

*Just*Faith

*Purpose. From a
new perspective.*

JustFaith Week 28

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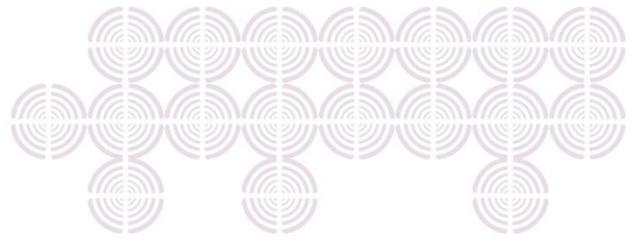


www.justfaith.org

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In partnership with





Note to Co-Facilitators

This week participants will have the opportunity to hear about local social service agencies that work with the poor in your community. This is another occasion for participants to consider their post-JustFaith commitments to actively engage in social ministry.

All of these resources will help participants move from formation to action. There are three things to keep in mind as you discuss what happens after JustFaith:

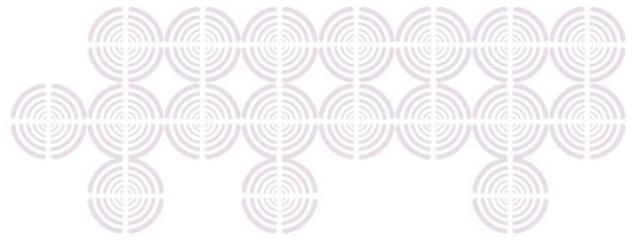
- First, each participant will most likely have interest in and passion for different types of ministry, offer varied gifts, and differ on time available for this work. As participants share their initial thinking and planning, it is important to let them know that each person's call will look somewhat different even though it all contributes to bringing about a more just world.
- Second, the work of pursuing justice is often done best in groups. Much of this work requires changing policies and structures and is often long term; in other words, it is work that is enhanced by joining with others who have similar goals. Take advantage of opportunities to stress to participants the benefit of working together with other people in their area of interest.
- Third, the spiritual journey that started here will not stop here. Most participants will continue the process of integrating their faith with the needs of the world that results in a deeper relationship with God.

Keep these thoughts in mind as participants discern their next steps over the next few weeks.

Week Twenty-Eight Components

Preparation for Week Twenty-Eight

- Review Session Twenty-Eight information.
- Copy Week 28 handouts (**Attachment A and Note to Participants**).
- Confirm with guest speaker(s) one week before and, if necessary, one day before this session.
- Send **Engaging the World Together** document and **Taking Action Resource Guide** web link to all participants by e-mail. Please make a photocopy for those that do not have access to e-mail. These materials will be discussed during the closing retreat.
- Bring your JustFaith group's copy of Prayers for The New Social Awakening and find "For Disciples," page 132. Assure that this week's prayer has been assigned a



prayer reader or that it has been divided for the group members to read in segments.

- Gather prayer items: A Bible, a tree branch with new leaves, a candle
- Assign a Scripture Reader for Jeremiah 17:7-8.

Timing of the Session

Activity	Time
Prayer	10
Guest speaker(s)	60
Break	15
Business	10
Discuss reading	50
Closing prayer	5
Total time	150

Opening Prayer

You will need: Bible marked at Jeremiah 17:7-8, Prayers for The New Social Awakening, a tree limb with new leaves, and a candle

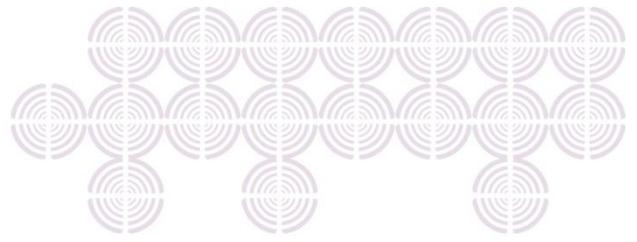
Symbols: Trees, grounded in the earth so that they can stand tall and firm

Environment: Candle and prayer cloth

Introducing the Symbol

When the group has gathered, hold up the tree branch into the center of the circle and introduce the symbol with these words:

A tree — Standing firm and tall with its roots planted in the good earth... a symbol of being grounded, able to withstand the winds and rains and storms of life...steadfastness.



Call to Prayer

The leader sits in the circle, holding the tree limb and shares:

O Holy One, tonight we open our hearts to those who have been steadfast in their faith and their convictions. Guided by your Word, they stood firm when buffeted by the world around them. Help us to live lives of such faith.

Pass the tree limb and invite participants to hold the symbol for a brief moment of silent prayer before passing it around the circle. Offer the call to prayer while the tree limb 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 tree limb has gone around the circle, replace it in the center.

Scripture Reading

Read Jeremiah 17:7-8. Pause for a minute of silent reflection before beginning the prayer “For Disciples,” page 132 from Prayers for The New Social Awakening.

Communion of Silence

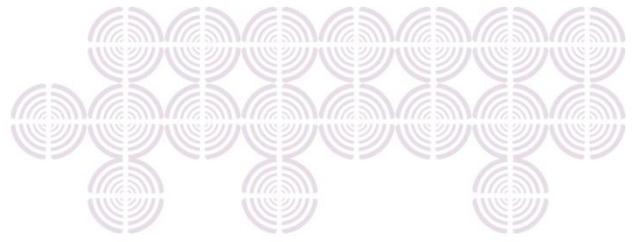
After a short pause, introduce the moment of silence with these words:

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.

Offer two full minutes of silence.



