

# JusticeWalking

*A journey of being rooted  
and grounded in love.*

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## Justifiable Peace SESSION ELEVEN

In partnership with



Catholic  
Campaign  
for Human  
Development



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With additional support from: Catholic Charities USA

## Session Eleven

# JUSTIFIABLE PEACE

### 2 HOURS

**Overview** J-Walkers examine the roots of violence and explore non-violent living as a pathway into God’s peaceable realm. They select the legacy of a reconciler to guide them, and they adopt the practice of “Reconciliation and Collaboration.”

**Aim** J-Walkers acknowledge the violence that has torn into their lives and hold up Jesus as our model for non-violent living.

**Environment** Place the prayer cloth in the center of a circle of chairs or pillows. Put the Bible, candle, and newspaper on the cloth. Have the other materials close at hand. Write the title of the session (Justifiable Peace) on the cloth. J-Walkers should bring their journals and pens.

| SUPPLIES FOR THIS SESSION:  | BROUGHT BY: |
|---|-------------|
| Prayer cloth  |             |
| A strip of fabric cut from the prayer cloth (see below)                     |             |
| Crucifix or cross, Bible marked at Micah 4:1-5 and Joel 2:12-14, and candle |             |
| Markers and matches   |             |
| CD player and companion CD, reflective music (optional)                     |             |
| A gardening hoe   |             |
| A pair of scissors  |             |
| A copy of <i>Everyday Justice</i>   |             |
| A current newspaper   |             |
| A small bell or chime   |             |
| Copies of Attachment B (one for each J-Walker)                              |             |
| A copy of the co-facilitation schedule                                      |             |

| CO-FACILITATOR TASKS:  | DONE BY: |
|--|----------|
| Review materials and gather supplies.  |          |
| Delegate facilitation roles.   |          |
| Write the session title on the prayer cloth.   |          |
| Select a news story to share with the group.   |          |
| Cut a (1-inch wide) strip from one edge of the prayer cloth, along the full length of the cloth. Write the names of reconcilers (Attachment A) along the fabric strip. |          |

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## GATHERING 30 minutes

*You will need... a small bell or chime; candle and matches; a newspaper; Everyday Justice; journals and pens.*

### 1.1 Signing

*You will need... the small bell or chime; the candle and matches.*

Invite everyone to sit comfortably with their hands resting on their legs, palms facing upward. Invite the group to maintain this position for two full minutes of silence and stillness:

***In silence we welcome the gentle spirit of God.***

***The first chime calls us to quiet attention.***

***The second invites us to mark ourselves with a sign of the cross.***

Ring the chime and settle into silence. After two minutes, ring it once more. Make the sign of the cross and offer this prayer (Psalm 85:8):

***Let us listen to God, who speaks peace to the people.***

Light the candle.

Co-facilitator prays:

***Come Spirit of Justice, overwhelm us...***

***Come fill our hungry hearts...***

***Come ignite in us the fire of compassion...***

***Come reshape our lives, send us out...***

***To restore systems...***

***And renew the beauty of the earth...***

J-Walkers repeat:

*Come Spirit of Justice, overwhelm us.*

*Come fill our hungry hearts.*

*Come ignite in us the fire of compassion.*

*Come reshape our lives, send us out,*

*To restore systems,*

*And renew the beauty of the earth.*

***AMEN.***

### 1.2 Praying the News

*You will need... a recent newspaper.*

Ask participants to sit.



Pray a news story.

Close with a response prayer, such as ***Lord have mercy*** or ***Lamb of God...***

*(For a full description of “Praying the News,” see Step One Overview, Attachment A.)*

## 1.3 Opening Dialogue

*You will need... a copy of Everyday Justice; journals and pens.*

Open space for J-Walkers to share thoughts from their reading of Everyday Justice, insights from their journals, and thoughts on the spiritual practice, solidarity challenge, or overall process. If necessary, begin by reminding everyone:

***Dialogue is about listening and sharing. This is not a debate. Anyone can share, no one is required to speak, and all are expected to listen.***

As the dialogue closes, thank everyone for sharing and listening.

