become ‘a political and social duty’ to perceive ‘the other as the very devil, so as to fascinate the outward eye and prevent it from looking at the individual life within.’”
 - In your own words, what point is Cantú making here?
 - Thinking back on all we have learned during our time together, where have you seen evidence of this reality?
 - Where do you see evidence of this reality in your own life?



Session 7 Attachment C: Discerning Next Steps

Read between Sessions 7 and 8. Attachment B is in the participant packet and is not needed to facilitate this session.

"Vocation is where our greatest passion meets the world's greatest needs."

— Frederick Buechner

During Session 8, your group will plan the action steps you will take in response to what you have experienced in this JustFaith Ministries program. While it is important to continue educating yourself about injustice, insight without action is of little or no value, and your action plan should therefore include concrete steps you will take to address systemic injustice. If your group would like assistance with the discernment process, contact Outreach and Engagement Manager Leila Oakley by emailing leila@justfaith.org.

To prepare for your group's discernment process, follow the instructions below.

- 1. Center yourself in the Holy Presence:** Find a quiet, comfortable space where you will not be distracted. Take a few moments to notice your breath. Invite God's Spirit into your discernment process.
- 2. What action step will you take individually?** Consider all you have experienced on your JustFaith Ministries journey. Flip through your books and program material; as you do so, recall where you experienced a sense of energy, urgency, excitement, or anger. These emotions may give you a clue as to how you are being called to take action as an individual. In addition, read through your group's "Now What?" list, if you have it available, and read through the suggestions on Session 7 Attachment D. Do you feel any energy around any of these potential action steps?

During Session 8, you will be asked to name your individual action step aloud.

- 3. What action steps will you take with your group?** Taking action as a community can help you maximize your impact and engage in mutual support. During Session 8, your group will choose one of four options for how you will take action as a group.

Prayerfully consider each of the options so you can bring an informed opinion to your group's discernment process during Session 8. Choose at least two options you'd be open to taking.



Option 1: **Continue on to another JustFaith Ministries program.**

Who is this for? Option 1 may be the best fit for groups whose members want to continue exploring root causes of injustice before taking collective action.

How to prepare: Peruse the JustFaith Ministries programs page to discern which program might be most interesting and relevant to you and your group. The program *Want to Talk? Communication Skills for Divided Times* may be of particular interest, as it can guide your group in exploring how to navigate important conversations around immigration.

JFM program page: <https://justfaith.org/programs/>

Option 2: **Cultivate a new group:** Together with your current group, offer Faith and Immigration Justice for a new group of participants. Option 2 requires all hands on deck from everyone in your current group: in addition to two co-facilitators, you will also need volunteers to invite new participants into the group, create social media and/or bulletin announcements, and help plan other logistical details.

Who is this for? Option 2 can be a particularly effective next step if your current group belongs to the same church or organization. Getting more individuals from your institution on the same page about immigration justice can help you mobilize the institution as a whole. By working together, you can create a sustainable immigration justice/welcoming team and accomplish bigger goals. (Faith and Immigration Justice can serve as a training or enrichment tool for this team).

How to prepare: Consider who from your current group might be a good facilitator and if there is a role you would like to serve in coordinating and supporting a new group.

Option 3: **Create a community action plan using the JFM program *Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice* to guide your process:** *Just Action* will walk your group step-by-step through creating and implementing an achievable immigration justice action plan. Along the way, it will introduce practical grassroots organizing and advocacy tools that can equip you for effective and sustainable action that aligns with your faith.



Who is this for? Option 3 is especially great for groups who are serious about creating systemic change, and who can dedicate about four to six months to participating in *Just Action* and implementing their action plan.

How to prepare: Read about *Just Action* on JustFaith Ministries' website, and consider whether it could be a helpful next step for your group:
<https://justfaith.org/just-action-how-to-advocate-and-mobilize-for-justice/>

Option 4: **Take action as a group without using *Just Action*:** If you choose this option, your group will review the "Now What?" list and discern a goal together. Next, you will name action steps to help you achieve that goal.

Who is this for? Option 4 is for groups who feel they are ready to jump into action without further guidance from JustFaith Ministries, or for those who cannot commit to taking *Just Action*.

How to Prepare: Consider ideas for what your group's goal might be, as well as steps you might take together to achieve it.



