

*Just*Faith

*Purpose. From a
new perspective.*

JustFaith Week 10

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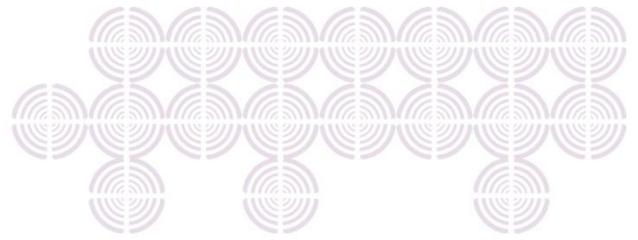
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Note to Co-Facilitators

As you come to the end of the first third of the JustFaith process, we encourage you to take stock of your group's experience so far. Has it been engaging, challenging and life-giving? If the answer is an unqualified "yes," you can skip over the rest of this note. However, if your answer is less confident, read on.

JustFaith is a complex process that engages people on questions of faith that touch on many difficult areas. The chances are that your group has experienced some awkward moments and perhaps some conflict. All of this might have you second-guessing the process.

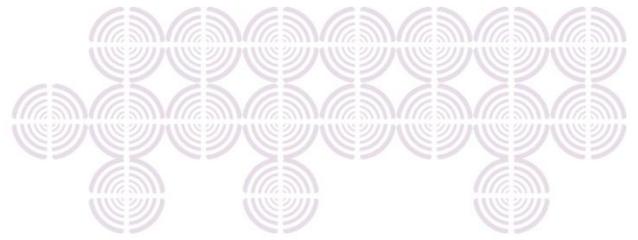
In fact, all of this is what should probably be happening. As the Gospels attest, the Good News often encounters difficulty, resistance and conflict. Most of us have been trained to see and respond to the world with a particular lens given to us by a culture that does not typically pay attention to the poor and, instead, identifies wealth, power and prestige as most desirable. It is no wonder we struggle to embrace the Good News!

If there is going to be a serious encounter with the Gospel, it will involve excitement and enthusiasm. Often, participants in JustFaith become so excited to *do* something that they become impatient with the process. However, it is important that your group not leap into action . . . yet. Our advice is to allow the process to unfold and not rush into action. Encourage your group to stay committed to the process, to stay connected with the JustFaith community, to continue to learn and grow and to make decisions about next steps as the process concludes with discernment and a call to action. There is still much ahead in these thirty weeks of JustFaith.

Also, by this point in JustFaith, consistent group dynamics will have emerged. Many groups discover deep bonds, but tensions are also normal; do not be discouraged by some tension in the group. Consider whether the tension in the group is also accompanied by a general spirit of care and kindness. If so, let the process unfold. It is likely that your group will grow and discover some new possibilities for their faith and love. It is a common JustFaith story to hear of people who saw themselves as opposed to one another to discover, over the course of the process, that they have grown and changed and become close to each other.

On the other hand, if your group is experiencing tension that seems burdensome beyond some people's ability to tolerate, this would be a good time to call our office to talk things through. Remember that when you register for JustFaith, you are provided access to the JustFaith Ministries staff for support and consultation. Therefore, please do not hesitate (ever) to contact our office if you have a concern about group process or any other difficulties.

Again, we look forward to hearing from you, whether you call to share struggles or excitement.



Week Ten Components

Participants Are to Have Completed

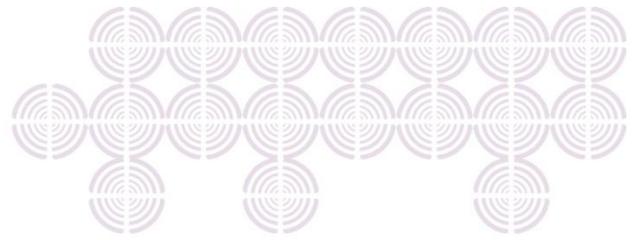
“Budget Activity”

Prepare for Week Ten

- Review Week Ten session information.
- Copy Week Ten handouts.
- Bring copies of Rising to Common Ground to distribute.
- For the Budget Activity discussion, visit The Pennsylvania State University’s website (<http://www.livingwage.geog.psu.edu/>), which details the cost of living and expenses in various cities across the US. Find the following information for your location:
 - Living Wage for your city/county: \$ _____
 - Minimum Wage for your city/county: \$ _____
- Gather prayer items.
- Select music for opening prayer, if desired.

Timing of the Session

Activity	Minutes
Prayer	15
Discuss reading	50
Break	15
Business	10
Budgeting Activity	50
Closing prayer	10
Total	150



Welcome

Greet participants and welcome them to the session. Describe what the group will be doing together using these or similar words: “Today we will finish our discussion of Ash Barker’s book, Make Poverty Personal. In the second portion of the session, we will discuss the budgeting activity assigned from last week. Let us begin with prayer.”

