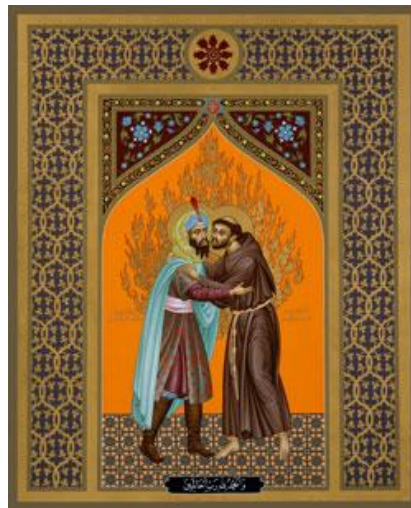


*Just*Matters

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**In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan
Muslims and Christians Working Together for the Common Good**

Facilitator Packet

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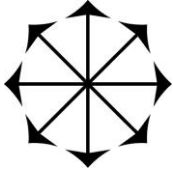
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In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan

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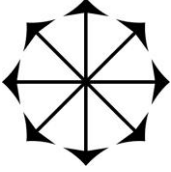
Online links:

Documents:

<http://www.justfaith.org/programs/resources/jm-stfrancisandsultan-program-documents.html>

Evaluations:

<http://justfaith.org/JustMatters/Evaluations/stfrancisandthesultan.html>



JustMatters

Issue based formation.

In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan

General Overview

Welcome to the JustFaith Ministries JustMatters module, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. We are grateful for your willingness to facilitate this module. Bringing Christians and Muslims together to work for the common good will be challenging for you, as well as for the participants. The reason for the challenge is sadly clear: the prejudice against Muslims that has been growing since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. (The Council on American-Islamic Relations or CAIR tracks evidence of this growing prejudice. Check their website at www.cair.com.) Yet neither Christians nor Muslims have any basis for submitting to this prejudice, Muslims to suffer it or Christians to be party to it. Both their faiths explicitly call them to act vigorously against all forms of prejudice. Muslims and Christians cannot do otherwise if they are to fulfill the two commandments God has enjoined on them both, to love God and to love the neighbor.

Helping a group of Muslims and Christians fulfill this aim is the responsibility you have undertaken. In the course of the next eight sessions, not only the participants' but also your own thinking about the Christian or Muslim "other" will be challenged. The module will require that everyone make a strong commitment to the skills of dialogue and active listening. Those skills will be in demand in every session, but perhaps especially so in session six, which directly addresses the current climate of anti-Muslim sentiment, as that climate is shaped by media and political interests. None of us, whether Christian or Muslim, can claim to have been unaffected by such influence.

Despite the complexities of the issues at stake in bringing Muslims and Christians together, you need not be an expert to lead this group; rather, you are a facilitator-learner. You will be learning along with the group, and, in so doing, you will experience the process of deepening your awareness of the Christian or Muslim "other" together with the participants. As with other JustFaith programs, this module is not intended to be an exhaustive, factual analysis of an issue or, in this case, of Muslim-Christian similarities and differences. Rather, it is more of an immersion into the faith dynamic that will allow Muslims and Christians to work effectively and joyfully together for the common good.

This specific module is also an immersion into the two faiths from the "inside." As much as possible, the Christian and Muslim members should be encouraged to teach each other about their respective faiths. In that sense, the text used for reading and discussion, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*, is meant as a stimulus and resource, not as your prime focus. Reading and discussing the text of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

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is not meant to take the place of active adult-based learning, where Muslims can help Christians understand Islam far better than any book could help them, and where Christians help Muslims in the same way, with an understanding of Christianity. This module does not depend, in other words, on “outside experts.” The experts in question are members of the group! Encouraging them to engage in active teaching and learning is another way to describe your responsibility.

This guide contains everything you, as facilitator, will need to coordinate the module. Coordination between the book and the module material should be all the smoother since the same people, George Dardess and Marvin Mich, authored both. Dardess and Mich have done all in their power to facilitate a seamless transition between the reading and your facilitation.

In addition, each session includes a preparatory Note for the facilitator and a list of the items needed for that session. These Notes (some of which are quite lengthy) should be read well in advance of each session as they will help you prepare for that session. This document will provide information pertinent to the focus and flow of the entire session following each of the Notes to the facilitator.

There also is a separate Participant Packet from JustFaith Ministries. All participants should receive a copy of this Participant Packet at the time of recruitment and/or as part of the introductory material. A cover letter should be included in the Packet giving participants the reading assignment in the Dardess-Mich text. They are to complete this assignment before coming to Session One. We have provided a sample version of such a cover letter below (page 13).

Logistics

Session Preparations and Facilitation

Each session is approximately 2 ½ hours in length. In many ways, the content of Session One will set the tone for the module. Allow time for careful preparation. Arrive early enough to set up the room in which you are meeting so that you can greet each person as they arrive.

Times are approximate, but they have a role in keeping the process moving. Don't worry too much about being exact, but do prevent the process from getting stuck. It is the facilitator's role to try to draw out those who speak little and to ensure that no one dominates the conversation. Gentle reminders or invitations to participants can help ensure that everyone has a chance to contribute.

Some possible phrases for a facilitator to use to move the conversation are:

- For discussions where the discomfort or emotion of the discussion becomes overwhelming, you might say: “Let's stop to pray in silence to allow personal healing and the space needed to move on.”
- “We are looking here for a number of short “popcorn” style responses to these questions, not sermons.

- “I’m looking for phrases or one minute or less responses.”
- “We’ve come to the end of our allotted time. Let’s just pause and take a brief moment of silence.”
- “I would like the group’s permission to wrap up this discussion.”
- “This is an interesting discussion. Should we adjust the agenda to continue?”

To be a good facilitator does not require being an expert on the topic or years of working in groups. It does require you to think about what is best for the group and remind the group of its shared responsibility to each other.

Be sure to review the material, including the DVDs, before the module begins so you are familiar with them. Also, it is very helpful to go over each session ahead of time and have a clear plan for carrying it out. Preparation will make all the difference in how the process unfolds. At the same time, there is no perfect process – be flexible – not everything needs to be done perfectly down to the least detail. Have in mind the overall theme of each week and what the individual session hopes to accomplish in order to build towards the next one.

Also, throughout the course of the module, people may suggest activities (e.g., “We should read XX.” or “Let’s have a discussion about XY issue.”). Facilitators are encouraged to keep a running list of these suggestions and ideas and have them available for the final session when the group discusses possible next steps.

Session Nine is a gathering that is to be planned by the group for the purpose of evaluating and celebrating the action (see Session Eight) that they have taken together.

Immersion and Guest Speakers

The group will have an immersion experience at each other’s places of worship, both at a mosque and at a church. (Guidelines for these visits are laid out in detail below and in the Participant Packet.) **Note:** There should be at least two such experiences, depending on the members’ mosque affiliations and the number of church denominations represented in the group.

These visits, to at least one mosque and one church, should be planned ahead to give time for the group members to get to know each other and to learn enough about each other’s religion and practices to make the visits worthwhile. The visits will be followed up by a de-briefing during Session Five. Session Six is devoted to dealing with the painful topic of anti-Muslim propaganda. The seventh and eighth sessions are devoted to planning the group’s work for the common good once the sessions end.

The basic outline of the visits would include:

- Gathering and orientation prior to a Friday (Muslim) or Sunday (Christian) worship service.
- Observation of the service
- Gathering (with refreshments) and Q&A after the service concludes.

These visits would, of course, be arranged ahead of time with the permission and support of the worship community's congregation and leadership. The entire mosque/church community should be invited to the gathering afterwards and to the Q&A.

At this first session, members should see if they can agree on feasible dates for these visits prior to Session Five). Muslim and Christian volunteers should agree to contact their respective communities to arrange the visits. They should agree to report back at the second session.

Also, for Session Eight, the group will invite guest speakers from an organization (such as Catholic Charities, Catholic Campaign for Human Development, the Catholic Worker, or other) that is addressing the issue which the group has chosen. (These guest will be part of the "Listening and Hearing" described on pages 186 of the text and in Session Eight.)

Details of the Visits to Each Other's Places of Worship

Planning the Visits: Which Church? Which Mosque?

We urge you all to begin planning without delay for your visits to each other's places of worship. There should be at least two such visits, one to a local mosque and one to a local church. Of course, if this JustMatters session were a longer one, more such visits could be planned. Just as no two mosques are the same, so also are no two Christian churches the same. Mosques and churches are after all no more or less than gatherings of the faithful. A particular gathering's ethnic and cultural characteristics will influence the tone of the service, and while Christian worship practices differ far more greatly among themselves than Muslim ones do, there can still be slight differences even in Muslim practice, depending on cultural factors or on whether the group identifies itself as Sunni or Shi'a.