Session 7 Attachment D: Suggested Action Steps

Shifting the Narrative around Immigration

- **Facilitate the immigration simulation (Session 3) and/or timeline activity (Session 2) in your church or community.** This can be a great way to dispel harmful myths about immigration and prepare your church or community to more fully welcome immigrant neighbors.
- **Host a Welcome Table:** A Welcome Table is a gathering where people can come together to share a meal, stories, and conversation, in order to shift the narrative around immigration. This is a highly flexible format centered on community and connection, and Welcome.US provides all the resources you need to get started: <https://welcome.us/learn/welcome-tables-a-hosting-guide>

Advocacy

- **Take the Faith in Action: Practicing Biblical Advocacy online course:** Contacting or meeting with your elected officials may feel daunting, but it can make a real difference and bring about long-term changes to unjust systems. Created by the Christian Reformed Church (who also developed the timeline activity and immigration simulation), this workshop will help you learn how to navigate the U.S. political system and make your voice heard by policymakers. Enroll for free [here](#).
- **Make 5 Calls to your elected officials:** 5 Calls is an easy, effective way for U.S. constituents to make a political impact by calling the offices of their elected officials about important issues. This platform is regularly updated with [relevant policy issues](#), including immigration, and equips people to make calls with up-to-date scripts. It's best to call your legislators' Washington, DC offices so that your concerns are shared with their legislative staff.
- **Email your elected officials and get action alerts sent to your inbox:** As part of their advocacy work for immigrants and refugees, Church World Service offers regularly-updated [action alerts](#) to equip people of faith to send emails to their elected officials about current policy issues affecting immigrants and refugees. View all of their action alerts [here](#) and sign up to receive the latest action alerts to your email inbox [here](#).



- **Write a [letter to the editor](#) or an [opinion piece](#) in your local newspaper:** An effective way to raise your voice, get your legislators' attention, and act on issues important to you is to write a letter to the editor (LTE) or an op-ed in your state or local news outlet. Learn how and where to write and submit an LTE [here](#) and an op-ed [here](#). You may consider using the issue descriptions provided on the [5 Calls](#) platform mentioned above—as well as your personal experience and perspective—to help you craft your argument.
- **Note: If you live in Iowa,** the **Iowa Migrant Movement for Justice** can be a great way to get involved in advocacy. This membership-based organization provides immigration legal services and circles of solidarity among immigrant families, and its advocacy arm is driven by the stories and patterns they encounter in their work. To get involved, visit their website and contact their office: <https://www.iowammj.org/advocacy/>

Support Existing Efforts

- **Support or volunteer with an immigration legal services organization:** Take a look at [this map](#) from the Immigration Advocates Network to find immigration legal services organizations in your area and contact them about any volunteer opportunities they may have. Many organizations rely on volunteers to support their workshops, citizenship classes, court accompaniment, interpretation, and more.
- **El Refugio** is a nonprofit organization (started by JustFaith grads!) in Lumpkin, GA that accompanies migrants at Stewart detention center and their loved ones through hospitality, visitation, support, and advocacy. There are many ways to support their work. Visit their website to learn more: <https://elrefugiostewart.org/en/advocacy>.

Stay Informed!

Insight without action is of little or no value. However, staying up-to-date on immigration policy can help you discover the most effective ways to take action. Learn about policy updates through the [American Immigration Council](#) website or the [Welcome.US website](#).



SESSION EIGHT

TURNING TO ACTION

Items needed for this Session:

- Index cards (one for each group member)
- For prayer (each week):
 1. A white pillar candle
 2. Matches or lighter
 3. Optional: A Southwest or Mexican styled placemat or table cover on which to place the candle
 4. Optional: A cross of proportional size to the candle, to be arranged with the candle on the placemat.
- "Now What?" Poster
- Laptop and screen to show video
- Pens/Pencils
- White board or easel pad and markers
- Participants will need their Participant Packets

Links you'll need to have pulled up:

None

Schedule for the Session:

Activity	Time
Welcome and Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Reflections on Where We've Been	35 minutes
Announcements	10 minutes
Break	5 minutes
Call to ACTION	45 minutes
Closing Prayer	15 minutes



Session 8 Notes for Co-Facilitators

Congratulations on finishing this JustFaith journey! In reality, our hope is that the end of Session 8 will mark the *first* stage of the journey; that together you and your group will follow through with your plans to work for justice in your churches, workplaces, and communities.