Opening Prayer (15 minutes)

Items needed: A city map; a long, thin stick of burning incense and holder; three readers; Bible marked at Matthew 25:31-40

Symbol(s): Map – We follow Jesus to the places where our brothers and sisters suffer.

Environment: Have the incense burning and, if possible, the lights dimmed.

Introducing the Symbol/s

(Slowly and deliberately)

When the group has gathered, bring the folded map into the center of the circle. Unfold it, hold it up, and briefly introduce the symbol with these words:

Map – directions to get us to where we want to go, places where people live, neighborhoods, community . . . God’s people.

Place the opened map in the center of the circle.

Bring in the burning incense and introduce it with these words:

Incense – cleansing, purifying, fragrant and pungent . . . God’s presence.

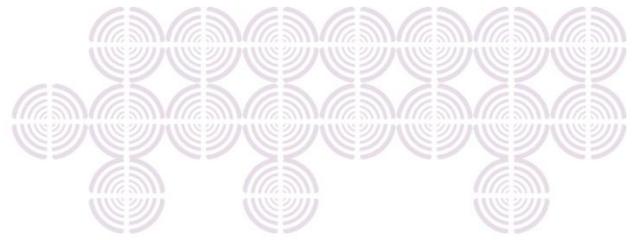
Call to Prayer

(With quiet reverence)

The leader sits in the circle holding the map and prays aloud:

Loving Jesus, we desire to follow you to those places where you were drawn.

Pass the map (fold if needed) to the person seated on the right; invite participants to hold it for a brief moment and pray silently before passing it on to the right.



The leader prays the call to prayer while the map moves around the circle:

**Jesus, in your name we gather. You are here in our midst.
In the presence of your Spirit we become your body,
to listen, to share, to learn, to care, and to pray for one another.
Move within us. Move among us.
Spirit of Compassion, bind us to one another.
Propel us out into your world to be your compassionate justice.**

When the map has gone around the circle, return it fully opened to the center.

Distribute **Week 10: Participant Handout A** and follow the directions for prayer.
Continue afterward with the Communion of Silence.

Communion of Silence

After a short pause introduce the moment of silence with these words:

**In honest silence, gentle truths begin to surface.
In stillness, reflections make themselves clear.
We pause and still ourselves to share in the prayer of silence together.**

Prayer of the Heart

After a couple of minutes of silence, introduce the mantra prayer in this way:

Let us take prayer to heart. Echo this simple prayer from Psalm 34:18 line by line. Then echo the whole prayer:

Leader: **The Lord is near to the brokenhearted...**

Participants: The Lord is near to the brokenhearted.

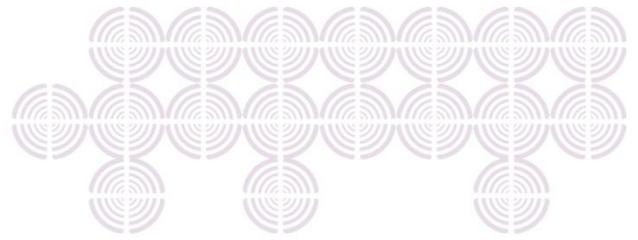
Leader: **Blessed be the Lord.**

Participants: Blessed be the Lord.

Leader: **The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. Blessed be the Lord.**

All: The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. Blessed be the Lord.

Leader: **Let this prayer echo in our hearts.**



Blessing

Leader: **Holy Spirit, inspire our thoughts. May we speak your truth.
May our hearts be opened. Amen.**

First Half (50 minutes)

Discussion Questions

- Make Poverty Personal, pages 136-157
- Cloud of Witnesses, “Henri Nouwen,” pages 72-77

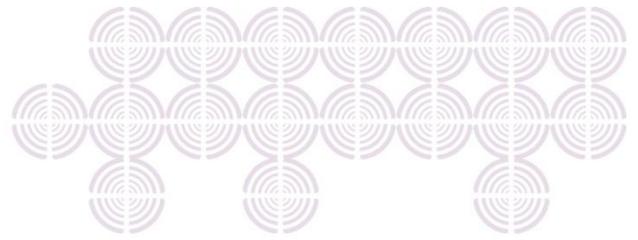
1. On page 139, Barker writes “Pentecost enabled ordinary people not to have to live under oppression, but rather be empowered to create a new identity and belonging. Whereas previously the poor were only eaten away by despair, the Holy Spirit filled them up with the hope to live as God’s family.” How does this interpretation of Pentecost compare with your own understanding of Pentecost? How might Pentecost be transformative for one in poverty? Under oppression? Living securely?

2. Barker explains that the disciplines of the early church – disciplines such as apostolic teaching, fellowship, breaking bread, and praying – were responses to poverty. However, on page 141, Barker contends that they have been lost, becoming “rituals to get through, rather than revolutionary practices to change the world.” How have you experienced these disciplines? How might these disciplines be *revolutionary*? How might you and your faith community *reclaim* these disciplines?