So to choose one particular gathering for their colleagues to visit will be a challenge for both Muslims and Christians, though the Christians will face the bigger dilemma. For example: Since there will almost certainly be time for their Muslim friends to visit only one Christian church, should that church be a liturgical church (Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopalian, Lutheran)? Or should it be a non-liturgical one, say, a mainline Baptist or Presbyterian church? Or an evangelical church or a Pentecostal church? And should the chosen church represent a particular spiritual, or even political orientation? Should it be a conservative church, or a progressive one, or middle-of-the-road?

Probably the best way out of this dilemma is to go with familiarity and convenience. On that basis, the Christian members can choose a church at least one of them attends. Planning can be focused on that church and its worship practices *while at the same time including information about how different Christian worship would look and feel in other settings*. Perhaps there may even be time to insert a visit to one of those other churches. But more likely a visit to one church will have to serve as a visit to all.

The Church Visit

Once the church is chosen, the Christians should not delay in making contact with the church's staff in order to make the necessary arrangements for date, time, hospitality, etc.

(The Christian member who attends the chosen church would be point person for all such arrangements.) Included among the preparations should be readying the church community for a visit by a small group of Muslims. Sadly, given the current upsurge of Islamophobia, one can't assume that this news will be greeted with universal enthusiasm. The Christian group members, in conjunction with the church's leaders, will need to anticipate possible objections and at least soften them. An announcement about the visit should be made on the Sunday prior to the visit and should be printed in the church bulletin. The key point would be to emphasize that the visit will be a learning opportunity for everyone.

The visit itself should include:

- *Gathering at the church:* welcome by the church staff; introductions; walk-through of the worship space; brief explanation of the service soon to be observed.
- *The service itself:* The Muslim guests should be comfortably seated in a part of the church where they can observe the service without obstruction; the pastor should welcome the entire JustFaith group at the beginning of the service and explain to the congregation the purpose of their visit; prayers for the success of the JustFaith group's efforts should be included among the petitions; at the conclusion of the service the pastor should thank the guests for their presence; the pastor should invite the guests to gather with the congregation for hospitality and Q&A.
- *Gathering afterwards:* hospitality (beverages, refreshments), to which the worshiping community is cordially invited; a brief presentation by a church staff person on the particular characteristics of the worship the members of the group have just observed, as contrasted with practices of other Christian communities; Q&A in which everyone is invited to participate.

Since the Q&A is open to everyone, the Muslims present are very likely to find themselves questioned about Islam. The Christian JustMatters participants may well find themselves being questioned as well, about the reason for their association with Muslims. The questions will probably be well-meaning, but again, because of the heightened climate of anti-Muslim suspicion, some questions may have an edge. JustMatters participants, whether Muslim or Christian, shouldn't be surprised or offended if such an edge emerges. Rather, you should see the attention, even if tainted by suspicion, as an opportunity to present yourselves as a community in solidarity with each other and with all humankind. In other words, your public demonstration of unity of purpose in such situations is exactly the message you are trying to establish through your JustMatters commitment. Your ability to handle such questioning calmly and knowledgeably and in concert with each other is a key strength the JustMatters curriculum is designed to develop.

The Mosque Visit

Everything said above about the Church visit applies to the Mosque visit, with these differences:

- Because Jum'a (Friday) gathering takes place during midday on Friday, arranging for the entire JustMatters group to be free at that time may take some creative rearranging of schedules. If a visit to the Friday prayer proves impossible, then members should seek out an evening prayer time convenient to all.
- Since Muslim prayer is conducted in Arabic, Muslim members should explain to their Christian colleagues once they gather at the mosque the meaning of the words they will soon be hearing, both in the Adhan (call to worship) and during Salat (public prayer) itself. A hand-out with the words in English and in Arabic transliteration would be useful. Try to schedule this visit after Session Two. That way, the Christian members will already be familiar with the Fatihah, the Muslim equivalent to the Lord's Prayer and a prayer frequently recited during Salat. Muslim members will also need to explain the purpose of the postures assumed during prayer. (This information will be reinforced in the ceremony beginning Session Six.)
- In the Q&A afterwards, Christians may experience some tension from their Muslim hosts. The reason for this (if it should occur) is the same as the one that might cause similar tension from some Christians during the church visit: the destructive effects of the current upsurge of Islamophobia. As a result of this upsurge, fear has been sown in both communities nationwide. The Christian members should not be surprised at or feel offended by this phenomenon, but, as mentioned above in the case of the church visit, take advantage of the opportunity to reinforce the message of solidarity that is at the heart of their JustMatters commitment. Learning to deal creatively and non-violently with prejudice is a key part of what the group's effort together is all about.

Debriefing the Visits

We have provided a block of time and some questions in Session Five for the group to debrief their visits to the mosque and church.

You may be tempted to move this block of time either to a later or earlier session, so as to be able to discuss your experiences as soon after the visits as possible. We urge you to be careful before taking that step. Keep in mind that we have tried hard to write the curriculum in a sequential way. Moving parts of it around will probably mean that other parts will be short-changed: either they'll suffer from lack of context or preparation or they'll be dropped altogether. It is better to consider that a delay in the debriefing might actually help you think about the experience more fully than you otherwise would have. You might even encourage participants to do some journaling following the visits and to use these reflections during the debriefing discussion.

Timing of the Visits within the JustMatters Curriculum

The two visits should be finished in the early weeks of the module so that the debriefing discussion of the visits can occur in Session Five. We have planned the curriculum accordingly. If the participants run up against unavoidable delays in executing the visits, they would probably do better to delay the next session than to try to rearrange the curriculum for sessions six through eight to accommodate a postponed visit.

Group Guidelines

As noted above, as facilitator, it is important that you give careful attention to creating an environment where each participant feels free to share his/her ideas and feelings and where each individual is committed to considering, carefully and genuinely, what each of the other participants has to say. With this in mind, please take time during Session One to set some ground rules or guidelines for discussion. A sample of Group Guidelines is provided in this document in Session One and also in the Participant Packet.

Planning and Purchasing Resources

In terms of planning, your two most immediate tasks are to (1) order resource materials and (2) set the date, time and location for the meetings. **Important to Note:** The module will almost certainly **not** be possible during the month of Ramadan, since Muslims, after sundown, would need to break the fast with a large meal in their own community. Christian facilitators will need to discuss this in advance with their Muslim counterpart.

It is important that facilitators get the date, time and location information and the entire Participant Packet with the reading assignments to all participants *a minimum of one week before Session One.*

While groups may purchase program materials from any source, JustFaith Ministries (JFM) has created the JFM Books & Videos online store to make ordering materials as easy as possible and to provide an opportunity for groups to secure all materials from one source with low prices and rapid delivery. There is link to the JustFaith Ministries Books and Videos online bookstore provided with the other module materials online. Most orders are filled the same day they are received and are sent via UPS.

Please Note: JFM Books and Videos makes every effort to turn an order around in 24-48 hours but has no control over the timing and release of books and videos that may be on backorder from the publishers. Please take time to plan ahead.

Participant Packets

As noted above, the module includes a separate Participant Packet with information on the module, all reading assignments or the link to reading assignments, and needed program content. This Participant Packet also contains some of the questions that will form the basis for some small and large group discussions.

The Participant Packet should be either e-mailed to each participant or copied for each participant and given to them previous to the first session. Sending the document via e-mail can save in copying and also provide online “links” that can be used directly from the document itself. If facilitators need to copy the Participant Packet for all or even just some of the participants, they might want to consider asking a JustFaith grad or a volunteer from the parish to assist them with this copying.

Promoting the Program and Group Size

Given that the program and its success is based on dialogue and on helping participants learn together and from one another, **we recommend that the group be limited in size**

to no more than 14 people – 7 Christians and 7 Muslims. It is important for the group to be well balanced in this way and not heavily weighted with one faith group.

We encourage facilitators to work with parish staff to identify dates, times and locations for this program. We also encourage you to use the usual parish channels to promote the module and recruit participants - i.e., the bulletin, newsletters, announcements at the end of church services, bulletin boards, etc.

Prayerful Experiences

The call to a quiet, reflective, prayerful space is an integral part of all JustFaith Ministries programs. Each session of this module begins and ends with an opening and closing ceremony or prayerful experience. Each of these opening and closing ceremonies is clearly laid out in this document.

Inviting participants into a welcoming space that fosters an attitude of reverence can do much to deepen the bonds of community and enhance dialogue. Invite all in the group to put aside other things and enter these ceremonies as a place where they become one community – unhurried, fully present and attentive.

Facilitators should set up the opening ceremony space before the group arrives so that they are ready to welcome participants as they arrive. The closing ceremony should be the last activity of each session. Avoid making additional announcements, continuing with business, or group discussion after this closing ceremony, which is intended to bring the session to a prayerful completion, especially in situations where discussion was heated or where activities or questions were not fully addressed. Facilitators should be attentive to the ending time and avoid overlooking or short-changing this time of prayerful togetherness.

Once the group starts meeting, facilitators might ask the pastor(s) of their church(es) or the imam of their mosque(s) to include a prayer for the group during weekend services for each of the eight weeks the group will meet.

