

*Just*Faith

*Purpose. From a
new perspective.*

JustFaith Week 27

These documents are for registered groups to use during the program year, per the licensing agreement. Do not copy, share, or forward without permission.

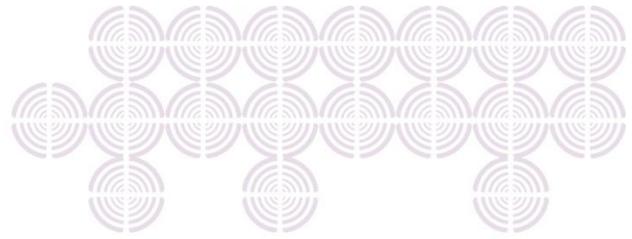


www.justfaith.org

(502) 429-0865

In partnership with





Note to Co-Facilitators

Some members of your group may already know quite a bit about community organizing and, in particular, faith-based community organizing. However, others may have some basic questions about this method of building communities of people working together for systemic change. There are several national umbrella groups that work with local communities to train and empower people for the work of community organizing. Here are some of them along with their websites:

- Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) www.industrialareasfoundation.org/
- People Improving Communities through Organizing (PICO) www.piconetwork.org/
- Direct Action and Research Training (DART) Center www.thedartcenter.org/
- Gamaliel Foundation www.gamaliel.org/
- Highlander Research and Education Center www.highlandercenter.org/

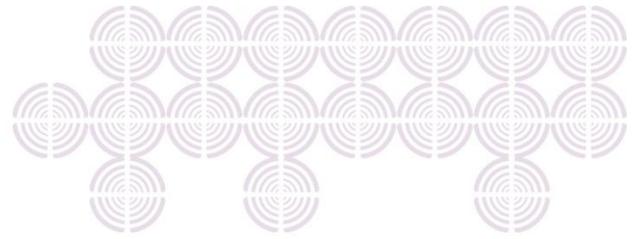
Often their Web sites will list the states and local communities in which they are working as well as some of the issues their local groups have tackled recently. Let participants know that working for justice with local community organizing groups can be energizing and sustaining. Working with groups of people on common issues is one of the ways that JustFaith graduates have found that they can remain engaged in social justice ministries for the long term. As participants will see in the “Holding Ground” video, it can take several years for communities to achieve the level of change that they envision. In many cases, the staying power required for this work comes from the support of a loving and prayerful community.

As you reach the final weeks of the program, it is also important to celebrate this thirty-week process and the journey traveled by each participant. Take the time to celebrate new relationships, spiritual insights and growth, and the completion of the program. The group may choose to continue to meet together, but marking the end of this phase of the journey is important.

Ideas for how to celebrate are noted in the General Comments at the beginning of this document and are reiterated here as you plan for your celebration. Each group should tailor its celebration to fit your specific needs, but here are a few ideas that have been collected from other groups around the country:

- At the conclusion of the last meeting, present each participant with a certificate or some other symbolic item, and then share a meal together. As co-facilitators, you will receive via e-mail a template for a certificate that you can modify to match your needs.
- Work with the pastor and/or worship director to prepare a special recognition or a ritual that happens during a weekend worship service followed by breakfast or brunch together. Not only will your group be recognized and blessed for their commitment, but it will also help spread the word about JustFaith to the rest of the church community.
- Arrange for a dinner and speaker event; you might consider inviting other church members to hear the speaker, if appropriate. Present certificates at this event.
- Arrange for a social event that includes the spouses, children and significant others of the participants. Present certificates at this event.
- Or do a combination of any of these.

The logistics for celebration activities can be coordinated by the co-facilitators, by group members, or by former JustFaith graduates in your church. Let your group’s creativity determine how this celebration will be organized.



Week Twenty-Seven Components

Preparation for Week Twenty-Seven

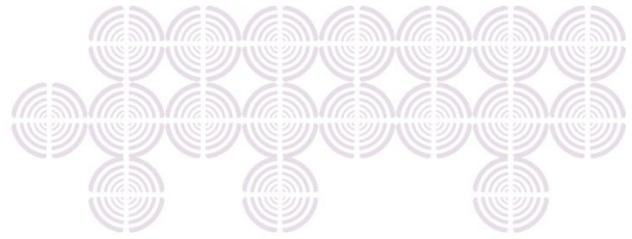
- Review Session Twenty-Seven information.
- Copy Week 27 Handouts (Note to Participants)
- Locate DVD of “Holding Ground” and assure availability of equipment.
- Locate copies of Let Your Life Speak to distribute.
- Bring your JustFaith group’s copy of Prayers for The New Social Awakening and find “For Communities of Resistance and Solidarity,” page 81. Assign a prayer reader or divide the group members to read in segments.
- Gather prayer items: A Bible, a pair of old, worn shoes or sandals, and a paper or cloth
- Assign a Scripture Reader for Isaiah 61:1-3.