The second half of this session invites participants to commit to taking two action steps: one personal and one collective. Participants will have begun discerning both action steps as part of their preparation for Session 8. Regarding the collective action step, we strongly encourage groups to choose one of the four options we have outlined in the discernment attachment, as we think they will result in effective, achievable, and sustainable change. However, some groups may have alternative ideas for how they will take action for justice, in which case you may need to adjust the program materials to fit the needs of your group.

There may be members of your group feeling fear, anxiety, or uncertainty around taking action. Remind participants that God has a history of calling on imperfect people to help bring healing to our world — especially when those individuals didn't feel qualified or fully prepared. Encourage the group to refrain from putting off their action-discernment process until a later time, but rather to choose one small action step that can be accomplished within a month; after all, as the Chinese proverb puts it, "the journey of a thousand miles begins with one step." Encourage your group to lean into the Spirit, holding onto their dreams of a more just and peaceful world.

At the same time, it can be tempting to dream up action plans so big that they become overwhelming and ambiguous. Don't let this happen to your group! With every action step you create as individuals or as a team, be sure to also discern concrete, specific first steps (What will they be? Who will take them? By when will these steps be taken?), as well as a plan for accountability to one another.

Thank you again for facilitating this important conversation. We hope your journey has been transformative for you and your group. Keep in touch with us at JustFaith Ministries, and let us know how your action takes shape.

Request a Virtual Program Commissioning for Your Final Session

JustFaith Ministries is offering a new opportunity for the final session of every program: a Participant Commissioning from a JFM staff member. You can invite a JFM national staff member to join your final session to offer a special commissioning to participants, as well as share ways graduates can continue their social justice mission after their program is completed.



To request a Program Commissioning, please reach out to Andrea Martin Gaddis, andrea@justfaith.org, at least one week prior to your final session. You can also [complete this form](#) to schedule your Program Commissioning.

Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Find volunteers to help read the opening prayer. Begin with the following words:

Welcome, everyone, to our final session together! During this session, we'll discern and commit to action steps, so that we can work toward seeking immigration policies that are compassionate and just, as well as extend hospitality toward our immigrant neighbors in our local community. But first, let's pause to center ourselves in this space, so that we can hear the voice of God's Spirit more clearly.

Light the candle, and pause for 30 seconds of silence.

The weekly opening prayer was written for JFM by Maryknoll Sister Elizabeth Knoerl who lived and worked for many years in Nepal and Haiti.

Invite each participant to read a paragraph:

Reader 1: Creator God, your loving care is a home for all. No one is a stranger to you. With your generous blessings, watch over migrants and all who leave their homes to escape oppression, poverty, persecution, trauma and violence. Help us to also be sources of blessings through our acceptance and valuing who they are as persons eager for wholeness of life.

Reader 2: Creator, you taught us to welcome all. Help us to remember that the land we call ours is a gift to be cared for and a gift to be shared with all who come. May we be open to all those searching for a safe and peaceful life.

All: *Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.*

Reader 3: Creator, help us to respect and revere the unknown between and among us. May we grow into new discoveries and accept new ways of learning about our



common needs and desires. May respect and reverence break down our fear, anxiety, suspicion, racism, hate and closed heartedness towards others.

Reader 4: Creator, we build barriers in our hearts and make judgments that keep us from seeing others for who they are, the potential they have, and talents they have been given. You taught us to give witness to your love for all people. May we be accepting of those who want to be our neighbors. May we rejoice in their talents and accept new life-perspectives from them.

All: ***Help us to pour out your love and compassion to all our brothers and Sisters.***

All: **Creator God, You who are present in all of humankind, guide us to be mindful of your presence and help us to act in ways pleasing to you towards all those who search for a better life. May we reach out to migrants in need of help and acceptance and stand by them as brothers and sisters in Christ. We ask this through Jesus, the Christ, who was a migrant. Amen.**

Reflection on Where We've Been (35 minutes)

Then say:

Let's think back on our time together as a group. During our first session, we were introduced to a theology of migration. In Sessions 2 and 3, we learned about the history of migration in the United States and learned some basic immigration policy, while in Session 4 we began the conversation about why immigrants come to the United States. During the second half of this program, we heard from a guest speaker and visited _____ during our immersion experience, learned a bit more about current immigration issues such as DACA and family separations, and discerned some possible ways to engage in advocacy efforts for just immigration policies.