Breaks

A break is incorporated into every session. Many groups encourage one or two members to bring snacks/refreshments for these breaks. If you decide to do this, it is helpful to create and bring to Session One a sign-up sheet with the meeting dates and a space for participants to sign up to bring refreshments. Facilitators will need to bring or make arrangements for refreshments for Session One.

Important to Note: Before purchasing refreshments for the session, it will be critical for Muslims to mention any foods and food preparations that are prohibited for them - for example, you would not want one of the Christians to bring, innocently, a refreshment containing alcohol, unlawful meat such as pork, or meat from animals not slaughtered according to Halal rules. A deeper consideration of Muslim dietary practices is a topic the group might even want to address at some time.

Participant Roster

It is requested that every participant and facilitator provide their contact information for the JustFaith Ministries office. This assists JustFaith Ministries with ongoing communications with participants and in tracking the breadth, scope and needs of the program. A Participant Roster is included in the module documents available online. Gather this information during the Session One break. Transcribe the information into the Excel file or Word file and return it via e-mail to info@justfaith.org. Or, you can copy the paper form and mail it *by the end of the second session to JustFaith Ministries, P.O. Box 221348, Louisville, KY 40252.*

Thank you for your help and follow through on this very important element of the program.

Evaluations

JustFaith Ministries provides both a *participant* and a *facilitator* evaluation, and each is very helpful to the ongoing development of modules in the JustMatters program. Please encourage all participants to complete the evaluation.

Both the facilitator and the participant evaluation forms are online documents. Doing the evaluations online saves paper and time and allows the JustFaith Ministries staff to analyze the responses more effectively. Also, the online evaluations are easy to complete and should not take more than fifteen minutes. These online evaluations can be accessed at: <http://justfaith.org/JustMatters/Evaluations/stfrancisandthesultan.html>. This “clickable” link to the participant evaluation is also in the Participant Packet at the end of the Table of Contents.

A separate evaluation reminder Word document is included with the module materials online. Before Session 8, please cut and paste the text from this Word document into an e-mail to all the participants. This e-mail from you will then have a direct link to the evaluation, which will simplify the participants’ connection to it as well as urge them to complete the evaluation.

It is important to share with participants that once you start the evaluation you will need to complete the whole thing at that time, so please wait until the last session to go to the online evaluation form. As a result, facilitators and participants are encouraged to take a few notes about the book, the DVDs, the activities and sessions during the course of the module and to use these notes when it comes time to complete the evaluation.

Facilitators are asked to complete both a participant and a facilitator evaluation. Please ask everyone to complete the online evaluations *within two weeks* of finishing the module. The timely return of the evaluations is greatly appreciated.

Next Steps

During the final session of the module, there will be an opportunity to talk about what to do with the information learned and shared during the course of the module and to discuss whether the group will continue to meet and, if so, with what focus. It is important that participants have this intentional conversation to discuss what they have learned during the module and what they plan to do with what they have learned.

Important things to keep me mind as you prepare for the final session include the following. First, each participant will most likely have interest in and passion for different types of ministry, offer varied gifts, and differ on time available. Second, the work of social ministry is often done best in groups. Third, the spiritual journey that may have started with the module will not stop here. Participants may or may not be ready to engage the world together. Encouraging such activity, though, is important.

Additional Resource

Kathleen Warren, OSF, has created a free online resource to accompany one of the DVDs used in this module. You and others might find parts of this resource useful, especially in developing a prayer and in understanding the story of Francis and the Sultan. The PDF is found here: <http://catalog.franciscanmedia.org/Guide/pdf/D36630ResourceMaterial.pdf> .

Ongoing Support

If you have questions or concerns at any point during the module, the JFM staff is happy to work with you, as needed, throughout the module process. Contact Mary Wright (mary@justfaith.org) at the JustFaith Ministries office.

**Thank you for your commitment
to this JustFaith Ministries JustMatters module,
the topic and the work of facilitation!**

Sample Cover Letter for Participants

It is very important that you send participants notice as soon as possible of their first reading assignment in the Dardess-Mich text for this module. The cover letter should be encouraging in tone and should also include reminders of some of the module's key features.

*Below is a sample of such a letter. Feel free to adapt it as suits you. Just make sure the basic information in it is conveyed in a friendly, clear way. **Note:** this sample letter is written from the perspective of a facilitating team of two, made up of a Muslim and a Christian.*

Dear Participant:

Welcome to the JustMatters module, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. We're grateful for your willingness to participate in this module. We look forward to getting to know you all better, and to walk with you as we all embark on this first-of-its-kind effort on the part of JustFaith ministries: to establish between members of two different religions a single faith community dedicated to working for the common good. Our journey together will be an exciting, ground-breaking one.

It will be a challenging one as well, for us as well as for you. The reason for the challenge is sadly clear: the prejudice against Muslims that has been growing since the tragic events of September 11, 2001. (The Council on American-Islamic Relations or CAIR tracks evidence of this growing prejudice. Check their website at www.cair.com.) Yet neither Christians nor Muslims have any basis for submitting to this prejudice, Muslims to suffer it or Christians to be party to it. Both our faiths explicitly call us to act vigorously against all forms of prejudice. Muslims and Christians cannot do otherwise if we are to fulfill the two commandments God has enjoined on us, both to love God and to love the neighbor.

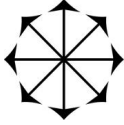
During the course of our eight sessions together we will be:

- exploring the commonalties and differences between each other's faiths;
- celebrating our common symbols;
- testing the possibility of praying together as one community;
- visiting each other's places of worship;
- reviewing each other's warrants in scripture and tradition for social justice solidarity;
- planning together a concrete commitment to public work for the common good.

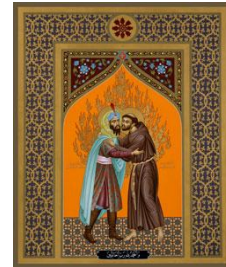
You do have a homework assignment to complete before our first meeting (Session One). The assignment is to read Chapter 1 of *In the Spirit of St Francis and the Sultan* by George Dardess and Marvin Mich. Please make note of any questions you have as you read his text. Please also record your thoughts in response to the discussion questions you'll find at the chapter's end. Your thoughtful preparation beforehand will guarantee that our discussion of the themes raised in Chapter 1 will be worthwhile for you and for everyone else.

We look forward to journeying with you,

[signed by facilitator(s)]



Session One



Getting Started. Finding Common Symbols

Participants will have read:

- “Group Guidelines” from the Participant Packet
- Chapter 1 of the book, *In the Spirit of St Francis and the Sultan*, by George Dardess and Marvin Mich
- Facilitator’s Letter to Participants

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches.
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur’an
- Some small stones, some sand and a large cardboard or a couple of long, dark cloths (i.e. a couple of old curtains) to be used to suggest a pathway through a desert
- DVD player, TV, and the DVD, *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan*
- One copy of Participant Roster (copy is with the online link to documents)
- Refreshments for the break

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	10 minutes
Introductions	40 minutes
Group Dialogue Guidelines	10 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	30 minutes
Discussion of Reading	40 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	155 minutes

Note to Facilitators

The first session of all JustMatters modules focuses on putting the participants at ease. This almost always is an enjoyable process, and this present module may require extraordinary efforts of hospitality on your part. This is so not because the Muslim and Christian participants will be any less friendly or committed to the modules' goals than other JustMatters module participants. The need for extra-sensitive facilitation derives from the fact that the participants belong to different religions and probably also to different cultures of origin. Anticipating the kinds of awkwardnesses that may arise in such a situation will be a challenge both for you and for the participants themselves. The authors have tried to help you meet this challenge by giving you explicit guidelines for group introductions.

They also help you guide the participants, not only in this first session but also in subsequent ones, through another sticky question: the question of whether they can pray together as one community. The authors believe that the question has to be answered by the participants themselves. So as not to force them into a premature decision, the authors have provided, for each session, both an opening and closing "ceremony" centering on a symbol shared by both faiths. The ceremony format does not involve prayer as such. It instead focuses the participants on concrete signs both of their similarities and differences. By recognizing and honoring these signs, the group can learn to be encouraged by what they understand in common and to relax around those beliefs about which they differ. Yes, praying together may flow from the ceremony experience. Or it may not. The thoughtfulness and mutual respect with which the participants address the issue of prayer is what's most important. Nurturing an atmosphere supportive of such thoughtfulness and respect will be one of your key responsibilities.

The participants themselves will help you. The goal they share — the goal of embarking on what we will refer to later in these sessions as a common praxis or jihad — demands their cooperativeness. That goal has taken on new urgency given the growing atmosphere of anti-Muslim sentiment. Ultimately, though, the goal has been fixed, not by people or politics, but by God. This is the goal of fulfilling the prophetic commandment enjoined on Muslims and Christians alike: to love God above all things and to love the neighbor as oneself.