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## LISTENING 50 minutes (includes a 10 minute break)

*You will need... the gardening hoe; the Bible marked at Micah 4:1-5 and Joel 2:12-14; the pair of scissors; the CD player and companion CD cued to "Born of Blood and Love"; the fabric strip with the names from Attachment A written on it; the cross or crucifix; markers.*

### 2.1 Symbol

*You will need... the gardening hoe; the Bible marked at Micah 4:1-5.*

Pick up the gardening hoe:

***A tool for tilling and tending... for seeding and weeding the garden...  
from the legend of Cain to the legacy of Rwanda,  
the ploughshare has also been a crude blade for killing.  
This simple technology allows hundreds of millions to feed their families.  
Turning the soil is the most common work of human hands.  
This dignified labor is turned to slavery  
by competition for land and unfair trade.  
Too often, exploitation is the uninvited guest when we share food at our tables.***



Read Micah 4:1-5 – *God's vision, the eradication of violence.*

Place the hoe on the cloth:

***Some say that conflict and exploitation are just a part of life.  
Others justify or even glorify them in God's name.  
But because Jesus walked a non-violent path,  
imploping us to feed and not to fight, non-violence becomes  
a clear mark of his followers, a path to being like God.***

## 2.2 Presenting the Theme (20 minutes)

*You will need... the pair of scissors; the Bible marked at Joel 2:12-14; the CD player and companion CD; the fabric strip with the names from Attachment A written on it; the cross or crucifix; markers.*

Lead the group in this echo prayer (Psalm 95:7-8):

Co-Facilitator prays (slowly) : J-Walkers repeat:  
***Oh that today you would hear God's voice... Oh that today you would hear God's voice...  
Harden not your heart... Harden not your heart.***  
(Pause and repeat the prayer a few times.)

Clear items off the prayer cloth and pick it up, while the other co-facilitator shares these words:

***Our world presumes that conflict is unavoidable and peace is beyond our reach.  
Our faith proclaims, "Peace is possible! The Reign of God is at hand!"  
We are torn between the faith we profess and the ways of the world.***

Take the scissors and make a small cut in the center of a side of the cloth. Using your hands, tear the cloth a few more inches. Hold it open to expose the tear:

***To our divided human family, yearning for wholeness, God says,  
"Peace be with you!"***



Read Joel 2:12-14 – *Grieve and return to God.*

***Violence must be exposed before we can renounce it.  
And without remorse, we cannot be turned around.  
We must acknowledge the scars of violence,  
grieve our own aggressiveness,  
and turn to God who wants to heal our torn world.***  
(Pause)

***Where are the wounds and scars of violence most apparent  
in your life, in our world?***



"Born of Blood and Love" from the companion CD

***Violence wears many faces:  
war and genocide... terrorism and military power...  
torture and abuse... abortion and execution...  
neglect and poverty... racism and discrimination...  
debt and devastation... greed and crime... powerlessness and despair...***  
(Pause)

***Violence tears into the very heart of God... releases God's compassion.  
Where has violence rended your heart? When has harm ripped your life?***

Invite J-Walkers one by one to make a small tear in the cloth and share their prayer.  
(Do not rip the cloth completely in two.)

***As you make a small tear in the cloth,  
name a place in you or your world that is torn by violence.***

When everyone has prayed, place the torn cloth in the center:

***This is an icon—an image—of the torn covenant with the God of life.  
Violence is a real force in our lives,  
and its roots run deep in our communities.  
But they do not run as deep as the force of love.  
In life and death Jesus demonstrated God's desire for peace and reconciliation,  
showing us how to imitate the God of Justice by becoming reconcilers ourselves.***

Pick up the fabric strip with the names from Attachment A written on it:

***Society recognizes two responses to conflict: fight or flight.  
But the Gospel offers a third way.  
Rather than choosing to run, and rather than choosing to retaliate,  
we can choose to reconcile, to confront violence  
by actively engaging in peacemaking.***

Pass around the strip and the scissors; ask each person to cut a name and hold onto it:

***We are cut from the same cloth as those peacemakers  
who have chosen to reconcile rather than to run or retaliate.  
After a century of genocide,  
we are challenged to proclaim a century of reconciliation.  
Keep the name of your reconciler in your journal.  
Do what you can to find out about the life behind that name.***

Close with the universal prayer for peace:

***Let us pray for the restoration that comes not by the might and power of  
armies, but by the Spirit of love (Zechariah 4:6).***

***O God, lead us from death to life, from falsehood to truth.  
Lead us from despair to hope, from fear to trust.***

***Lead us from hate to love, from war to peace.  
Let peace fill our hearts, our world, our universe. Amen.***

## 2.3 Break (10 minutes)

Assess the time; if possible, offer J-Walkers a break before the session continues.