All of that to say.... we've been through a lot together!

With all of that in mind, let's take a minute for silent reflection about the following question: *How are you different now than you were two months ago?* (Feel free to jot down your answer, if that's how you think best).

Give participants a minute to think, and then invite them to take turns answering the question.



If you have additional time, choose one or two of the questions below for group discussion.

- What is a memory, idea, or conversation you will carry with you for the rest of your life?
- What is something that particularly challenged you during our time together?
- What questions do you still have?

***** At this point, remind everyone to fill out the program surveys that can be found in the Weekly Assignments list in the Participant Packet. This is really important — we at JustFaith Ministries want this program to be the best it can be, and we take participant feedback extremely seriously.**

Announcements (10 minutes)

Then share with the group:

As we bring this program to a close, I have a message from JustFaith Ministries to share with you:

Dear Friends,

The ultimate goal of this program — and all our JustFaith Ministries programs — is to invite participants into a deeper commitment to the work of love and justice. To support program graduates, we created the JustFaith Network to provide lively and current resources that can sustain you spiritually and equip you with the tools you need for your work to be effective. By joining the Network, you will have access to reflections, small group guided conversations, speaker events, blogs, best practices, and an expanding list of items. The JustFaith Network is free! The link is available in your Participant Packets in the post-program section of the Weekly Assignments.

In addition, we invite you to partner with us in our work of building a more just, peaceful and sustainable world. We are a nonprofit organization that is supported by individuals — like you — who want to make the world a better place. Registration fees make up only a fraction of the funds needed to create and distribute this program. If you've found this program meaningful, please help us continue to provide it for others. You can learn about all of the ways you can support this work at the JustFaith Ministries website. Donations can be



made by going to justfaith.org/donate. This link is available in your Weekly Assignments chart, as well.

Lastly, please know of our continuing care and support as you move on to the next program or take action steps you have discerned in this program. We will keep you in our prayers and look forward to hearing how your action takes shape.

Break (5 minutes)

Invite participants to take a five minute break and share refreshments.

Call to ACTION (45 minutes)

Before beginning the Call to Action, post the “Now What?” list in a visible location. **Pass out the index cards.**

Prayer of Invocation

Begin with these words:

In the author’s note, Cantú shares a brief story about Aurelio, a man who risked his life crossing the border dozens of times, only to be sent home by the U.S. authorities on every single occasion:

“Compassion,” Susan Sontag famously declared, “is an unstable emotion. It needs to be translated into action, or it withers.” The same can be said of empathy—we can imagine Aurelio’s pain, we can feel something that perhaps approaches it, and we can even, as Pope Francis suggests, grieve for him, weep for him—but in the end our feelings and our tears are useless unless they compel us to act in a way that might someday improve his situation. The hard truth is that the policies and structures that have taken Aurelio’s body and rejected it, time and again, will remain in place until we push firmly against them, demanding they be abandoned or remade.



In a moment, we will discern how we will take action to change the policies and structures that perpetuate rejection, suffering, and death — so that we might instead choose embrace, life, and freedom.

But first, let us pause to recenter ourselves in the presence of our Creator God, who made us for love; and God’s Spirit, who beckons us into a new way of living; and Jesus, who was himself a migrant seeking refuge.

Pause for one minute of silence. Then move directly into the next section.

Discerning Individual Action Steps (15 minutes)

Introduce the discernment of individual action steps:

During our preparation for today’s session, we began discerning the action steps we would like to take as individuals, as well as those we might like to take as a group.

We will now take a few moments of silence to finish reflecting, taking into account any ideas you came up with during the week, as well as the ideas on the “Now What?” list and Session 7 Attachment D.

When you are ready, write on your index card one action step you will take individually in response to what you have experienced on your JustFaith journey.

Pause for about 2-3 minutes. Let participants know to hang onto their index cards, which they will use later in the session.

Discerning Group Action Steps

Introduce the discernment of group action steps with these or similar words:

During our preparation for today’s session, we also explored four possibilities for how we might take action as a group in response to what we’ve learned during our journey together.