Timing of the Session

Activity	Minutes
Prayer	10
View film and discuss	70
Break	10
Business	10
Discuss reading	45
Closing prayer	5
Total	150

Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- You will need:* Bible marked at Isaiah 61:1-3, Prayers for The New Social Awakening, a pair of old, worn shoes or sandals and a paper or cloth to set them on
- Symbol:* Old, worn shoes or sandals – symbol of walking in solidarity with the poor
- Environment:* Dimmed lights



Introducing the Symbols

When the group has gathered, hold up the shoes or sandals into the center of the circle. Introduce the symbol with these words:

Old, worn pair of shoes – symbols of the shoes of the poor and oppressed, those heavily burdened, the hungry, the sick without healthcare, those held captive by poverty or addiction or ignorance or prejudice

Call to Prayer

Standing in the circle and holding the pair of old shoes, pray aloud:

Loving God, you have opened our eyes and our ears and our hearts to hear the cries of your oppressed people. We long to share their struggle for justice, to walk with them on our common journey to freedom, over the ground made holy by your presence. Though our own shoes and the paths we walk are more comfortable, give us the courage to choose a love that can sacrifice and risk. Help us to make a pilgrimage into new places in our own cities and communities.

Pass the shoes and invite participants to hold the symbol for a brief moment of silent prayer before passing them on. Offer the call to prayer while the shoes move 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.

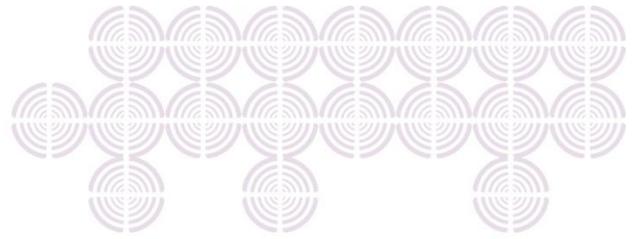
Spirit of Compassion, bind us to one another.

Propel us out into your world to be your compassionate justice.

When the shoes have gone around the circle, place them in the center.

Scripture Reading

Read Isaiah 61:1-3. Pause for a minute of silent reflection before beginning the prayer “For Communities of Resistance and Solidarity,” page 81 from [Prayers for The New Social Awakening](#).



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.

Allow for two full minutes of silence.

Prayer of the Heart

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

Leader: **Let us take prayer to heart. Echo this simple prayer, line by line.**

(From Psalm 72)

Leader:

May leaders everywhere defend the oppressed

Show compassion to the needy and poor,

Freeing them from extortion and violence.

Sharing the earth's abundance with all.

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

Participants:

May leaders everywhere defend the oppressed,

Show compassion to the needy and poor,

Freeing them from extortion and violence.

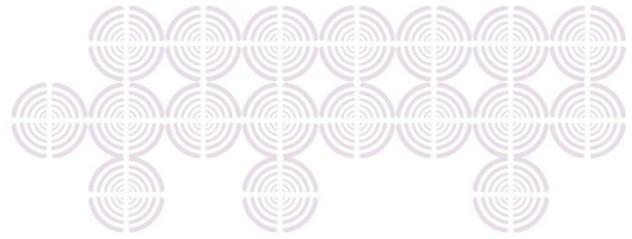
Sharing the earth's abundance with all.

Rite of Blessing

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

First Half (70 minutes)

View "**Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street.**" (58 minutes) This video tells the story of community organizing in the Dudley Street area of Boston. It shows the beginnings of the community organizing effort and follows the process for ten years. In doing so, it reveals the developmental phases, the successes of community organizing, and the role of the larger community in supporting the organizing efforts of the poor.



Then allow for a brief period of discussion considering any of these questions: (12 minutes)

1. What was the role of those in the community beyond Dudley Street? Can you envision your neighborhood similarly involved in renewal efforts happening in another part of your city?
2. What factors led to the organizing group's success over the long haul?
3. What barriers did they face over the decade, and how did they overcome these barriers?

