

Justice Walking

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

Step Three OVERVIEW

In partnership with



Catholic
Campaign
for Human
Development



breadfortheworld
INSTITUTE



With additional support from: Catholic Charities USA

The Gospel of Life

I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness.
John 10:10

Welcome to this final phase of the J-Walking journey! Over the remaining weeks, the focus returns to the heart of the Gospel— the promise of abundant life. J-Walkers search for signs of God’s call to affirm, bring, and protect life; they look into the political and economic forces that shape our world and inform our choices and attitudes. J-Walkers ask,

What frames our lives and orders this world?

For what, or whom, are we living and dying? What gives us life?

How do we turn our heart, head, and hands to the ways of peace?

What does it mean to dedicate ourselves to the good of all?

J-Walkers turn prayerful attention to these questions and pick up the challenge to:

peacefully confront a pervasive culture of violence,

walk away from destructive systems of consumption,

adopt a life orientation of self-giving, and

measure life choices by their enhancement of the common good.

Before the last leg of this journey together, allow the life-giving Spirit of Jesus to invigorate you:

Come Spirit of Justice...overwhelm us.

Come fill our hungry hearts.

Come ignite the fire of compassion.

Come reshape our lives and send us out.

Come restore our systems,

And renew through us the beauty of the earth.

Amen!

Continuing to Go Deeper

Becoming a Peaceable Community

After eight sessions, four visits to the margins, the Justice Pilgrimage, and the Public Dialogue, J-Walkers are now encouraged to widen the scope of their compassion and concern. Prayerfully walking local streets together, you have wondered about God’s promise of restoration and have looked for signs of alienation in your own backyard. As you recommit to the path that led you from being an interest group to becoming a community of faith, you are now invited to consider what it means to become a *peaceable community*.

The last four sessions present opportunities to deepen community. This final phase challenges your community to stay on the path toward integrity. Be attentive to the Spirit moving through your small community. Find ways to celebrate each J-Walker. As you become more comfortable with the process, encourage everyone to stay focused. Be careful to avoid dissociating yourselves from the realities you are investigating. As you reunite around the prayer cloth, remind each other of your covenant to walk the Gospel path of peace for the good of all.

Meeting at the Margins

J-Walkers' names and faces should be familiar at the social service agency. Likewise, the names and stories of agency guests and staff should be known by your community. The real fruit of these visits is the grace that comes from solidarity – knowing the people there as friends to whom we are connected, who widen our circle of belonging. Solidarity, however, is a mutual relationship; it can neither be forced nor assumed. Challenge your community to further personalize your encounters at the margins, keeping in mind that relationships are based on the people, not the activity.

Remind J-Walkers to carefully tend to their relationship with the agency, being mindful of their connection to the people at the agency in their daily actions and choices. As J-Walkers begin to appreciate the complex social, structural and cultural realities that have defined the agency as marginal, they will be encouraged in their journal to consider ways to deepen their identification with people on the fringes, moving the center of their own lives closer to society's margins.

Session Components for Step Three

Themes

The Gospel of life is at the heart of Jesus' message. Lovingly received day after day by the Church, it is to be preached with dauntless fidelity as "good news" to the people of every age and culture.

John Paul II, *Evangelium Vitae*

In these final sessions, J-Walkers examine what it means to be “Good News.” You will explore four ways to integrate Gospel justice into the policies that pattern and govern our lives:

- **Planetary Politics:** In contradiction to global politics that reduce God's garden to a marketplace and God's children to exploitable resources, Scripture endorses stewardship: reverencing the living planet as an inheritance, a sacred trust to be sustained and protected.
- **So Others Might Live:** Abundant life can neither be won nor acquired. The Gospels liberate us from the life-limiting attitude of self-promotion, offering fulfillment through sacrificial living. We are invited to life by living and loving so that others might have life.
- **Justifiable Peace:** In a culture of mega-violence, peace represents a “narrow path,” the only justifiable means for us to integrate God's compassionate reign into our lives. Following Jesus means risking non-violence and disarming hearts, attitudes, and structures so we uncover the forgiving-feeding ways that make for peace.
- **For the Good of All:** Rejecting the doctrines of gain and expediency, the Gospel and the social wisdom of our faith elevate the common welfare as the moral touchstone capable of promoting and preserving life. Just-Peace becomes reachable when this global ethic is applied to personal and communal decisions. Walking justly means discerning personal choices in relationship to the common good. This path leads us into deeper friendship with the earth and all who are sorely afflicted.

These four pathways are broken open in prayer, dialogue and journal-reflection, and are integrated through practice and friendships at the margins.

The Four Movements—Some Options

The J-Walking sessions continue to follow the four movements of Eucharist in this third step. While Step Two introduced a few changes to the activities within those four movements, the activities as outlined in Step Three will look basically the same as they did in Step Two. At this point in the process, however, you are encouraged to reflect on which flow has worked best with your group and to adapt the process as necessary.

Prayer

The remaining two spiritual practices focus on developing a contemplative attitude toward life. If we dare to engage injustice with compassion, we must routinely steep ourselves in mindfulness of God's indwelling presence. Prayer anchors us in God's abiding presence so that we are not easily tossed and torn by the needs and distresses of our fragmented world. If we are not grounded in a rhythm of prayer, we easily fall prey to the hubris of relying solely on our own limited capacity for action and understanding. And when our hopes and plans are not realized, we become accessible to cynicism and despair.

Encourage J-Walkers to define a sacred space in their homes to carve out a regular time for reflection and journal writing. You will be invited to use the prayer you read on page one to invoke the presence of the Holy Spirit of compassion.

Reading

At this point in the journey, you should be focusing on the last few chapters of the second book, *Everyday Justice*. Encourage everyone to stay faithful to the reading and the J-Walker journal.

Spiritual Practices

To walk justly means to become intentional about the company we keep and our relationship to life. What do you pay attention to? What voices do you tune out? The last pair of spiritual practices emphasizes the contemplative aspects of radical discipleship:

- Tuning in to Silence and Solitude invites J-Walkers to turn down the volume and become attentive to the quiet presence within and around, make space for spiritual reading, and make time for regular conversation with a spiritual guide.
- Reconciliation and Collaboration challenges everyone to respond to the violence within and around us with actions and prayer that promote kindness and collaboration.

These practices come at the conclusion of the journey because they are the most counter-cultural and challenging. Avoid discouragement by gently reminding people to see the practices as learning experiences, opportunities to uncover ancient pathways that empower us to walk through these times with integrity.

This final stretch of the journey holds the potential to yield the richest rewards. As disciples of Jesus, we are able to follow his path by leaning into the gift and grace of community. Support one another as you strive to deepen your prayer, journal with consistency, strengthen your relationships at the margins, and implement spiritual practice in every facet of life. Allow these challenges to reshape you, grow your capacity for compassion, and create a wide space for God's spirit of justice to rush in and transform your hearts and lives!