Briefly summarize each of the four options listed in Session 7 Attachment C:



- Option 1: Continue with another JustFaith Ministries program.
- Option 2: Cultivate a new group: Offer this program for a new group of participants.
- Option 3: Create a community action plan using the program *Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice* to guide your process.
- Option 4: Take action as a group without using *Just Action* as a guide.

Ask:

Which option do you think is the best fit for our group?

Come to a consensus around which of the four directions your group would like to take. Pay special attention to step #5 below.

- If your group chooses Option 1, [turn to Session 8 Attachment A](#)
- If your group chooses Option 2, [turn to Session 8 Attachment B](#)
- If your group chooses Option 3, [turn to Session 8 Attachment C](#)
- If your group chooses Option 4, [turn to Session 8 Attachment D](#)

Steps for building consensus:

1. Have each person articulate the next step they feel the group should take. (Facilitators should keep track of how many participants want to move into each of the options).
2. If there is a clear majority, ask anyone who did not identify this action as their top choice if they would have any concerns moving forward based on the majority's interest. If concerns are expressed, let the person(s) express their concerns and have another discussion about options.
3. If there is not a clear consensus, invite each group member to articulate the action step that would be their second option for your group. (Facilitators should again keep track of how many participants want to move into each of the options.)



4. Determine the common denominator among the first and second choices and invite group members to share any concerns about moving forward with the action step that has received the most interest.
5. Be flexible and creative! For example, you could create a combination of two different actions, or you could take two different actions on two different timelines. While uniting around a single action step will likely be the simplest and most effective way to proceed, it may be necessary to divide into two groups that will each take a different action step.

Closing Meditation (15 minutes)

Invitation and Commitment

Invite the group into 30 seconds of silence to re-center themselves for prayer (Session 8 Attachment E)

Facilitator 1: Holy One,

You call us beloved. We belong to you.

You created us in your image; through your very breath you formed us.

Through your Son Jesus, our Teacher,

You taught us to call one another *beloved*, because in belonging to you, we belong to each other.

You told us to see your image in the faces of the forgotten and the oppressed.

Through you we became one family; through your Spirit, we breathe the same breath.

Free us from that which keeps us from perfect love of our neighbors, Because loving our neighbors is the same as loving you. Help us to recognize your image in the faces of others, just as the disciples on the road to Emmaus recognized Christ in the breaking of the bread.

We now lay before you the following intentions.

We will take turns going around the circle, as we name aloud our individual commitments to more perfect love. As each of us names our individual commitment, they will place their index card on the prayer table as a sign of their commitment.

Facilitator 1 begins, and then gestures to the participant on their right.



Facilitator 2 continues with the following words:

Facilitator 2: Redeeming God,

We commit to you these intentions as acts of praise and worship.

We also commit to you our collective intention of..... *briefly state the group's action item.*

We unite our individual and collective commitments with those working for racial justice across the country, that we may work together to participate with you in building your Kin-dom here on earth.

Strengthen all of us, that through the power of your Spirit, we might have the courage to love you, others, and ourselves, with all of our hearts, minds, and strength.

In the name of our Creating, Redeeming, and Sustaining God we pray,

Amen.

Then say:

As we are sent out into the world to encounter Christ among those who are the most vulnerable of our society, may we be reminded that God's light illuminates our path forward. In unison, let us join in the Hispanic Creed by theologian Justo González.

(If you have Spanish speakers in your group, invite them to read the Spanish portion, alternating English and Spanish. If not, simply read the English, skipping over the Spanish).

Hispanic Creed/Credo Hispano

We believe in God the Father Almighty

Creemos en Dios Padre todopoderoso

Creator of the heavens and the earth;

Creador de los cielos y de la tierra;

Creator of the all peoples and all cultures;

Creador de los pueblos y las culturas;

Creator of all tongues and races.

Creador de los idiomas y de las razas.



We believe in Jesus Christ, his Son, our Lord,

Creemos en Jesucristo, su Hijo, nuestro Señor,

God made flesh in a person for all humanity,

Dios hecho carne en un ser humano para todos los humanos,

God made flesh in an age for all the ages,

Dios hecho carne en un momento para todas las edades,

God made flesh in one culture for all cultures,

Dios hecho carne en una cultura para todas las culturas,

God made flesh in love and grace for all creation.

Dios hecho carne en amor y gracia para toda la creación.