3. In comparing the early church to faith communities today, he explores the differences between radical Christian commitment and Christianity focused around relevance in society. Barker asks “Will we be diligent in focusing more on being faithful as God’s people with the poor rather than being “relevant”?” (p. 145) What do you think he means by this?

4. Talking about mission, Barker suggests that Christians are often resistant to go beyond “relief”-type work (p. 148). Why would he say this? How would you describe Christian mission? How might mission look beyond “relief”?

5. Have someone read the Henri Nouwen quotation at the bottom of page 75 in Cloud of Witnesses. What do you think Nouwen means by this statement?



Break (15 minutes)

Business Items (10 minutes)

1. Share with participants: “Next week we will have a guest speaker (name the speaker) who will be sharing his/her experience with working on issues of racism and his/her insights on the challenges associated with that kind of work.”
2. Assign reading for next session: Rising to Common Ground, pages vii – 35; Cloud of Witnesses, “Martin Luther King, Jr.,” pages 81-89 and “Note to Participants for Week Eleven.”
2. Distribute “Note to Participants for Week Eleven”.
3. Distribute copies of Rising to Common Ground.
4. Review plans for upcoming immersion experience if needed.
5. Let participants know that you will be sending them an email with a weblink to a brief, online evaluation of the first ten weeks of the JustFaith program. Ask them to complete the evaluation as soon as they receive it. This feedback is vitally important to the JustFaith Ministries staff as they begin planning for revisions to next year’s program.

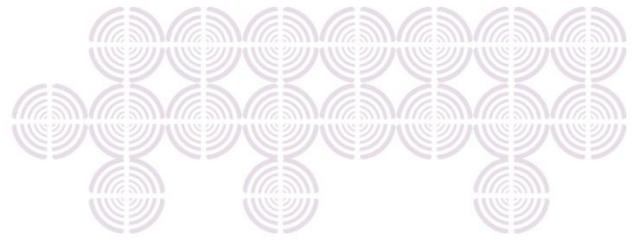
Second Half (50 minutes)

Discuss Budget Activity

Beginning in small groups of 3 or 4, ask group members to gather to share their experiences of budgeting for their scenario. It may be helpful to ensure that each small group member has a different scenario. Have the group members each take 4-5 minutes to present their scenario as well as the budget they developed. Ask them to address the reflection questions from the Budget Activity after each member has presented. (25 minutes)

Invite everyone to join back in the larger group. Engage in discussion, using the following questions as a guide (25 minutes):

1. When considering one’s ability to live from their income, many find it helpful to distinguish a “minimum wage” from a “living wage.” Many economists define a “living wage” as the minimum income needed to provide housing and basic nutritional needs for each member of the household. The federal “minimum wage” is \$7.25. In your community, the living wage is _____.



- a. Why might it be helpful to distinguish between a “minimum wage” and a “living wage”?
 - b. Given what you know about your own expenses, how do you imagine budgeting on this “living wage” in your community? How do you imagine budgeting on the “minimum wage” in your community?
2. How would you distinguish between a “minimum wage,” a “living wage,” and a “poverty level wage”?
 3. It can often be very emotionally challenging for low income people to visit charitable organizations. Why do you think people find it difficult to seek out charitable social services, such as food pantries, for example?
 4. What is the American dream? Are you living the American dream? How might people facing these and other scenarios experience the American dream?

Closing Prayer (10 minutes)

Removing the Symbol

Hold up the incense and take it out of the circle with this blessing:

May we be purified and blessed to walk where Jesus walks.

Hold up the map and take it out of the circle with these words of blessing:

May the map of our work and lives take us to the places ignored.

A Circle of Prayer

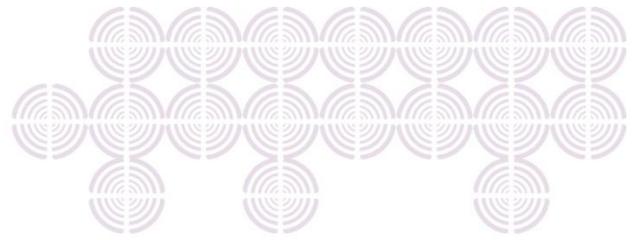
Invite the group to form a tight circle and link hands. Invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it with the group:

We are disciples on a journey.

We are the body of Christ, broken for this world.

Let us quietly pray for one another. (Pause)

If someone has a concern, a word of encouragement, or a short prayer to offer, please do so.



Words to Live By

Leader: **Let us again take prayer to heart. Repeat the prayer after me:
The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. Blessed be the Lord.**

All: The Lord is near to the brokenhearted. Blessed be the Lord.

Leader: **May this prayer echo in our hearts throughout the week, as we
walk, while we work, as we rest, and when we pray for one another.
Call to mind those who are suffering in despair or fear.**

A Sign of God's Peace

Leader: **Now we share in the peace for which our world hungers.
With a sign of peace we affirm one another for the journey.
May we extend God's peace to all!**