For Session One, you will need to supply the items needed for the opening and closing ceremonies. (This responsibility can be shared for the ceremonies in subsequent sessions.) If you can identify, prior to Session One, volunteer readers for the roles of Muslim and Christian readers in the two ceremonies, arrange to meet with this pair a few minutes before the session to familiarize them with their parts.

NOTE: It is important that you have set up and checked out the DVD segment *prior to* the start of this Session. Timing is tight for this part of the Session.

Session One Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

Begin the session with a brief welcome, saying something like this:

“Welcome to the *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* study and discussion group! You’re all aware that we’re breaking new ground here— always an exciting action— and at what might seem an unpropitious time: when anti-Muslim feelings in the U.S. are increasing. Yet, Christians and Muslims have the responsibility to face the risk and danger, and face it together, if they’re to (1) fulfill the commandments God has given them to love both God and neighbor and (2) do their part not just to dispel our country’s growing Islamophobia but also to provide positive leadership in building a better and more just world for everyone.”

Opening Ceremony (10 minutes)

Note: *ALL opening and closing ceremonies are also in the Participant Packet.*

Note that while all other JustFaith Ministries JustMatters modules begin with an “Opening Prayer,” ours begins instead with an “Opening Ceremony.” We have made this change in order to allow the group itself to determine whether and how they might pray together. Why is this an issue? This is an issue because in other JustMatters modules, a common Christian faith is assumed among the participants. The very point of the present gathering is that the participants are members of two different faiths. Yet, not only do creed and worship divide Christians and Muslims; history divides them too, a history of blessing and violence mixed. The present also is problematic, as the US is (as of this writing) involved in military operations in three Muslim-dominant lands and continues in a hostile relation with a fourth.

We are not saying or implying, however, that common prayer between Muslims and Christians is impossible. In fact, we hope it will become possible for the members of this group. But common prayer should not be entered into precipitously or unadvisedly. We will devote Session Two to an examination of the issues involved in the group’s coming to a decision about whether to embrace common prayer or not. Meanwhile, and throughout the eight sessions of this module, we provide scenarios for what we call “ceremonies”: scripts that bring Muslims and Christians together in relation to symbols shared by both religions — without assuming or pretending that they understand these shared symbols in the same way. (Participants will be aware that Chapter One of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* clarifies how Muslim and Christian understandings of common symbols actually differ.) Some groups may want to stay with these ceremonies throughout the entire module and avoid the clearly sensitive issue of common prayer. Others may find themselves able, after conscientious reflection and discussion following Session Two, to begin to include a common prayer in the rest of the sessions. Accordingly, we will provide such groups a sample “Common Prayer” to use after each session beginning with Session Three. (Session Three would be the earliest occasion on which common prayer would be recommended.)

A key aspect of your role as facilitator throughout all eight sessions is to be as sensitive as possible to the direction the members of your group want to take with respect to whether to embrace common prayer or not. We will say more about this aspect of your role in the Facilitator's Guide to Sessions Two and Three.

Opening Ceremony

You will need: a table spread with a white cloth; two handsome hardback copies of both the Arabic Qur'an and the Bible standing upright in metal book-holders arranged on either side of a pillar candle; matches; either some small stones, some sand scattered on a large cardboard (for easy clean-up) or a couple of long, dark cloths (i.e. a couple of old curtains). The point is to suggest a pathway through a desert.

The table is placed along a wall, the candle and the scriptures arranged on either side. The candle is lit. The symbolic path is laid in front of the table and as if leading toward it. The entire group, including the facilitator, stand at the opposite side of the room, facing the table, the symbolic pathway directly in front of them. The group's Muslims stand on one side of the facilitator, Christians on the other. The facilitator asks for two volunteers, one from among the Muslims and one from among the Christians, to be readers.

The facilitator goes forward to light the candle, returns, then, facing the table, says:

We come together, Muslims and Christians, both in eagerness and in constraint: eager to know how we might fulfill God's command that we love Him and love our neighbor but constrained by our differences.

Muslim reader:

We are divided by theology.

Christian reader:

We are divided by history.

Muslim reader:

Yet God calls us together, so that we might all grow more deeply in holiness. Listen to the Qur'an: "We have made you different, we have made you male and female, we have made you different tribes and nations, so that you might come to intimate knowledge of each other; the most generous of you in God's eyes are those most God-conscious; for God is all knowing, most wise." (Sura al-Hujuraat 49:13)

Christian reader:

Yes: God calls us together, so that we can become one in Him. Listen to the New Testament: "But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile

both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it.” (Ephesians 2:13-16 NRSV)

Muslim reader:

We experience attraction to each other, but we experience reserve as well.

Christian reader:

We yearn to be one, yet our differences are real.

Muslim reader:

Will we become baffled or frustrated by what seem contradictions between attraction and reserve, similarity and difference?

Christian reader:

Perpetually pulled forward yet perpetually pushed back?

Facilitator:

Or can we trust in the image of the PATH to help us move through the seeming contradiction of similarity and difference towards the light?

Muslim reader:

We Muslims ask God to “lead us along the straight path.”

Christian reader:

We Christians cherish the words of the twenty-third psalm which say: “He leads me in right paths for his name’s sake.”

Facilitator:

Let us walk forward together along the path to the light in confidence that God walks with us and will help us accomplish our goal of loving Him and our neighbor. We ask for no greater unity than that.

All Muslims:

Amin.

All Christians:

Amen.

The facilitator leads the way towards the lighted candle on the table across the symbolic pathway. The Muslims and Christians fall in step behind him/her, alternating Muslim and Christian. The facilitator stops in front of the candle while the group behind him/her form a semicircle from right to left, alternating Muslim-Christian, all facing the lighted candle.

Facilitator: (after pause)

We stand before another powerful symbol of both our faiths, a light, and before the holy scriptures given us by God for our guidance. Let us silently ask God’s help that our work together during the coming weeks will enable us to do God’s will more

faithfully. And let us also pray that God will give us guidance in knowing whether and how we might someday pray to Him together, in one voice.

All:

Amin/Amen.

The facilitator puts out the candle. Participants return to their seats.

Introductions (40 minutes)

As in all JustMatters modules, participants in this module, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*, are urged to take time to get to know each other. This module's difference from most others, however, is that *the entire* module can be seen as a getting to know you and as an introduction. In most JustMatters modules, that is, the introductions lead almost immediately to the introduction of the common topic, be it immigration or prison reform or some other issue of importance. In this case, however, the module's focus is group formation itself, and specifically the process of formation of a social justice community comprised of adherents of two different faiths.

This difference alone would be challenging enough. But in addition the facilitator needs to keep in mind that the Muslims who are present have special reasons for approaching these introductions cautiously. If they are immigrants, they may feel shy or modest about their command of English as well as self-conscious about cultural differences from their Christian counterparts (in dress, for example, or in gender relations or in manners). They may be uncomfortable with American-style informality. The chief reason for their caution is likely to be their awareness of the increasing suspicion with which they and their religion are viewed by the general public. The very purpose of this module is to help dispel this suspicion! This purpose represents a goal to be achieved, not a reality to be relied on. The Muslims in the group must be given every opportunity to express their anxieties, here and throughout the module, without in the least being pushed to do so, or even seeming to be pushed to do so. In this situation, the facilitator must exhibit unusual sensitivity.

Despite these caveats, these first introductions can begin simply. The facilitator is to ask the following three questions of each member of the group, encouraging him or her to answer only as much as he or she feels comfortable in answering. **Note:** The size of the group will determine how much time each participant will get to introduce him or herself – e.g. if there are twelve people in the group, each person will have only about three minutes to speak.

Invite participants to answer the following questions. Read all the questions through twice. Tell the group how much time each person will get to respond to the questions, and then go first in order to model the idea of sharing a *brief* response.

1. What would you like to say about yourself personally (family, background, employment, etc.)?
2. Why did you choose to participate in this module?
3. What key difficulty or difficulties do you anticipate in forming community with those of a different religion? What benefits?

Group Dialogue Guidelines (10 minutes)

Note: The following “Group Guidelines” are also in the Participant Packet.

Quickly review guidelines with everyone and then ask the participants if they can all agree to use these guidelines for discussion and dialogue throughout the program. If not, take a few minutes to modify them to fit the group’s goals.

Group Guidelines

- God has created each of us uniquely, and I recognize that everyone comes to this experience with very different backgrounds, experiences and views. I commit to **honoring differences**, knowing they add to the richness of the group’s experience.
- God frequently speaks through the unfamiliar and different. I will **listen intently** in order to fully understand different points of view.
- Listening is an act of love and care. I will **practice sacred listening** and listen with respect (i.e., no side conversations, no interruptions).
- How I treat another person is much more important than my opinions and perspectives. I recognize that we are looking for truthful insights within potentially different views. I will **respectfully seek clarification** of other perspectives to add to my understanding. If I choose to disagree with a perspective that is different from mine, I will do this respectfully and lovingly.
- Because God made us, all persons are of equal importance and value, and all voices are important. I commit to assuring that **everyone has an opportunity to speak**, and I will encourage others to speak before I speak again.
- God has given each of us gifts that are given in the hope and expectation that these gifts will be shared. I will **participate fully**, share in the responsibility for the group’s process and experience, and commit to faithful attendance and doing the assignments and readings.
- Trust and respect must be offered as the terms of being together in this journey of faith. I will honor that everything that is shared within this group is to stay within this group.

