

Phase 2: Session 7

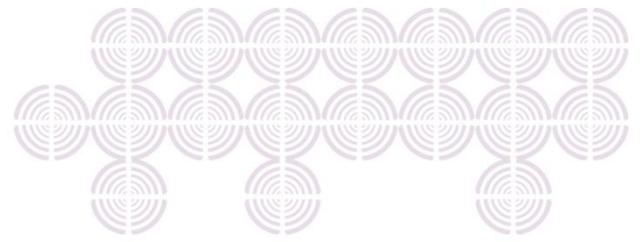
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With additional support from: Catholic Charities USA



Session Overview and Materials

Session Focus: Global Poverty

Set chairs in a circle around the central prayer table.

Section	Timing
Opening Prayer	10 minutes
Discuss Group Process	15 minutes
Identifying Assumptions about Global Poverty	35 minutes
BREAK	10 minutes
Business Items	10 minutes
New Perspectives Dialogue: reflecting on the reading	65 minutes
Closing Prayer	5 minutes

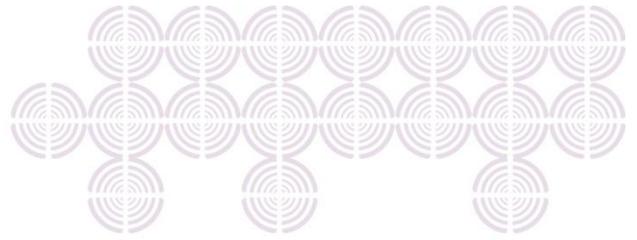
Session Checklist

For the group:

- Large pillar candle and matches
- Bible
- Reflective music
- Incense and incense holder
- City map
- Flipchart paper and markers (optional)
- JustFaith Roster
- Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* or a print out of Paragraph 53

For each participant:

- Session 7 Participant Handout (for readers during Opening Prayer)
- Copy of the Group Guidelines



Session Notes for the Co-Facilitators

Be sure that, well in advance of this session, you have given everyone the additional resources for Phase 2: Solidarity Will Transform the World (book) and Bread for the World Hunger Report, Chapter 2 (bound booklet).

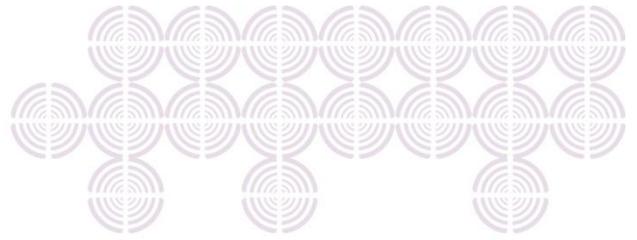
It is important for co-facilitators to evaluate the group process, especially as the group enters a new phase. Groups tend to develop communication habits—some good and some not so good—early in the program. We recommend that co-facilitators regularly discuss the group’s communication habits and patterns and make adjustments as needed. Refer to the “Facilitation Guidebook” and “Group Dialogue and Active Listening” documents for further information.

During this week, there is time for everyone to reflect on the group’s communication patterns, using the agreed-upon group guidelines. Remind participants that responsibility for the group’s process belongs to the group. They make the guidelines come alive in how they communicate with each other. They will create an environment of support and care that will make good communication and dialogue possible.

Co-facilitators should also evaluate the depth of conversations. Does your group tend to discuss issues superficially, not really getting to the depth of the material at hand? If so, you may want to consider asking one or more of the following questions to promote more in-depth conversations:

- Are there aspects of this issue that we are missing?
- What assumptions are you making?
- How did you develop your perspective on this topic? What parts of your life experience inform your perspective?
- Whose perspective is missing?
- What beliefs and values shape your views on this topic?
- How does this issue affect you personally?
- How does God speak to you in this type of situation?

Also, take a moment to think about any interactions that did not go as well as you might have hoped during Phase 1. Were there moments of conflict or tension that were not addressed during the session? If you think that a situation warrants attention, find time to meet individually with the participant(s) involved. To start the conversation, consider saying, “There was a session during Phase 1 where the dialogue did not seem to go well. I want to ask you what I can do next time to help facilitate it so that we have a deeper dialogue. Also, what are your thoughts on ways to enter into these difficult issues making sure that we express ourselves fully and demonstrate respect and care for each other?”