We believe in the Holy Spirit

Creemos en el Espíritu Santo

Through whom God incarnate in Jesus Christ

por quien el Dios encarnado en Jesucristo

Makes his presence known in our peoples and our cultures;

se hace presente en nuestro pueblo y nuestra cultura;

Through whom, God Creator of all that exists,

por quien el Dios creador de todo cuanto existe,

Gives us power to become new creatures;

nos da poder para ser nuevas criaturas;

Whose infinite gifts make us one people: the body of Christ.

quien con sus infinitos dones, nos hace un solo pueblo: el cuerpo de Jesucristo.

We believe in the Church,

Creemos en la Iglesia,

Universal because it is a sign of God's Reign,

que es universal porque es señal del reino venidero,



Whose faithfulness is shown in its many hues

que es más fiel mientras más se viste de colores

Where all the colors paint a single landscape,

donde todos los colores pintan un mismo paisaje,

Where all tongues sing the same praise.

donde todos los idiomas cantan una misma alabanza.

We believe in the Reign of God – the day of the Great Fiesta

Creemos en el reino venidero, día de la gran fiesta,

When all the colors of creation will form a harmonious rainbow,

cuando todos los colores de la creación se unirán en un arco iris de armonía

When all peoples will join in joyful banquet,

cuando todos los pueblos de la tierra se unirán en un banquete de alegría,

When all tongues of the universe will sing the same song.

cuando todas la lenguas del universo se unirán en un coro de alabanza.

And because we believe, we commit ourselves:

Y porque creemos, nos comprometemos

To believe for those who do not believe,

a creer por los que no creen,

To love for those who do not love,

a amar por los que no aman,

To dream for those who do not dream,

a soñar por los que no sueñan,

Until the day when hope becomes reality.

hasta que lo que esperamos se torne realidad.

Amen.

— Justo González



A Circle of Prayer

Invite participants to share their joys and struggles:

Would anyone like to request prayer or support from the group?

Conclude with these words:

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 each other and our neighbors.

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.

Extinguish the candle. Optionally, invite participants to stick around for community building time and continued conversation.

Important: Invite participants to take their index card home and to put it in a place where they will see it daily — such as on the refrigerator or bedside table — as a reminder of the commitment they have made to themselves, the group, and our world in need of healing.



Session 8 Attachment A: Continue on to Another JFM Program

Continuing on to another JustFaith Ministries program can be a great fit for groups whose members want to continue exploring root causes of injustice before taking collective action.

The program *Want to Talk? Communication Skills for Divided Times* may be of particular interest, as it can guide your group in exploring how to navigate important conversations around immigration.

If your group has chosen this option, follow the steps below.

Step 1: Decide which program your group would like to take next.

If some participants have not had a chance to read the descriptions of each program on the JustFaith Ministries website, it may be helpful to display the program page so that participants can see all the options available: <https://justfaith.org/programs/>

Step 2: Decide the following logistical details:

- When will you begin your next program?
- If your group will be meeting in-person, decide where your meetings will take place.
- Decide if you would like to open your group to new participants. The recommended group size is 7-14 for in-person groups and 7-12 for virtual groups, including facilitators.

Step 3: Decide who will co-facilitate.

- You will need two co-facilitators. While current co-facilitators can certainly continue in their roles, choosing new co-facilitators can prevent facilitator burnout and create opportunities for shared leadership.



- Co-facilitators should have the capacity to invest the following time each week:
 - 1 hour for weekly session preparation, plus additional time for coordinating a guest speaker and immersion experience for most programs.
 - 1-1.5 hours to complete weekly assignments
 - 2 hours to facilitate each weekly session
- Facilitator training and support is available from JustFaith Ministries.

Step 4: Brainstorm about the immersion experience and guest speaker:

During most programs you will have the opportunity to hear from a guest speaker during Session 5 and engage in an immersion experience between Sessions 6 and 7. With your group's program topic in mind, can you think of anyone you would invite as a guest speaker? How about a group or organization you would like to visit with for your immersion experience?

You do not have to decide the answer to this question today! However, it can be helpful to begin thinking about who you would like to invite, as well as who from your group could coordinate the guest speaker's visit and immersion experience.