Break (15 minutes)

The facilitator is encouraged to have a few refreshments and a beverage or two available. The facilitator might also want to have a sign up sheet for others to bring refreshments for the next seven sessions.

Important to Note: (This information was also noted in the General Overview and Logistics segments above.) These sessions will almost certainly **not** be possible during the month of Ramadan, since Muslims, after sundown, would need to break the fast with a large meal in their own community. Important here in Session One would be for Muslims to mention that certain foods and food preparations are prohibited them. A deeper consideration of Muslim dietary practices is a topic the group might want to address at a later time. Discussion of those practices at this point should be informative

only, so as to avoid future misunderstandings, which could occur, for example, if one of the Christians innocently brought in a refreshment containing alcohol, unlawful meat such as pork, or meat from animals not slaughtered according to Halal rules.

Have the Participant Roster form (see initial e-mail and copy from online link) and a pen available and ask each participant to complete their information at this time. (Facilitators are asked to send the completed form to the JustFaith Ministries office in one week.)

Business and Announcements (30 minutes)

The Business and Announcements component of this first session is likely to be lengthy and involved. Facilitators need to be sure to keep track of time for this segment.

1. Give the reading assignment for the second session, Chapter Two of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people make brief notes on their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter (in order to speed group discussion of these questions during the next session).
2. Ask for volunteers from the Muslim participants to do the following: (a) Find or write out a version of the Arabic words of the Fatihah transliterated into Roman letters side by side with their English equivalents. Ask this member to bring sufficient copies of the transliteration next time for use in session two. (b) One or more of the Muslims to bring for the next session a tape/DVD player and a recording of a favorite Qari (Qur'an reciter) chanting the Fatihah. (c) Facilitate this part of the discussion during the next session. *Be sure to provide these volunteers in advance of Session 2 the materials for Sessions 2, especially the segment on page 29 where they will lead the discussion.*
3. Begin planning for future immersion experiences at each other's places of worship, a mosque and a church. (Participants should be referred to their Participants' packet, where guidelines for these visits are laid out in detail.) There should accordingly be at least two such experiences, depending on the members' mosque affiliations and church denominations.

These visits, to at least one mosque and one church, should be planned ahead to give time for the group members to get to know each other and to learn enough about each other's religion and practices to make the visits worthwhile. The visits will be followed up by debriefings at the sessions directly following the visits. The available "windows" for these debriefings occur during the fourth session and the fifth. Session Six is devoted to dealing with the painful topic of anti-Muslim propaganda. The seventh and eighth sessions are devoted to planning the group's work for the common good once the sessions end.

The basic outline of the visits would include:

- Gathering and orientation prior to a Friday (Muslim) or Sunday (Christian) worship service.
- Observation of the service
- Gathering (with refreshments) and Q&A after the service concludes.

These visits would, of course, be arranged ahead of time with the permission and support of the worship community's congregation and leadership. The entire mosque/church community should be invited to the gathering afterwards and to the Q&A.

At this first session, members should see if they can agree on feasible dates for these visits prior to Session Five. Muslim and Christian volunteers should agree to contact their respective communities to arrange the visits. They should agree to report back at the second session.

4. Explain that the module will include selected DVDs giving further insight into each other's faith.

5. Tell everyone that there will be an online evaluation at the end of the module. Ask everyone to jot some notes at the end of each session so that they will have something to refer to when it comes time to complete the evaluation.

DVD and Discussion of Reading Assignment (40 minutes)

Note to facilitators: During the following several Sessions, the group will view films on each faith tradition. The first two, in Sessions Two and Three, will focus on Christianity; the next two, shown in Sessions Four and Five, will focus on Islam. Today the group will watch a film that brings together the mission and history of both faiths, just as our text does, around the figures of St Francis and the Sultan. Time will be tight for this segment.

Share the following with the group prior to starting the DVD: The film we are about to watch, "In the Footprints of St. Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking", was developed in close conjunction with the authors of our text and of this program. The intention is for the visuals to help the meeting between Francis and the Sultan come alive and to bring the mission and history of both Islam and Christianity together, just as our text does, around the figures of St Francis and the Sultan. As you view the film, make note of any similarities between the two faiths that you hear or see.

View Part I of the DVD, "In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan: A Model for Peacemaking" (22 min)

Following the film, take just a few minutes and ask participants to *briefly* share any *similarities* that they noticed between Christianity and Islam.

Then turn to page 44 at the end of Chapter One of the text, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Invite participants to respond to question 3 first and then question number 5. Or, if the group prefers, simply ask participants what information and insight they wish to contribute based on their reading of Chapter One.

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

All closing ceremonies are also in the Participant Packet.

Once again the facilitator and the Muslim and Christian participants gather, this time in front of the table. The facilitator relights the candle, the participants, arranged as before

in a semicircle around him, alternating Muslim and Christian. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers (the same ones as before) have their scripts.

Facilitator:

Where did we start from this evening?

Muslim reader:

We started from our own separate understanding of God.

Christian reader:

We started from our own separate understanding of our common history.

Facilitator:

And where did our path this evening take us?

Muslim reader:

It took us to a place where we could share some food and hopes and dreams.

Christian reader:

Where we could begin to know each other as creations of the One God?

Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us leave together along the same path we came in on, confident that God is guiding us step by step towards the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourself.

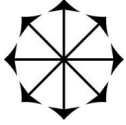
Muslims:

Amin.

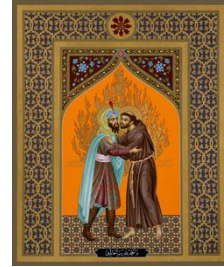
Christians:

Amen.

The participants file out along the symbolic path in the order along which they entered during the Opening Ceremony. The facilitator is last in line.



Session Two



Common Prayers as a Point of Entry

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Two of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur'an
- A few copies of Attachment A
- Refreshments for the break
- DVD player, TV, and the DVD, *Communities of Salt and Light*

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	5 minutes
Discussion of Reading	40 minutes
The Fatihah	25 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	5 minutes
DVD and Discussion	55 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	155 minutes

Note to Facilitators

This second session may seem to some members, both Christian and Muslim, an unnecessary step, though for opposite reasons. Some may say that, of course, Muslims and Christians can pray together since both worship the One God. Others may say that, of course, they can't, because while they do worship the One God, they worship Him in

ways that are mutually exclusive (because of their differences of belief about the identity of Jesus, for example).

Yet the fact that they come to this session having read Chapter Two of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* may have given such members pause for thought. And it may have given the remaining members confirmation of the need for caution in joining forces with practitioners of a religion that they probably know little or nothing about. Fears and misconceptions generated by media portrayals of Islam will have affected the entire group, though in different ways. Beyond or underneath discussion about common prayer is the question about whether the members can become comfortable enough with each other's real differences not just to accept those differences but even to learn from them. The word "common" in "common prayer" doesn't mean "identical." The word "common" relates to the word "community." "Common prayer" would then mean prayer offered by those who, even because of their differences, find strength in each other to carry out the necessary work of loving God and neighbor.

The hardest job for you, not only in this session but also throughout the remaining ones is to help the members maintain what is called in Chapter Two "creative tension" in approaching the question of whether to pray in common or not. There is simply no right or wrong answer to the question. You will need to help people accept the possibility that *not* having a black-and-white answer may in this instance be a good thing. Ambiguity is preferable to false clarity — to an aggressive insistence on prematurely resolving a complex question simply in order to free oneself from the burden of complexity.

Do your best to encourage the fullest possible discussion of the question of whether to pray in common or not. And don't be surprised if the question keeps coming up session after session, or indeed if it comes up again at a later session, after having apparently been resolved at an earlier one. Allow the participants to wrestle with the question throughout the entire module, if need be. Help them see that no time is lost by their doing so. The very process of engaging as a community in the effort to understand and affirm their common relation to God and God's creation is actually what the module is all about!

AGAIN: It is important that prior to the start of the Session facilitators set up and test the DVD player and TV and cue the DVD to the starting point.

Session Two Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: "In last week's session we talked in general about the responsibility Muslims and Christians share not only to resist the bigotry that constantly attempts to drive a wedge between them but more positively to work together for the common good. We used the symbol of the Path to highlight our desire to walk together. During this week's session we'll consider a key question confronting Muslim

and Christians attempting to work together: Can they pray together, as one community, to the God they both recognize as the One God?"