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

- Items needed: City map; incense and incense holder; the Bible marked at Genesis 1:26-27.
Symbols: Map – We follow Jesus to the places where our brothers and sisters suffer.
Environment: Light the incense and, if possible, dim the lights.

Welcome participants and distribute handouts. Describe this week's session using these or similar words:

**During this session, we focus on global poverty – poverty at home and abroad. We also will take time to review our group guidelines and to introduce a new spiritual practice.
Let us begin with prayer.**

Light the pillar candle on the prayer table.

Introduce the Symbols

Hold up the folded map of your city. Unfold it and briefly introduce the symbol with these words:

**Map – directions to help us find where to go, places where people live,
neighborhoods, communities...God's people.**

Place the opened map in the center of the circle. Light the incense and, holding it, offer these words:

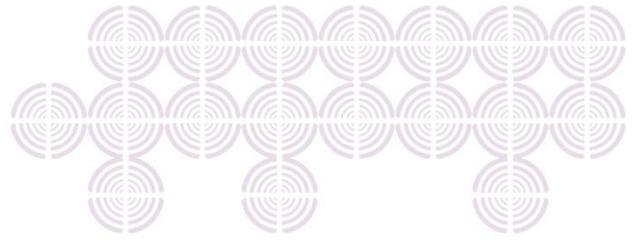
Incense – cleansing, purifying, fragrant, and pungent...God's presence.

Call to Prayer

Hold up the map once more and pray aloud:

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

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

Scripture Reading

Read Genesis 1: 26-27. Pause for reflection.

After a full minute of silent reflection, offer this Scripture commentary:

Each person on this earth was formed in the image of a Creator God who loves us and cares for us. We are one human family—no matter where we live or what color our skin or what name we use when we pray to God. We are one.

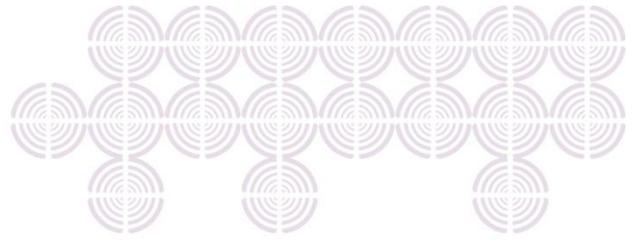
Ask the reader to **re-read the verses**. Allow for another minute of silent reflection.

Meditation

Reader One: **Our towns, our cities, our communities are composed of neighborhoods – networks of relationships. If any of us have ever flown over our city, it looks like a seamless tapestry of roads and buildings and trees and patterns of houses. But here on the ground, it is not so seamless. Neighborhoods begin and end.** (Pause)

Reader Two: **Beauty frequently gives way to blemish, even if gradually. Prosperity gathers itself into clusters. Poverty is left in the pockets of neglect and abandonment. Our maps obscure the divisions that keep us apart.** (Pause)

Reader Three: **But this is God’s world and God uses a different map, a more truthful map. Jesus walked the streets of his people and walked especially in the places of the poor, as if to say this place is holy, this place is loved, and this place has dignity. In his life and in his words and in his steps, Jesus declared that the places of the poor were God’s places. He asks us to follow him.** (Pause)



Leader: Pick up the incense and waft the incense to the four corners of the map.
All people are God's people. All places are God's places. All places are holy. We walk with Jesus to the places that are ignored and neglected and impoverished. These are our people.

Leader: Waft the incense in the direction of the group.
All people are God's people. All places are God's places. All places are holy. Make us a people who walk with Jesus to the places that are ignored and neglected and impoverished. These are our people.

Replace the incense on top of the map. Pause for a moment of quiet.

Leader: **In the words of St. Vincent de Paul, let us pray together:**

All: **You will find that charity is a heavy burden to carry, heavier than the kettle of soup and the basket of bread. But you must your gentleness and your smile keep. Giving soup and bread isn't all that the rich can do.**

The poor are your masters, terribly sensitive: exacting, as you will see. But the uglier and dirtier they are, the more unjust and bitter, the more you must give them your love. It is only because of your love – only your love – that the poor will forgive you the bread you give them.

Prayer of the Heart

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

Leader: **The Lord hears the cry of the poor...**

All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor...