Step 5: Reflect on the following questions:

- Thinking back on your group's journey together so far, is there anything you would like to do differently as you embark on this new phase of your journey? (For example, groups may wish to convene before or after each session for extended conversation and fellowship, or perhaps there is a group guideline you would like to commit to following more closely).
- What are decisions you have made that you would like to uphold and continue during the next phase of your journey? Or, what are qualities of your group that you really appreciate?

[Click here to return to the Session 8 outline.](#)



Session 8 Attachment B: Cultivate a New Group

Making this program available to a new group of participants is one effective way to take action in response to what you have learned during your own journey. By working together with program graduates of multiple small groups, you can accomplish much bigger goals than you could individually or as a single small group.

If your current group is part of the same faith community or organization, offering this program to more of your institution's members can help you to mobilize the institution as a whole. As more participants graduate from the program, you might consider creating an immigration justice team, perhaps using this program as a training or enrichment tool.

To maximize effectiveness, all participants should participate in coordinating and supporting the new group. Below are some questions to discuss with your current group during Session 8.

Note: It will be very important that your current group coordinate a gathering with the new group after they have finished Session 8. The purpose of this gathering will be to determine the action steps you will take together to create effective and sustainable change.

Building a Community: Recruitment and Promotion

- For whom would you like to offer this program? For example, do you seek to offer the program within a particular church, organization, or other institution?
- Including facilitators, you will need 7-14 participants for an in-person group or 7-12 for a virtual group. Who would you like to invite into the group? **List specific names, and assign group members to reach out to them with personal invitations.**

A few notes:

- While making an announcement in a newsletter or from a pulpit can be helpful, personal invitations (face-to-face, over the phone, or through video conferencing) work best.
- If you are hoping to mobilize a church or organization, it might be helpful to include those in positions of influence — such as clergy or committee leaders — who can incorporate the principles they learn into institutional decision-making, as well as motivate others to participate in future program offerings.



- To the best of your abilities, seek out diverse voices, as well as those whose lives are personally affected by the injustices you seek to address. A diversity of backgrounds and perspectives can enrich the group's conversations and result in more effective action planning. If your group consists of people of color, at least one facilitator should be a person of color, if possible.
- Would your group like to promote the new group through social media, a bulletin announcement, or newsletters? **If so, who are two people from your current group who can take the lead on promotion?**
 - JustFaith Ministries provides a promotion kit, which contains images and sample scripts you can use for social media, newsletters, and other promotional spaces. The promo kit can be found on the program page of the JustFaith Ministries website, justfaith.org.

Facilitation

- Invite current co-facilitators to share about their own facilitation experience. Then discuss: Who in your group has the time and spiritual gifts needed to co-facilitate the new group? **Choose two people to be co-facilitators.**⁴
 - Co-facilitators should have the capacity to invest the following time each week:
 - 1 hour for weekly session preparation, plus additional time for coordinating a guest speaker and immersion experience
 - 1-1.5 hours to complete weekly assignments
 - 2 hours to facilitate each weekly session
 - Facilitator training and support is available from JustFaith Ministries.
- Will the new co-facilitators need assistance in running the technology during each session? If so, who is someone from your current group who can either show the co-facilitators how to use the necessary technology or attend each session to run the technological elements?

⁴ Alternatively, you could choose one co-facilitator from your current group and one new co-facilitator from the new group.



Hospitality

- Who is someone from your current group who enjoys hospitality? **Choose one or two hospitality coordinators from your current group** to assist in welcoming the new group. This role can be creative: it may include securing a meeting location; setting up the meeting room with comfortable chairs and soft lighting; bringing coffee and refreshments the first or all weeks; or hosting a celebration gathering after the new group has finished Session 8.

Immersion and Guest Speakers

- Who from your group has connections with a guest speaker or immersion organization? **Choose one to two people to help set up the guest speaker and immersion for the new group.**

Loose Ends

What other details need to be decided before the group? Write them down, and assign participants to take the lead on coordinating each.

[Click here to return to the Session 8 outline.](#)



Session 8 Attachment C: Continuing to Just Action

Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice will walk your group step-by-step through creating and implementing an achievable immigration justice action plan. Along the way, it will introduce practical grassroots organizing and advocacy tools that can equip you for effective and sustainable action that aligns with your faith.

Just Action is especially great for groups who are serious about creating systemic change, and who can dedicate about four to six months to participating in *Just Action* and implementing their action plan.