Opening Ceremony (5 minutes)

You may need to explain once again the reason for opening with a Ceremony rather than with a Prayer. Remind the group that by opening with a Ceremony you are not saying that common prayer between Muslims and Christians is impossible. Quite the contrary! You hope common prayer will become possible — perhaps as early as the next session (Session Three); but, it might not be, not in Session Three, nor in any of the following sessions. There is no blame about that. Each group will respond differently to the challenge: some embracing it comparatively easily, others needing more time for reflection. There is no “right” answer to this difficult question.

Opening Ceremony

You will need: a table, spread with a white cloth; two handsome hardback copies of both the Arabic Qur’an and the Bible standing upright in metal book-holders arranged on either side of a pillar candle; matches.

Ask someone to light the candle. Then ask everyone to sit quietly for a moment in chairs facing the table. Parts for the two readers should be assigned beforehand.

After the pause, the facilitator begins:

We come together for our second session under the symbol of the Book.

Muslim reader:

According to our Qur’an, Christians and Muslims, along with their Jewish brothers and sisters, are equally “People of the Book.”

Christian reader:

We have all received one Book, or Message: to love God and neighbor.

Muslim reader:

Common symbol.

Christian reader:

Common understanding.

Muslim reader:

Yet while the particular Books through which that Message has been conveyed to us, the Qur’an and the Bible, look the same physically, they are very different.

Christian reader:

For us Christians, the main vehicle of God’s Word is Christ Himself. We believe that that Word becomes present to us through the Holy Spirit as we read our Bible reverently.

Muslim reader:

For us Muslims, the main vehicle of God’s Word is the Holy Book, the Qur’an itself, because through it God chose to send down that Word through the angel Gabriel to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing on him).

Christian reader:

We believe our Bible to be have been inspired by God in the hearts of those who composed and wrote down its words.

Muslim reader:

We believe that the Qur’an contains God’s very words, in the Arabic language, and for that reason cannot be translated.

Christian reader:

Our Bible, originally written in Hebrew and Greek, has been translated into all the languages of earth, without lessening its power as a vehicle of the Holy Spirit.

Muslim reader:

Two books, the Qur’an and the Bible— similar objects physically, but very differently regarded and revered through the eyes of our two different faiths.

Christian reader:

Yet both Books convey the same message, that we are to love God and neighbor.

Muslim reader:

And both urge us, in different ways, to act on that message.

Facilitator:

Let us open our Books and place them before us, Muslims and Christians confident that holy guidance flows from them both, to enable us to know God’s will for us, in this session and in the ones to come.

The Muslim and Christian readers approach the table, open their respective Books reverently, and place them carefully back in the book holder so that the pages remain open throughout the session.

They return to their seats. After a pause for reflection, one of them gets up, puts out the candle, and the session begins.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (40 minutes)

Ask the members of the group to turn to the Discussion Questions immediately following Chapter Two of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* (page 64). If possible, divide the whole group into five smaller groups, taking care that each of the five groups is balanced between Muslims and Christians. Give each group one of the questions to discuss. If the whole group consists of fewer than ten members, you will need to assign fewer than five groups, giving more than one question to one or two of the groups. The

point is to provide an opportunity for people to gather in small, mixed groups of Muslims and Christians to work together on responses to the discussion questions. (We will divide the group similarly in subsequent sessions in order to elicit responses to the Discussion Questions at the end of each of the assigned chapters.)

Small groups: 10 minutes

As noted, assign one or at most two questions to each of the groups. Allow up to ten minutes for the small groups to decide together on their answers. Urge them to keep their answers brief, so that when they report back to the large group, all groups will have an equal chance to give input.

Large group: 30 minutes

Once each small group has reported, ask the whole group, to respond to what they've read and to what they have heard each other report. Ask then what additional information and insights they have based on their reading of Chapter One?

The Fatihah in Arabic (25 minutes)

The following is also in the Participant Packet, share highlights to start this segment.

Regardless of the language they speak at home, all Muslims pray the Fatihah, the first Sura (similar to chapter) of the Qur'an, in Arabic. That is because the Qur'an itself was, according to Muslim belief, delivered in the Arabic language to the Prophet Muhammad by the angel Gabriel beginning in 610 CE. Accordingly, the Arabic Qur'an contains the unadulterated presence of God in human speech. All Muslim worship must be conducted in the same Arabic language in order to assure fidelity to the initial revelation.

A corollary of Muslim belief in the divine origin of the Qur'an's Arabic is the certainty that the Qur'an cannot be translated into other languages (where translation might imply an equivalence between the Arabic text and one in another language). Muslims refer to renderings of the Qur'an in other languages as "versions" or "interpretations," to emphasize their secondary and derivative status.

As the first Sura of the Qur'an, the Fatihah (which means "opening" in Arabic) enjoys a special pride of place. In addition, its form is unusual among the Suras (which number 114 in all). Whereas all the other Suras contain God's voice, and God's voice alone, the Fatihah is cast as a prayer for the community to say. In length, form, and content it closely resembles the Christian Lord's Prayer. It resembles the Lord's Prayer in intention as well. Both prayers, the Fatihah and the Lord's Prayer, are God's merciful gifts to His human creation, gifts that enable them to pray to God as God desires them to pray. (Participants should refer to pp. 60-63 of Chapter Two to refresh their memories of the similarities and differences between the two prayers.)

For Muslims, the Arabic Qur'an is an utterance unparalleled in power and beauty. Accordingly, Christian members will gain some feeling for the power of the Fatihah in its true and original Arabic form. Otherwise, they cannot fully know why the Qur'an is so cherished by their Muslim colleagues. This is not as high a hurdle as it may sound. In fact, the Christian members' need provides a golden opportunity for Muslim members of

the group to help them. In other sessions, it will be the Christian members who will be doing the teaching. Such mutual sharing in the joys and responsibilities of teaching and listening is what we mean by adult-centered learning.

Using the above as background, **ask the Muslims who volunteered and prepared for this session** to lead the group through the following process:

- First, Muslims help Christians correlate the English version of the Fatihah found on p. 60 of the text, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*, with the transliterated version of the Fatihah prepared prior to Session Two and copied in sufficient quantities by the Muslim volunteer.
- Muslim members pronounce the Arabic words and explain their meanings.
- Ask the Christian members to silently read the English version, while at the same time keeping their eye on the Arabic transliteration, as one of the Muslim members chants the whole prayer, slowly and clearly.
- Afterwards, the Muslims should encourage the Christian members to pronounce the Arabic themselves, using the transliterated English version as a guide.
- Close with a playing of a famous Qari (reciter) whose rendition of the Fatihah the Muslims brought to this session. (Hopefully, Christian members will be encouraged to surmount any feelings (especially of fear) they may have imbibed about the “strange” or even “dangerous” sound of Qur’anic chanting and begin to hear how beautiful Qur’anic Arabic can be.)

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (5 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for the third session, Chapter Three of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people make brief notes on their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter (in order to speed group discussion of these questions during the next session).

2. Ask for a couple of Christians to volunteer to do the following during Session 3: (a) Help their Muslim colleagues become familiar with the contents of the Bible, and particularly with the New Testament. Assure the Christian participants that they aren’t expected to become Bible experts overnight or to give long discourses on the Letters of Paul. Tell them to review the Participants’ Packet for suggestions about how to prepare for this session on the Bible. This preparation will require that all of you communicate with each other by phone or e-mail prior to Session Three to divvy up responsibilities for the brief (10 minute) presentation. (b) Facilitate the discussion of the Bible during Session 3. Be sure to provide these volunteers the Session 3 material, especially the material for the segment on the Bible on page 38 of this packet.

3. Let the Muslim participants know that they will be teaching their Christian counterparts basic facts about the contents of the Qur’an during Session Four. Suggestions for how they are to prepare for their session as Qur’an instructors are contained in the Participants’ Packet.

4. Discuss plans for visiting each other's places of worship. Remind participants of the expectation that they will be debriefing each other about these visits during the fifth session.

5. Provide copies of Attachment A, a suggested "Common Prayer" (for those who did not bring their packets since the Common Prayer is also in the Participant Packet). Tell everyone that this "Common Prayer" is to be considered for possible use at the end of the next session, Session Three, and all other sessions. Ask each participant to read the prayer a few times during the week and consider whether they could in good conscience pray this prayer or one like it at the end of the next session. Assure everyone that they will have time to discuss the possible use of this prayer or a common prayer like this at the beginning of the next session.

6. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

DVD and Discussion (55 minutes)

Large Group Discussion (10 min)

In the First Half of this session we discussed Muslim and Christian approaches to prayer. In this Second Half, we will begin a conversation about the role of service and love of neighbor in each faith tradition.

Participants are invited to briefly share how each faith community expresses its commitment to "love of neighbor" and to be of service to others. Ask participants to *briefly* describe some of the outreach ministries to the poor and vulnerable from their parish or congregation. (Facilitators might want to record these ministries on flipchart paper.)

DVD, "Communities of Salt and Light: The Social Mission of the Parish (20 minutes) Prior to starting the DVD, remind participants that during Sessions Four and Five they will view films on Islam.