Leader: **And rescues them from all their troubles.**

All: And rescues them from all their troubles.

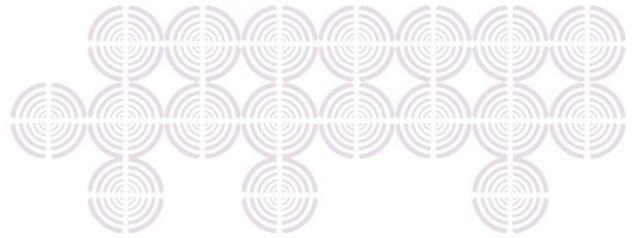
Leader: **Blessed be the Lord.**

All: Blessed be the Lord.

Leader: **The Lord hears the cry of the poor, and rescues them from all their troubles. Blessed be the Lord.**

All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, and rescues them from all their troubles.
Blessed be the Lord.

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



Rite of Blessing

Invite participants to follow you as you mark a cross on your forehead, lips, and heart:

Bless with me the thoughts, the words, and the stirrings of our hearts that we will share in dialogue:

(Cross forehead) **Holy Spirit, inspire our thoughts...**

(Cross lips) **May we speak your truth...**

(Cross heart) **May our hearts be opened.**

AMEN.

Discuss Group Process (15 minutes)

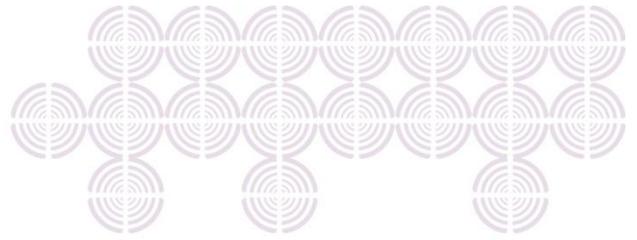
Remind participants of the Dialogue Exercise for Session 7 Preparation in their Phase 2 *Notes to Participants*. Pass out additional copies of the group guidelines from Session Two if participants do not have a copy with them. Give participants a minute to review the guidelines and to note how the group is or is not following each guideline. Affirm those aspects of the group process that are going well and discuss ways to improve the group process, using one or two of the following questions, if needed.

- Which guidelines does the group follow well and consistently?
- Which guidelines does the group need to focus on to improve our dialogue?
- Does the group stay on track? If the group begins talking about a tangent, does it easily refocus on the main topic?

Identifying Assumptions about Poverty (35 minutes)

This part of the session is designed to allow participants to uncover some of their assumptions about people in poverty at home and abroad. Write the two questions below on flipchart paper or a white board. Ask participants to spend two or three minutes quietly reflecting on the questions and encourage them to jot down a few responses.

1. What are your early memories of poor people or of being poor yourself?
2. What did people close to you say to you about poverty or about people who were poor?



After the time for silent reflection, ask participants to share their memories in pairs (about 6 minutes).

Gather the group back together and use the following quotation to set the context for the questions that follow:

In *Solidarity Will Transform the World*, Jeff Korgen reflects on the images he sees in mainstream media (page 3): “Images likes these [fundraising spots and public service announcements on poverty], coupled with the mainstream news media’s crisis-coverage of global poverty, have created a widespread perception of low-income people across the globe as entirely lacking skills and gifts of their own, dependent on the charity of wealthy nations and individuals just to survive. We give; they receive. ‘We have everything; they have nothing’ is the message. *Send your contribution now.*”

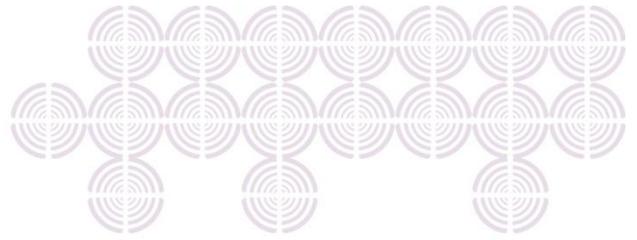
1. What is your reaction to this quote and the assumptions about those who are poor and low-income? Do you hold some of these assumptions?
2. In considering images of poverty you have seen in newspapers and magazines, on television, and on the internet, as well as the messages you have received from the readings for this session, what are some new ways you have come to think about poverty and those who are poor both in the United States and abroad?
3. Korgen says (page 4), “*How* we work with people living in poverty also reflects our belief in human dignity.” How does the way you work with or have worked with those living in poverty demonstrate your assumptions about them? How does it demonstrate your belief in their worth and dignity?

