

# *Just*Faith

*Purpose. From a  
new perspective.*

## **JustFaith Weeks 26-30 Overview**

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## General Comments

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Groups are now entering the last weeks of the JustFaith program. We hope the experience has been spiritually rich for you and for your participants. We are grateful for everything you have done to implement this program, and we hope you have also reaped the satisfaction and rewards that come from guiding your group on this faith journey. Our hearts are filled with appreciation for you and the generous sharing of your talents in accompanying each of your participants.

As the last weeks unfold, there are several elements that are essential to the closure of the program. These include helping participants discern their next social ministry steps, participating in joint advocacy, such as through Week 26's Bread for the World Offering of Letters, deciding whether to continue meeting as a group after the program has ended, exploring opportunities for spreading the word about JustFaith, evaluating and reflecting on the program and its impact on each participant, and providing for a time to celebrate the journey through the final retreat and other year-end events. Each of these is discussed below.

### Process of Discernment

The discernment process for participant engagement continues in the final five weeks. The texts and videos chosen for these weeks relate both to community discernment as well as personal discipleship. As part of the assignment for Week 29, each person begins a prayer/discernment process to help participants consider where God's call may lead them. Individual and group discernment is also integrated in the Closing Retreat.

### Week 26 Offering of Letters

During Week 26, participants will engage in an offering of letters organized by Bread for the World. For decades, Bread for the World has worked with people of faith to assist them in communicating with their elected officials regarding the issue of hunger. Bread for the World is not affiliated with any particular political party or agenda. As you have learned throughout the program, Bread's purpose is solely to work as a collective Christian voice urging the United States' decision makers to end hunger at home and abroad. One way of communicating this collective voice is through the annual offering of letters.

Each year, Bread for the World invites churches across the country to write letters to Congress regarding an issue that is important to hungry and poor people. Bread for the World supplies congregations with resources for educating themselves about the topic so that they can be well-informed regarding each year's topic. In some congregations, time is taken during worship for the entire congregation to write their letters. In others, groups such as Sunday School classes, youth groups, or small groups like your JustFaith community, write these letters together.

### Week 28 Guest Speakers

In Week 28, time is set aside for local representatives from social service and social justice agencies to visit with your group and speak about what their agencies do and the issues that they address. Before the session, let the speakers know that, at this stage in the JustFaith process, group members are looking for ways to engage and become involved with local and national issues. Encourage your



speakers to identify local and, ideally, national opportunities for involvement related to the issues their agencies work with.

The Week 28 session allots 60 minutes so that as many as three representatives from different agencies could have 20 minutes each to speak about opportunities for JustFaith participants. You may decide to invite two speakers and give them each 30 minutes. It may be helpful for one of the speakers to be from your church so that they can speak to the social ministry opportunities in your faith community.

The Week 28 speakers are important because they provide information to participants who have begun to consider their post-JustFaith commitments. Please begin to make connections and offer invitations to these representatives well in advance of this session.

## Engaging the World Together

As the program ends, it is important for participants to discuss options for continuing to meet as a small faith community. Some groups choose to continue meeting for ongoing formation and support. Others choose to follow their interests and passions individually and not meet as a group. Posted with the Closing Retreat is a document entitled, “Engaging the World Together.” You will be asked to forward this document to participants prior to the Closing Retreat. (We hope that facilitators or fellow participants will print a copy to share with those who are not able to receive it through e-mail.) This document will help guide individual and group discernment as you contemplate next steps and will be incorporated into the final sessions and closing retreat.

## Taking Action Resource Guide

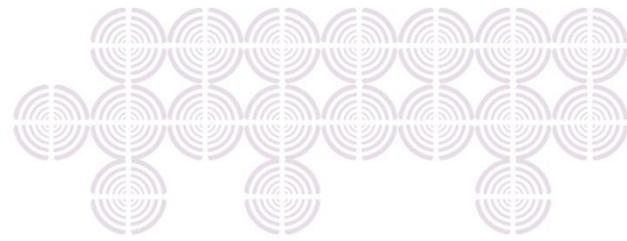
We will also post an online document, called the “Taking Action Resource Guide,” which will provide resources (books, films, Web sites) for exploring numerous social ministry areas. This document will be useful to participants as they begin considering the actions they will take to work for justice in these ministry areas. The many resources in this document will also be helpful if your group chooses to continue meeting as a small faith community. You will also be asked to forward this document to participants prior to the Closing Retreat.

## Closing Retreat

The closing retreat is designed to:

- provide time for reflection on what this year has meant to participants;
- offer discernment opportunities for “what is next” for each participant and for the group as a whole; and
- allow time for the group to honor and appreciate each other.

We *strongly* encourage every participant to attend this retreat. Since each participant has invested significant time into this program, final reflection and discernment are critical to bringing closure to the process. We suggest that the final retreat occur within one or two weeks after completing Week 30. In some cases, the retreat can be scheduled to occur the week before your final session.