Break (10 minutes)

Business Items (10 minutes)

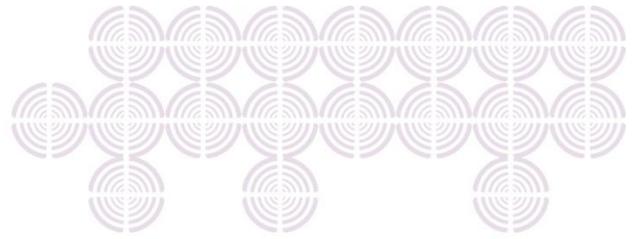
1. Assign the reading for next week: Let Your Life Speak, pages 1-55, Cloud of Witnesses, “Jean Vanier,” pp. 55-59 and “Note to Participants for Week Twenty-Eight.”
2. Distribute “Note to Participants for Week Twenty-Eight.”
3. Distribute copies of Parker Palmer’s Let Your Life Speak.
4. Discuss graduation celebration options with the group. Delegate components, if needed.

Second Half (45 minutes)

Discuss Reading

You will not have time to cover all of these questions. Select those questions that would best further your group’s dialogue. Many of the questions come from the Doing Justice study guide found in the back of your book.

- Discuss Doing Justice, pp. 50 – 103
1. In Chapter 6, the author introduces the organizer’s view of self-interest, stating that “to know your self-interest, to declare your self-interest, and to act on your self-interest is an act of political courage.” How has this phrase been interpreted in communities? How do you understand the difference between self-interest and self-denial?
 2. Would you describe the act of claiming one’s authentic self to be an act of courage? What has your experience been in claiming your authentic self? Have you found it easier to accept a false self rather than your true self?



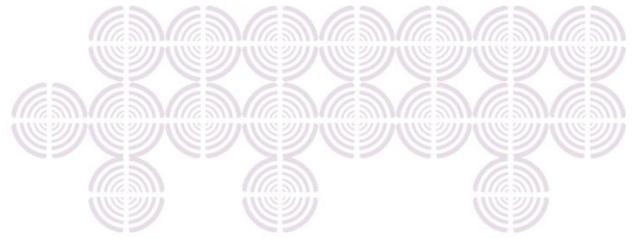
3. In Chapter 7 the author discusses characteristics of an interviewer. How does the author associate the characteristics of Jesus' conversations with the characteristics of a good interviewer? What elements do you understand to be necessary for "sacred" conversation?
4. Discuss your immediate response to the word *agitation*. How does the author's depiction of agitation in Chapter 8 differ from your own?
5. How do you respond to the quote on page 68, "Agitation is a summoning forth of one's vision for one's life...At its best agitation touches on the matter of vocation"? What kind of agitation do you need to move toward your life purpose?
6. Reflecting on the author's depiction of congregation-based community organizing in Chapter 9, how do you understand a church's physical location affecting its voice at the organizing table? What may be the special challenge for Christians in the wealthy suburbs/the inner-city?
7. In the beginning of Chapter 10, the author quotes Nelson Mandela: "The freedom struggle is not merely a question of making speeches, holding meetings, passing resolutions, and sending deputations, but of meticulous organization, militant mass action, and, above all, the willingness to suffer and sacrifice." Which of the three parts of the freedom struggle (meticulous organization, militant mass action, willingness to suffer and sacrifice) is most challenging to you?
8. On page 82, the author explores the intimate relationship between *logos* (order, discipline, form, definition) and *eros* (passion, desire, joy, movement). How do you see yourself learning toward either *logos* or *eros*? What affect does this inclination have in your life? What might help bring balance to your life?
9. In Chapter 11, the author explores the four marks of the church – Holy, catholic, Apostolic, and Confessional. How do you see your congregation living into these marks?
10. How do you understand the author's statement on page 96: "The summons to do justice is an invitation into an interesting life?" What words or images characterize the life of one who works for justice?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Returning to the Symbol

Hold up the shoes and offer these words of blessing:

Let our own shoes, which we now wear, the shoes that protect our feet, not lead us away from our sisters and brothers who cry for help. Let the shoes that guide our paths guide us to holiness and generosity and courage. Let our shoes that trod the earth be found mingled with the shoes of the poor and oppressed as we walk with them on holy ground.



A Circle of Prayer

Invite the group to form a tight circle and link hands:

We are disciples on a journey.

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

Let us quietly pray for one another and for our brothers and sisters in need. (Pause)

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

Words to Live By

Return to the mantra prayer and invite the group to echo it again.

Leader: **Let us again take prayer to heart. Repeat the prayer after me:**

Leader:

May leaders everywhere defend the oppressed

Show compassion to the needy and poor,

Freeing them from extortion and violence.

Sharing the earth's abundance with all.

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 and in need of life's basic necessities.**

Participants:

May leaders everywhere defend the oppressed,

Show compassion to the needy and poor,

Freeing them from extortion and violence.

Sharing the earth's abundance with all.

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 ahead.

May we extend God's peace to all!