BREAK (10 minutes)

Invite participants to share refreshments (if provided).

Business Items (10 minutes)

1. Circulate a copy of the JustFaith Roster (found on the Facilitator Resource web page). You will most likely want this for your use throughout the program. You also can share with participants that their contact information is kept confidential by JustFaith Ministries, that it is a way for JFM (and its four partners) to have very limited contact at the completion of the program, should participants choose the extended contact.
2. If your group’s Phase 2 Immersion Experience will be the Journey to Justice Day, let participants know how this day will differ from the other immersion experiences. Refer to



the distinctions outlined in the “Facilitation Guidebook,” and the separate “Journey to Justice Guidebook” if needed. If your Journey to Justice Day will be during another phase, propose two dates and finalize the dates via email over the next week.

3. Remind participants to read through their handouts before the next session and to make space for the spiritual practice to be integrated into one day for each of the next three weeks.

Reflecting on the Readings (65 minutes)

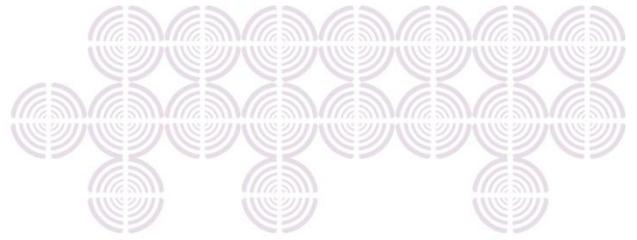
Ask two participants to each slowly read one of the following as a preface to dialogue. Pause for a moment of silence between each of these two readings from *Compassion* and *The Joy of the Gospel*.

Precisely because we are so inclined to think in terms of individual greatness and personal heroism it is important for us to reflect carefully on the fact that the compassionate life is community life. We witness to God’s compassionate presence in the world by the way we live and work together (*Compassion*, page 48).

Our world is being torn apart by wars and violence, and wounded by a widespread individualism which divides human beings, setting them against one another as they pursue their own well-being. ...I especially ask Christians in communities throughout the world to offer a radiant and attractive witness of fraternal communion (*The Joy of the Gospel*, page 69).

Begin by dividing participants into three small groups. Give each group one of the following questions from *The Joy of the Gospel* and offer 15 minutes for each group to discuss their question, asking everyone to contribute to the discussion. Also, ask one person to volunteer to report out to the large group after the 15 minutes.

1. In *The Joy of the Gospel*, Pope Francis asks the faithful to yet again read “the signs of the times” (page 38). He then spends much of Chapter 2 offering an analysis of the various challenges facing the world today. Which of these challenges speak most loudly to you? Why?
2. What is your reaction to the pope’s question on page 39: “How can it be that it is not a news item when an elderly homeless person dies of exposure, but it is news when the stock market loses two points?” What are the implications of this statement for the way we organize our society? For the way you live your life?
3. As you read this quotation from page 54 of *The Joy of the Gospel*, ask the group to look at the map of your city that you used in the opening prayer: “Houses and neighborhoods are more often built to isolate and protect than to connect and integrate. The proclamation of the Gospel will be a basis for restoring the dignity of human life in these contexts.” How do the



houses and neighborhoods of your city isolate people and prevent them from connecting and forming community? Why does this happen? How might you engage in creating a new pattern, one of “fraternal communion”?

After 15 minutes, ask each small group to share some key thoughts from their dialogue. Also, give participants a chance to comment on the two questions that were assigned to other groups, if they desire.