Large Group Discussion (25 minutes)

Using the following questions, ask the Christian participants to share a few of their insights regarding the messages of the DVD. Also take some of this time for any questions the Muslim participants might have about the film. **Note:** What is most important is discussion; do not feel obliged to use the following questions.

To stimulate discussion, you might ask the Christian participants one or two of the following questions:

1. How do you see the link between worship and love of neighbor? What is the connection between the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist and the works of charity and justice?
2. Share some thoughts and insights about the importance of Luke 4:18 (where Jesus announces good news to the poor, liberty to captives, and sight to the blind) in all aspects of ministry.

3. Give examples of the works of charity and justice as related to the ministries of advocacy and community organizing.
4. Why does the film and the bishops' document *Communities of Salt and Light* stress the importance of living the Gospel and the values of Catholic social teaching in the family, in our workplaces, and as citizens?
5. What does Father Burkhart's statement, "our parish is the world," mean to you?

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Once again the facilitator and the Muslim and Christian participants gather in front of the table. They take their seats as the facilitator relights the candle. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers (the same ones as before) have their scripts. After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:

Facilitator:

Where did the Books, the Qur'an and the Bible, guide us this evening?

Muslim reader:

They guided us to the prayers God gave us as models, to the Lord's Prayer and to the Fatihah.

Christian reader:

And to the question whether we could ever pray those prayers or any prayer together, as a community of faith.

Facilitator:

And did the Books resolve that question for you?

Muslim reader:

They did not resolve the question, but they opened up for us both the joy of addressing the question together, fully and reverently.

Christian reader:

And in ways that do not blur the real differences between us while at the same strengthening our common goal of loving God and neighbor in concrete acts of solidarity.

Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us close our Books for now, confident that God is guiding us step by step towards the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourself.

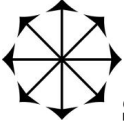
Muslims:

Amin.

Christians:

Amen.

After a pause, the Muslim and Christian readers rise, go up to the table, close their respective books, and replace them on their stands. One of them blows out the candle.



Session Two — Attachment A

A Common Prayer

The note to Participants:

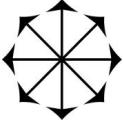
Here is a sample prayer that might be used after the Closing Ceremony of Session Three and all subsequent Sessions. As you read over the prayer in preparation for Session Three, make any changes you think are necessary. There will be time at the beginning of Session Three for the whole group to discuss the possible use of this prayer or of an adaptation to be agreed upon mutually. Alternatively, the group may decide not to use this or any common prayer at all. In that case, Session Three would conclude with the Closing Ceremony.

(Note: There is a common prayer on page 12 of Kathleen Warren's free online resource: <http://catalog.franciscanmedia.org/Guide/pdf/D36630ResourceMaterial.pdf> . If the group is stuck, you might want to offer this prayer.)

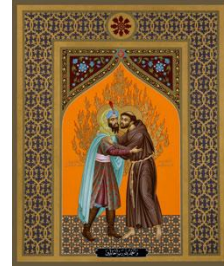
God,
through whom we move and live and have our being,
We, members of Your Muslim and Christian families,
Ask you that you guide our steps
As we strive to become one community
Dedicated to loving You and our neighbor
In solidarity with each other,
Yet always aware of our differences.
Help us remain in faithful and creative tension,
Respecting those differences,
Yet eager to see in them not barriers
But invitations to help bring about a fuller Salaam
For ourselves and for the rest of Your creation:
A Salaam beyond our grasp and understanding at present
But one day to be revealed to us
Through Your mercy and love for us all.

We ask this in Your holy Name:
Allah, as given to us Muslims,
Jesus Christ, as given to us Christians.

Amen, Amin



Session Three



Fundamentals of Christian Social Justice

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Three of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*
- The suggested “Common Prayer” for possible use at the end of this session

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur’an
- Two smaller candles in holders
- A sample of different translations of the Bible, including at least one Catholic and one Protestant Bible
- Refreshments for the break
- DVD player, TV and DVD, *In the Footsteps of Jesus*

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	5 minutes
Discussion of Common Prayer	5-10 minutes
Discussion of Reading	30 minutes
The Bible	20 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	5 minutes
DVD and Discussion	55 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	150 minutes

Note to Facilitators

This third session has two major goals: to allow the discussion to continue about whether prayer in common is possible and to acquaint the Muslim participants with key aspects of the Christian social-justice tradition/Catholic social teaching (as well as to remind Christian members of that tradition). Be sure to cue the DVD as you prepare this session.

Video/DVD presentations play key roles in all JustFaith Ministries curricula and, indeed, in most if not all teaching scenarios that are not explicitly limited to literary subjects. Video presentations provide an important pedagogic alternative to print-based methods, especially for those whose style of learning is visual. But beyond that, video presentations can give necessary support and enhancement to verbal statements.

There is an urgent reason for examining the *ways* in which video presentations make their point. That reason has to do with the fact that images of Muslims and of Islam have been manipulated by various interests, especially after the events of September 11, to enhance or create a fearful, negative condemnation of both Muslims and of Islam in the general public's imagination. The websites we'll be visiting in Session Six, those associated with two Islamophobic videos, "Obsession" and "The Third Jihad" — are extreme examples of such manipulation. Islamophobic images and attitudes appear in mainstream media as well, though in subtler forms. Participants will need to be able to talk about editing, pacing, the use of sound effects, musical background, voice-overs, disclaimers, and other production techniques of all such material. They will need to be able to note omissions as well: when significant information has been left out and what the effect such omissions have on the meaning an event then assumes.

Drawing attention to these use of images used in the media and in videos is not to make participants suspicious of all media accounts of Islam and of Muslims or to frighten them. The goal is to help participants handle successfully the challenges of those who have been infected by media Islamophobia. How can participants help such people recover their senses and good judgment? Extending such aid will become an important part of the participants' mission once they engage publicly in their chosen area of social justice praxis/jihad.

A discussion of the use of images and Islamophobic media will occur in Session Six to correspond to the text's emphasis in Chapter Six on "sin as exclusion." We hope that will give time for the participants to build strong ties of friendship and trust so that they can all approach the discussion of Islamophobic material in the calmest way possible.

Session Three Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: "In last week's session we talked in general about

the possibility of our praying to God in one voice. We emphasized the importance of our not rushing to a conclusion about this possibility but of maintaining a “creative tension” in relation to it. We will continue the discussion in today’s session. But we’ll also be looking closely at the Christian social-justice tradition— about what the Bible and various Christian thinkers over the ages have to say about the ways in which Christians should ‘love the neighbor.’ And finally, we will be looking at more background DVDs. Our purpose will be to supplement our understanding of what our text tells us about the Christian social-justice tradition as embodied in Francis himself. Eventually we also will look at ways in which visual images are used for the opposite purpose—to incite fear of that neighbor, especially of the Muslim. However, we will delay our focus on negative visual incitement to session six, giving us time to build up confidence in each other and in our own power to discuss these images calmly and helpfully.”

Opening Ceremony (5 minutes)

Opening Ceremony

Items Needed: A pillar candle and matches. A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible; an Arabic Qur’an. Two smaller candles in holders.

Light the large, central pillar candle. Then ask a Muslim and a Christian to join at your cue in lighting the two smaller candles.

Parts for the two readers should be assigned.

Ask everyone to sit quietly for a minute in chairs facing the table.

After the pause, the facilitator begins:

We come together for our third session under the symbol of Light.

At a cue from the facilitator, the Muslim and the Christian approach the table, each taking one of the smaller candles and, together, lighting their candles from the large candle that is already lit. Each, moving together, places his/her lit candle alongside his/her respective Scripture. They resume their seats.

Muslim reader:

We worship God as the source of Light.

Christian reader:

Light that illuminates our minds and animates our souls.

Muslim reader:

Common symbol.

Christian reader:

Common understanding.

Muslim reader:

According to our Qur'an, Light is a transcendent attribute of God, for as our beloved Light Verse says, "God is the Light of heaven and earth."

Christian reader:

Yet according to the Gospel of John, Light is more than an attribute of God. God is Light itself, in Christ, who is "the Light shining in the darkness."

Muslim reader:

Two lights, lit from the same source, apparently identical to the eye, yet very different.

Christian reader:

Two very different understandings of God deeply affect the way we understand our common symbols.

Muslim reader:

Yet neither of us can understand God fully. Our Qur'an says, "Human vision cannot capture God, but God captures human vision."

Christian reader:

And the First Letter of John says, "No one has seen God."

Muslim reader:

Our common symbol of Light points to a reality beyond our grasp.

Christian reader:

Yet the symbol of Light also orients us in our present time and place, directing both our faces even here and now, even in the midst of war and prejudice, towards God's beauty and glory, the source and stimulus of human enlightenment and spiritual flourishing.

Muslim reader:

A Light pointing towards a flourishing that embraces us all.

Christian reader:

Rather than towards a darkness that divides us.

Muslim reader:

A Light that in God's time will illuminate even our differences.