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## **Year End Celebration Options**

In addition to the retreat, it is appropriate to plan a fun concluding event that combines ceremony and social time. You could plan a celebration party during the final session, a graduation event, or a celebration after the program is completed. Some possible ideas include special recognition of the group's participants that happens during weekend worship followed by breakfast, brunch, or dinner; a dinner and speaker event; or a combination of any of these. Some groups invite family and friends to this celebration. The options are numerous. It is important, however, to celebrate the journey that everyone has shared.

Some groups have worked with previous JustFaith Ministries' graduates to have an event that includes the gathering of past and new graduates. This event can be planned to have a meal and/or social time, prayer, speaker and honoring of new graduates. Family members of the new graduates could also be invited.

Some groups have also given certificates as the program ends. Sample certificates of completion will be available on the JustFaith Facilitator Resource Page. You also have the opportunity to purchase "JF" medallions for your group members if you choose. Ordering information will be posted online in the Spring.

## **End-of-Year Evaluations**

In order for JustFaith Ministries to provide programs that are meaningful and relevant to our participants, it is important for us to receive feedback about your experiences. In these final sessions, please ensure that your participants have been completing their online evaluations. The links to these online evaluations have been sent to co-facilitators by the JustFaith Ministries staff. If you have not received these evaluation links, please contact the program director as soon as possible. For participants who are unable to complete the evaluations online, please print a copy of the online form for them and mail their filled-in evaluation to: JustFaith Ministries, Attn: JustFaith Program Director, P.O. Box 221348, Louisville, KY 40252.

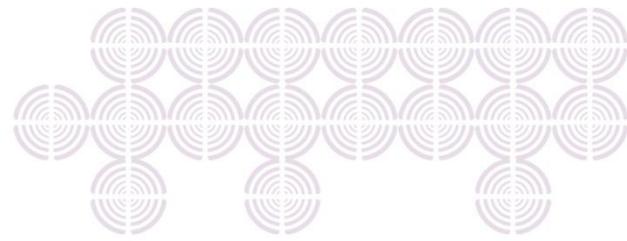
In addition, each facilitator will have the opportunity to complete a Facilitator Evaluation that will come as an online survey. This evaluation focuses on the facilitator's role and the experience of implementing this program. Feedback from the facilitator perspective is greatly appreciated and will also be used as we make revisions for next year's program.

## **Fall Startup of JustFaith**

If you have not already done so, March is the time to assure that there is a planning group for the next JustFaith program. Spring is often the best time to plan for a fall JustFaith program start-up. Often, current participants are interested in being part of the planning group for the next program, so this should be part of your discussion of opportunities for participants (see "Spreading the Word" in Week 30.)

## **Thank You to Facilitators**

Please know of our deep gratitude for all that you have done to make this process available in your community. We recognize that JustFaith is only as good as the facilitators who make it happen. In every



place where JustFaith has been effective and applauded, it is always the facilitators who deserve the applause. It is your work, effort, creativity, and generosity that allow the program to happen and to be well-received by others. Thank you very, very much. We hope that the experience was rewarding for you. We give thanks and pray for blessings on your life and work. It was our privilege to work with you this year.

## Co-Facilitator Timetable: Weeks 26-30

Co-Facilitator Responsibilities	To Do By (Date)	Done (✓)
<b>Order Bread for the World Offering of Letters Kit and DVD</b> This kit is free to all JustFaith groups through this special link only: <a href="http://www.bread.org/oljustfaith">http://www.bread.org/oljustfaith</a> .	Two to four weeks before Week 26	
<b>Check on status of books and materials ordered for Weeks 26 - 30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Doing Justice</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Let Your Life Speak</a></li> </ul>	Three weeks before the 26 <sup>th</sup> session	
<b>Check on status of videos/DVDs ordered for Weeks 26 – 30</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Offering of Letters” DVD (Week 26)</li> <li>• “Holding Ground: The Rebirth of Dudley Street” (Week 27)</li> <li>• “Dust” (Week 29)</li> </ul>	Three weeks before the 26 <sup>th</sup> session	
<b>Assure DVD player for weeks 26, 27 and 29</b>		
<b>Arrange for guest speaker(s) for Week 28</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refer to page 2 of this document and the Syllabus Overview Document for details on guest speakers needed for this segment.</li> </ul>	Three weeks before the 26 <sup>th</sup> session	
<b>Connect with the contact person(s) for immersion experiences</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm date and do final planning for the last immersion experience (if applicable).</li> </ul>	One month before each experience is scheduled	
<b>Make arrangements for final group celebration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide on type, date and location of celebration.</li> <li>• Complete certificates, if desired.</li> <li>• Order medallions, if desired.</li> </ul>	Four weeks before Week 30	
<b>Complete final arrangements for Closing Retreat</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• See Closing Retreat document.</li> </ul>	Two weeks before the Closing Retreat	

*See weekly session pages for specific preparation for each week*