Prayer of the Heart

After a couple of minutes, introduce the mantra prayer (from John 15:5) in this way:

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

Leader:	Participants:
I am the vine.	I am the vine.
You are the branches.	You are the branches.
Those who abide in me,	Those who abide in me,
And I in them,	And I in them,
Will bear much fruit.	Will bear much fruit.

Leader: **I am the vine and you are the branches.**

All: I am the vine and you are the branches.

Leader: **Those who abide in me and I in them will bear much fruit.**

All: Those who abide in me and I in them will bear much fruit.

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

Rite of Blessing

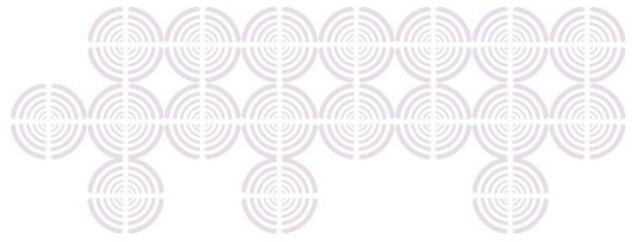
Leader: **Holy Spirit, inspire our thoughts. May we speak your truth. May our hearts be opened. Let us say “Amen.”**

First Half (60 minutes)

Guest Speaker(s)

Invite local representatives from social service agencies to come and talk with the group about opportunities for engagement in the local community. Sixty minutes are allotted so you may have two or three speakers and give them each thirty or twenty minutes respectively. One option is to invite someone from your church who can speak to the social ministry opportunities in your faith community. Be sure to let the speakers know that you are asking them to focus on opportunities for action.

Break (15 minutes)



Business Items (10 minutes)

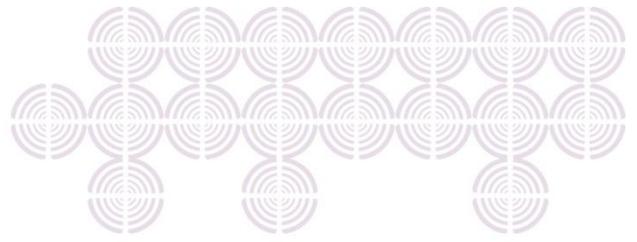
1. Assign reading for next week: Let Your Life Speak, pp. 56 - 109 and “Note to Participants for Week Twenty-Nine.”
2. Pass out “Note to Participants for Week Twenty-Nine.”
3. Hand out copies of Discernment Exercise, Part II (Week 28: Attachment A). Ask participants to complete this exercise in the coming week and come prepared to share their reflections next week.
4. Assure that everyone has received the “Engaging the World Together” document as an e-mail attachment. If not, arrange for distribution of paper copies. Ask participants to begin looking through this document. Opportunities for group discernment and whether to continue to meet as a group will be discussed during the Closing Retreat.
5. Also make sure everyone has received the “Taking Action Resource Guide.” This lengthy document has many resources for exploring various areas of social ministry, contact information for organizations that work in these areas, and ideas for continuing justice education on many social ministry topics.
6. Remind participants of the Closing Retreat weekend dates.

Second Half (50 minutes)

Discuss Reading

Do not be concerned with covering all of these questions. Select those questions that would best further your group’s dialogue.

- Let Your Life Speak, pp.1-55
 - Cloud of Witnesses, “Jean Vanier,” pages 55-59
1. What do you hear when you listen to your life? What has the JustFaith process taught you about the “truths you embody” and the “values you represent”? How might you make it a practice to listen for what your life “intends to do with you”?
 2. What are the “oughts” that most distract you from growing into your authentic selfhood? When you choose to set those oughts aside, what do you notice?
 3. Ask someone to read the last full paragraph on page 16 that begins with “Our deepest calling...” Then take a moment to consider what brings you deep gladness.



- How does starting with your gladness (instead of the world's need) change your view of service and vocation?
4. Where are you on your journey toward a sense of self and vocation? What have been your experiences of grace during this journey? What have been your experiences of hardship? How have the hardships helped you to find your way?
 5. How has your reading in this book so far helped you to understand the link between social justice and true self?
 6. Think of a time when you became acutely aware of your limitations. What have such run-ins with your limits taught you about your nature? How have these experiences helped you to identify your potential?
 7. What ideas or certainties are you attached to? How do these attachments serve you? How do they hold you back? Are there particular certainties of yours that were challenged during your weeks in JustFaith?
 8. In light of Parker Palmer's distinction between authentic self-hood and personal notions of how we *ought* to be, how do you respond to Jean Vanier's comment on page 59, "I think if there's too much success, we're no longer celebrating?" Why do you think he distinguishes success from celebration? How does celebration more fully tie into authentic selfhood?

Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Returning to the Symbol

Hold up the tree branch and offer this blessing:

We are planted in the good earth to grow strong and steadfast in faith.

A Circle of Prayer

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

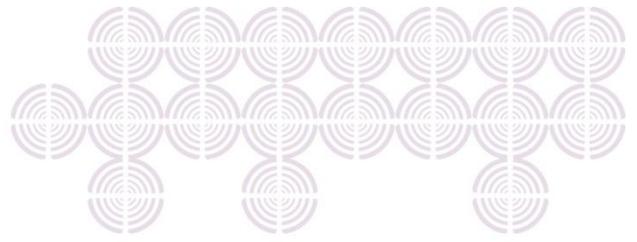
We are disciples on a journey.

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: **I am the vine and you are the branches.**

All repeat: I am the vine and you are the branches.

Leader: **Those who abide in me and I in them will bear much fruit.**

All repeat: Those who abide in me and I in them will bear much fruit.

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 parts of our communities that call out for justice.**

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!