Conclude this segment discussing the following two questions:

4. “Since the Christian community is the living presence of the mediating Christ, it enables us to be fully aware of the painful condition of the human family without begin paralyzed by this awareness. ...In the Christian community, we can know about hunger, oppression, torture, and the nuclear threat without giving into a fatalistic resignation and withdrawing into a preoccupation with personal survival.” (*Compassion*, pages 53-54). How has your preoccupation with work, family, “personal survival” affected how you view those who are experiencing poverty?
5. In *Solidarity Will Transform the World* (page 7), the authors quote theologian Thomas Massaro, SJ, who describes solidarity as “a word that ‘calls attention to the simple and easily observable fact that people are interdependent ... We cannot realize our full potential or appreciate the full meaning of our dignity unless we share our lives with others and cooperate on projects that hold the promise of mutual benefit.’” The authors of *Compassion* describe community (on pages 55-56) and offer the statement, “When information about human suffering comes to us through a person who can be embraced, it is humanized.” How can standing in solidarity with those living in poverty give you a larger, perhaps even stronger, sense of community?

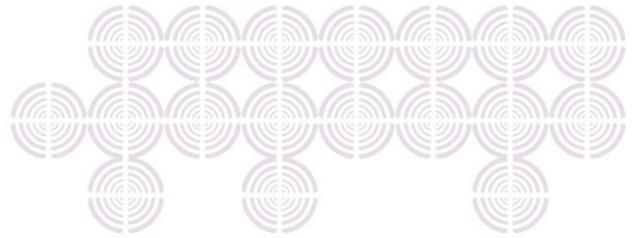
Closing Prayer (5 minutes)

Read aloud paragraph 53 (page 23) in the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*. Pause at the end of the reading to allow each person to prayerfully reflect on the text.

Return to the Symbol

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

May the map of our work and lives take us to the places where Jesus walked.



Words to Live By

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

Leader: **Let us again take this Psalm to heart.**

Leader: **The Lord hears the cry of the poor...**

All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor...

Leader: **And rescues them from all their troubles.**

All: And rescues them from all their troubles.

Leader: **Blessed be the Lord.**

All: Blessed be the Lord.

Leader: **The Lord hears the cry of the poor, and rescues them from all their troubles.
Blessed be the Lord.**

All: The Lord hears the cry of the poor, and rescues them from all their troubles.
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.**

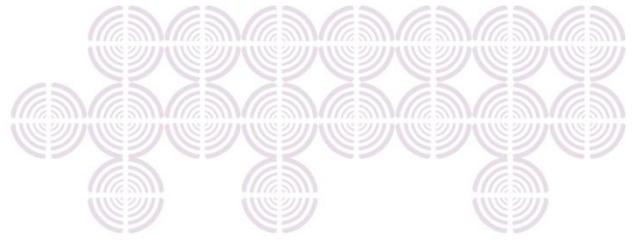
Call to mind those who are suffering, in despair or fear. (Pause)

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!



Session 7 Participant Handout

Opening Prayer

Read slowly. Pause between readers.

Reader One: Our towns, our cities, our communities are composed of neighborhoods – networks of relationships. If any of us have ever flown over our city, it looks like a seamless tapestry of roads and buildings and trees and patterns of houses. But here on the ground, it is not so seamless. Neighborhoods begin and end. (Pause)

Reader Two: Beauty frequently gives way to blemish, even if gradually. Prosperity gathers itself into clusters. Poverty is left in the pockets of neglect and abandonment. Our maps obscure the divisions that keep us apart. (Pause)

Reader Three: But this is God's world and God uses a different map, a more truthful map. Jesus walked the streets of his people and walked especially in the places of the poor, as if to say this place is holy, this place is loved and this place has dignity. In his life and in his words and in his steps, Jesus declared that the places of the poor were God's places. He asks us to follow him. (Pause)

Leader: (Take up the incense and waft the incense to the four corners of the map.)

All people are God's people. All places are God's places. All places are holy. We walk with Jesus to the places that are ignored and neglected and impoverished. These are our people.

Leader: (Take up the incense and waft the incense in the direction of the group.)

All people are God's people. All places are God's places. All places are holy. Make us a people who walk with Jesus to the places that are ignored and neglected and impoverished. These are our people.

(Replace the incense on top of the map. Pause for a moment of quiet.)

Leader: In the words of St. Vincent de Paul, let us pray together:

All: "You will find that charity is a heavy burden to carry, heavier than the kettle of soup and the basket of bread. But you must your gentleness and your smile keep. Giving soup and bread isn't all that the rich can do.

"The poor are your masters, terribly sensitive: exacting, as you will see. But the uglier and dirtier they are, the more unjust and bitter, the more you must give them your love. It is only because of your love – only your love – that the poor will forgive you the bread you give them."