## 2.4 Spiritual Practice (15 minutes)

*You will need... the cross or crucifix; markers.*

Pass the prayer cloth around the circle:

***This cloth maps our pilgrimage into Gospel-living.  
Here we have recorded our prayers, hopes, and encounters.  
Being J-Walkers has cut into our lives and challenged us to change.  
From the outset, J-Walking has been in competition  
with other influences and forces in our lives.***

Place the cloth once more in the center of the circle. Place the cross or crucifix on the cloth:

***Followers of Jesus counter violence with love,  
respond to competition with care,  
and confront conflict with reconciliation.  
When we let go the need to dominate or control,  
we expose the lie of violence and experience “love that casts out fear.”***

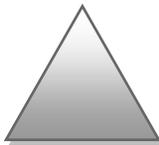
Write the words Reconciliation and Collaboration on the cloth:

***Jesus lived non-violent love.  
Violence never brings Gospel-justice and war never brings just-peace.  
For our final practice we will explore the violent roots within and around us.  
We will try alternatives to conflict, minimizing unhealthy competition,  
and practicing collaboration.***

Invite J-Walkers to open their journals to page 63. Dialogue on how to practice “Reconciliation and Collaboration”.

***Countless lives have been sacrificed  
to the idols of aggression and domination.  
In the face of such violence, restoring peace by inviting reconciliation must  
become one of the great priorities of our times.***

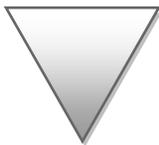
- *Practice Kindness*: regularly buy an additional drink/snack for someone in a cafeteria line; invite an estranged neighbor/classmate to eat with you.
- *Invite Reconciliation*: greet and pray daily for someone who considers you an enemy; write a note or extend some kindness to someone who has wronged you; offer to repair a broken friendship or dispel a long-held grudge; experience the sacrament of reconciliation; apologize with a letter (or in person) to someone you have offended or hurt.
- *Try Collaboration*: invite someone whose socio-economic, racial-ethnic, or political background is different than your own to share a tast or visit with you; ask for help from them. Offer to assist a neighbor/classmate who is not a friend; allow someone else to win, to be first, or to be recognized.
- *Encourage Dialogue*: choose not to have the last word; listen to someone who has a different perspective and opinion than your own; avoid trying to win an argument or change someone's mind—just listen.
- *Extend Trust*: become attentive to messages and media that instill fear pray for those considered enemies of the state; be aware of the daily impact of the violence of poverty and oppression.
- *Experience Lamentation*: pray daily for the victims of violence and those who commit violent acts; visit a war memorial and leave a message expressing sorrow over war's devastations.
- *Practice Noticing*: tune into your everyday environments and notice the violence that might occur in your home, your school, your neighborhood, your city or our nation. Pay attention to which forms of violence are reported by the media and which are not.



### Activities to Embrace

#### JUSTIFIABLE PEACE

### Activities to Minimize



- Fast from music, video games, movies, TV shows, comic books and graphic novels that promote violent acts and images as entertainment.
- Avoid harmful “us and them” language, as well as the violence of gossip, scandal and stereotyping.
- Step away from rivalries and minimize competitive attitudes at work/home/school.
- Resist the compulsion to win at all costs, be first, or appear better than anyone else.
- Stay away from places/activities that promote aggressive or destructive behavior.
- Refuse to join in on bullying, whether in person or online. Don't remain silent in the face of bullying.

Each J-Walker commits to *embrace* at least one activity  
and to *minimize* at least one activity.

Ask people to make note of their personal commitments in their journals.

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## SHARING 35 minutes

*You will need... the CD player and reflective music (optional); journals and pens; markers.*

### 3.1 Journal Reflection

- **Open space for journaling and silent reflection.** You may choose to play reflective background music. After a time, call everyone back to the circle.

### 3.2 Closing Dialogue

*You will need... journals and pens; markers.*

Invite people to share their thoughts on today's session and the new spiritual practice, making connections to the reading and meetings at the margins where possible. Use the following questions to spark dialogue, if necessary:

***Name a favorite childhood superhero/heroine. How did this character rely (or not) on violence in order to accomplish something good?***

***Tell us about a time when you needed to be right, or when you had to beat someone else.***

***When you hear the word "enemy," what people, places, feelings, come to mind? Whose enemy are you?***

***What do you become possessive or aggressive about?***

Invite those who wish to write a word or phrase of wisdom from the session on the prayer cloth.