If your group has chosen this option, follow the steps below.

Step 1: Ensure your group is on the same page about what *Just Action* is and what it requires of participants.

Review the information about *Just Action* found on JustFaith Ministries' website. Note especially that *Just Action* is for groups that can commit to carrying out a 1-3 month action plan after the program is finished.

Step 2: Decide the following logistical details:

- When will you begin *Just Action*?
 - Note: In addition to the eight regular sessions, *Just Action* contains a 3-hour discernment retreat and an immersion experience.
- If your group is meeting in-person, decide where your meetings will take place.

Step 3: Decide who will co-facilitate.

While current co-facilitators can certainly continue in their roles, choosing new co-facilitators can prevent facilitator burnout and create opportunities for shared leadership. You will need two co-facilitators.

- Co-facilitators should have the capacity to invest the following time each week:



- 1 hour for weekly session preparation, plus additional time for coordinating a guest speaker and immersion experience
 - 1-1.5 hours to complete weekly assignments
 - 2 hours to facilitate each weekly session
- Facilitator training and support is available from JustFaith Ministries.

Step 4: Reflect on the following questions:

- Thinking back on your group's journey together so far, is there anything you would like to do differently as you embark on this new phase of your journey? (For example, groups may wish to convene before or after each session for extended conversation and fellowship, or perhaps there is a group guideline you would like to follow more closely)
- What are decisions you have made that you would like to continue in the next phase of your journey? Or, what are qualities of your group that you really appreciate?

[Click here to return to the Session 8 outline.](#)



Session 8 Attachment D: Group Action Plan

If your group feels ready to jump into action without further guidance from JustFaith Ministries, or if your group cannot commit to continuing with the racial justice series or taking *Just Action*, follow the steps below.

1. Review the “Now What?” list you have created together as a group. Decide on one action step you would like to take together.

If your group would like to take multiple action steps, that is great! For now, choose one action to start with. Once this action step has been achieved, you can move onto other action steps.

While it is important to always continue learning, for the purposes of this exercise choose an action step to dismantle systemic injustice rather than continue your education.

2. Turn your action step into a SMART goal and write it at the top of the Group Action Plan chart below.

A SMART goal takes the form of a single, short sentence that everyone can understand. It has the following qualities:

- Specific: Narrow it down as much as possible. For example, can your goal be refined to one particular geographic location, policy, or institution?
- Measurable: You should be able to measure your progress toward meeting your goal.
- Achievable: Choose a goal that is realistic for your group. Do not be afraid to start with a relatively easy win!⁵ (If the group seems overwhelmed by the proposed goal, this may be a sign that your goal is not achievable enough).
- Relevant: Your goal should be relevant to everyone in your group.
- Time-bound: This goal should not be ongoing. Ideally, your group should be able to achieve your goal within 1-3 months after Session 8.

⁵ An “easy win” can fuel energy for setting more ambitious goals in the future.



Examples of SMART goals include:

- Start an immigration justice team in our church/organization by January 1st.
- Together as a group, participate in an immigration justice organization's action event. (Your group will need to specify the name of the event, date, and time).
- By April 31st, set up a meeting with our representative to address a specific immigration injustice our group is concerned about (Obviously, this goal will need to be more specific. Your [Bread for the World regional organizer](#) may be able to help if you choose this option)

3. Fill in the chart below:

- Write your SMART goal at the top of your chart.
- List each step you will need to take in order to reach your goal.

4. Plan a celebration and next steps: Once you have achieved your goal, plan to reconvene to celebrate your accomplishments!

At this gathering, you can also discuss whether your group would like to: 1. take on another action step, 2. participate in another JustFaith Ministries program, 3. offer this program for a new group, or 4. participate in *Just Action! How to Advocate and Mobilize for Justice*.



Group Action Plan

Our group's goal:

Steps <i>List, one step at a time, the actions you will take to achieve your goal</i>	By Whom? <i>Who will be responsible for taking each step?</i>	By When? <i>Name a specific date that each step will be accomplished.</i>



Steps <i>List, one step at a time, the actions you will take to achieve your goal</i>	By Whom? <i>Who will be responsible for taking each step?</i>	By When? <i>Name a specific date that each step will be accomplished.</i>

[Click here to return to the Session 8 outline.](#)