4

## SENDING 5 minutes

*You will need... a copy of the co-facilitation schedule; a copy of Attachment B for each J-Walker.*

### 4.1 Announcements

Remind the group of the following:

- Date, time, co-facilitators, and location for the last session (at the social service agency).
- Reading assignment: Read Chapter 7 and the Conclusion of *Everyday Justice* (165-189). Encourage daily reading of this book incorporated in prayer and journaling time.
- Commissioning Retreat details: date, time, location, co-facilitators. Inform J-Walkers that they are encouraged to invite family, friends and other supporters to the final hour of the retreat for a commissioning rite.

Give everyone a copy of Attachment B and invite them to reflect on this crucial area of our social teaching. Remind J-Walkers to research the peacemaker whose name they cut from the prayer cloth. Encourage participants to dialogue via email about these reconcilers and any insights from Attachment B.

### 4.3 Closing

Strike the chime once to invite the group into silence.

Prayerfully read this plea from Pope John Paul II:

***“On my knees, I beg you to turn away from the paths of violence  
and to return to the ways of peace....  
Violence destroys the work of justice....  
I say to you, with all the love I have for you,  
with all the trust I have in young people:  
Do not listen to the voices  
which speak the language of hatred, revenge, retaliation.  
Do not follow any leaders  
who train you in the ways of inflicting death....  
Violence is the enemy of justice.  
Only peace can lead the way to justice.”***

After a minute of silence, strike the chime again.

Close with a sign of peace, a word of thanks, and a reminder to pray for and support one another.

Attachment A

## A Short List of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Reconcilers

*Use a marker to write the names of these peacemakers along a strip of fabric cut from the prayer cloth:*

Harriet Tubman (d. 1913)

Edith Stein (d. 1942)

Sophie Scholl (d. 1943)

Franz Jagerstatter (d.1943)

Etty Hillesum (d. 1943)

Kathe Kollwitz (d. 1945)

Mohandas Gandhi (d. 1948)

A.J. Muste (d. 1967)

Martin Luther King Jr. (d. 1968)

Clarence Jordan (d. 1969)

Alicia Domon (d. 1977)

John Leary (d. 1982)

Magdeleine Hutin (d. 1989)

Cesar Chavez (d. 1993)

For more information on the lives of these and other witnesses of peace, see *All Saints* by Robert Ellsberg.

Attachment B

## A Resource Guide to Catholic Teachings on Peacemaking

### **Major documents and publications that reference Catholic peace teachings:**

Peace on Earth (*Pacem In Terris* - John XXIII, 1963)

The Church in the Modern World (*Gaudium Et Spes* - Vat II, 1965)

The Development of the Peoples (*Populorum Progressio* - Paul VI, 1967)

Documents of the Medellin Conference (Latin American Episcopal Conference, 1968)

The Challenge of Peace (U.S. Bishops Pastoral, 1983)

One Hundred Years (*Centesimus Annus* - John Paul II, 1991)

The Harvest of Justice is Sown in Peace (U.S. Bishop's Pastoral, 1993)

Confronting a Culture of Violence (U.S. Bishop's Pastoral, 1994)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

The Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2005)

### **Peace headlines adapted from Catholic social documents:**

- Violence is linked to economic injustice, hunger, lack of human rights, development and freedoms
- Peace is the fruit of the re-ordering of individuals and nations according to the priorities of God's Justice
- Peacemaking is the imperative of individuals as well as nations
- Followers of Jesus are bound to work for peace and defend the sanctity of life
- Violence must always be the last possible resort to resolving situations of conflict
- Christians are mandated to reject violence in all its forms and renounce unjust wars and conflicts
- The Catholic Church has recognized two traditions for responding to violence; the path of non-violence and the attempt to regulate, limit and reduce conflicts (also known as the just war tradition)
- Catholic Teaching endorses both pacifism (the rejection of violence) and conscientious objection (the refusal to engage in armed conflict)
- The Catholic Church calls for the promotion of education, research and training in non-violent approaches to conflict resolution
- Nuclear Weapons and the Arms Race are strongly condemned
- Good ends (defending one's country) do not justify immoral means (weapons of mass destruction, biological or chemical warfare, indiscriminate bombing)
- The Catholic Church supports international efforts to eliminate the use of land mines and the trade of large and small-scale weapons
- World Peace requires dedication to building global solidarity and on-going international efforts to promote the common good
- Global Peace demands international efforts to eliminate the gap between wealthy and impoverished nations, by rectifying unjust trade relations and relieving international debt
- U.S. Catholics are challenged to make every effort to nurture a Culture of Peace, to dedicate resources, creativity, and energy toward peace and peacemaking and to assume their vocation as communicators of hope and workers for peace