Christian reader:

A Light even brighter than the Light that shines brightly now.

Facilitator:

Let us walk together now towards that Light, confident that by pursuing the common good God will not lead us back into darkness but will instead bring us into the Salaam prepared for all those who sincerely love God and neighbor.

Muslims:
Amin.

Christians:
Amen.

After a one minute silence, the Muslim and Christian who previously lit and set out the two small candles, go up together to the table and extinguish his/her respective candle. Then both extinguish together the large candle.

Discussion of Sample Common Prayer (10 minutes)

Ask participants about the sample “Common Prayer” – i.e., where do they stand, as a group, in relation to the possibility of using this or a similar prayer at the end of this present session?

You will need to use your best judgment about how long this discussion should continue. If participants feel they are *not* ready for common prayer and come to that decision quickly and as a group, move immediately to the discussion questions at the end of Chapter Three of the reading.

If, however, the discussion about common prayer seems absorbing and significant for all evolved, allow the discussion to go up to ten minutes. If the group cannot come to consensus in that time (10 minutes), gently suggest that they are welcome to return to the discussion at the beginning of the next session (Session Four), if they should so choose. Remember that there is no “right” outcome here.

If the participants quickly come to consensus about praying in common at the end of the present session, ask them if they are comfortable with the wording of the suggested common prayer or if they want to make a minor change to it. Record the suggested changes.

When consensus has been reached about how exactly the prayer should read, move to discussion of the reading assignment.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (30 minutes)

Ask the members of the group to turn to the Discussion Questions immediately following Chapter Three of the text, *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* (page 87). Divide participants into small groups as you did for Session Two, but encourage different combinations of Muslim and Christian.

Assign one question, or at most two questions, to each of the groups. Allow up to ten minutes for the small groups to decide together on their answers. Urge them to keep their

answers brief when they report out to the whole group, so that all groups have an equal chance to report back. Once each group has reported back, encourage everyone to share a insight or two to what they read and what they have heard from the small groups. Ask what additional information and insights they have based on their reading of Chapter Three?

The Bible (30 minutes)

Ask the Christians who volunteered to facilitate a discussion of the information in the Participant Packet on the Bible with their Muslim colleagues.

As facilitator, your job is to help the presenters observe the time-limits (10 minutes for the initial presentation, 20 for Q&A) as well to make sure the discussion afterwards doesn't become anxious or defensive.

A purely descriptive, non-judgmental approach, from both Christian and Muslim participants, is the goal of this discussion.

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (5 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for Session Four, chapter 4 of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people make brief notes on their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter (in order to speed group discussion of these questions during the next session).

2. Ask for volunteers among the Muslim participants to prepare a short, 10 minute presentation for Session Four (the next session). The purpose of this presentation is to help their Christian colleagues become familiar with the contents of the Qur'an. Assure the Muslim participants that they aren't expected to become Qur'an experts overnight or to give long discourses on the differences between the Meccan and Medinan suras. Tell them there is material in the Participant Packet to help them prepare for this session on the Qur'an. This preparation will require that they communicate with each other by phone or e-mail *prior to* Session Four to divvy up responsibilities for their brief presentation and for facilitating the discussion following their presentation. *Be sure to give the volunteers the material for Session Four, especially the material on page 47 of this packet.*

3. Remind participants that the first of their debriefings of their visits to the mosque and the church is scheduled for the next session (Session Four). The second debriefing is scheduled for Session Five.

4. *If the group decided to use the common prayer*, ask everyone to evaluate before the next session their experience of common prayer. Time will be given at the beginning of Session Four for them to decide if they want to continue praying in common, using the suggested prayer with any necessary adaptations.

5. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

DVD and Discussion (45 minutes)

The group will watch *Part I only* of the DVD, “In the Footsteps of Jesus” (11 minutes). Prior to starting the film, share the following with the group: “In the Footsteps of Jesus” introduces the seven themes of “public theology.” “Public theology” means that while these seven themes are part of Catholic social teaching, they are not “owned” by one denomination or faith tradition. (A fuller explanation of “public theology” will be presented in Chapter Seven of the text, and a discussion of the themes themselves is provided for in Session Seven.)

Large Group Discussion (30 minutes)

Following the film, ask for a few quick responses or questions. Then engage a discussion using one or two of the following questions:

1. Part I of the DVD identifies the biblical context for the ministry of Jesus and a brief survey of the social teaching of recent popes. How have these values of the bible and Catholic social teaching been visible in the Catholic community? How might they have been missing?
2. Which themes are most evident to the Muslim participants as they observe the public work and witness of the Roman Catholic Church?
3. Which of the seven themes strikes you as very important today? Explain your selection.

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Once again the facilitator and the Muslim and Christian participants gather in front of the table. The facilitator relights the large candle. The Muslim and Christian who lit the small candles during the opening ceremony do so again and sit down. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers have their scripts.

After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:

Where did God’s Light guide us this evening?

Muslim reader:

It guided us to an understanding of the Bible’s call to social justice.

Christian reader:

And to the question whether we Christians have responded to that call with the single-mindedness Jesus and the Prophets asked of us.

Facilitator:

And did the discussion resolve that question for you?

Muslim reader:

It did not resolve the question, but it allowed us to acknowledge the high standards that should govern our behavior as individuals and as representatives of our respective religions.

Christian reader:

And to begin to address charitably our own and each other's failure to reach those standards.

Facilitator: **We have come far enough for one evening. Let us watch as the two lights now become one again.**

The Muslim and Christian approach the table and extinguish the two smaller candles, leaving only the central one lit.

Facilitator:

The Light of God shines fully and completely in both religions but is wholly contained in neither. Human understanding cannot grasp this paradox. Let us leave further enlightenment to God and go in peace, confident that God is guiding us step by step towards the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

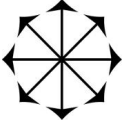
Muslims:

Amin.

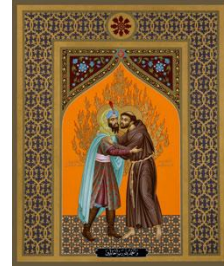
Christians:

Amen.

After a minute of silence, the Muslim and Christian approach the table to extinguish the large candle together and the session ends.



Session Four



Fundamentals of Islamic Social Justice

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Four of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur'an
- A pitcher of water, Two small basins, Two towels
- A small cup
- Refreshments for the break
- DVD player, TV and the DVD, *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	5 minutes
Review of Common Prayer	5 minutes
Discussion of Reading	30 minutes
The Qur'an	25 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	5 minutes
DVD and Discussion	60 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	155 minutes

Note to Facilitators

The goals of the fourth Session mirror those of Session Three: first, to allow the discussion to continue about whether prayer in common is possible; and second, to acquaint the Christian participants with key aspects of the Muslim social-justice tradition (as well as to remind Muslim members of that tradition).

It is on the second of the goals mentioned above where the emphasis of the first half of this session falls, on the Muslim social-justice tradition. Or better stated: not so much on that tradition itself, but on the most desirable approach the participants can take in comparing their two traditions, because that is what the participants will be doing anyway, comparing.

Recall that the first half of session three was focused on the Christian social tradition/Catholic social teaching. By design, the first half of the present session, focused on the Muslim social-justice tradition, puts one tradition side-by-side with the other, inviting participants to measure one against the other. Your job, as facilitator, at this point becomes critical. You will have to steer participants gently away from the all-too-easy tendency to turn comparison into argument.

You will need to warn them, for example, that it is, in general, very difficult to draw comparisons without making judgments. Much of the problem is linguistic. To say that one thing is “more or less X” than another thing seems to imply that by being “more X” the first thing is better than the second and that by being “less X” it is worse. People need discipline in order to honor a difference without taking sides on it. This discipline comes under even greater pressure (1) when people are comparing religious traditions, especially those of Islam and Christianity that contain plenty of bad examples of the opposite tendency directed at each other — examples of mutual prejudice and vilification — and (2) when the people making the comparisons are not coldly rational, disembodied spirits, but firmly committed members of those traditions.

You also will need to watch out for warning signs that participants are feeling overwhelmed. The discipline of making comparisons may weary them. So too may the sheer scope and complexity of the traditions they are comparing. You will need to remind them they are not expected to be experts on all aspects of their own faith traditions and teachings or to be able to grasp in one session or in eight the complexities of the other faith (or even of their own!).

Remind them that we will be returning in later sessions to many if not most of the questions they might presently be asking. Also remind participants that the most important goal of this module or program isn't to settle issues of difference once and for all but to break down the walls that separate people of faith and good will. As the Qur'an puts it in Sura Ma'idah 5:48, "... To God will you all return, and at that time God will enlighten you about all these matters about which you are now disputing."

NOTE: Again, it is important that prior to the start of the Session facilitators set up and test the DVD player and TV and cue the DVD to the starting point.

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Session Four Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: “In last week’s session we began the discussion of our respective social-justice traditions. We focused first on the Christian social-justice tradition or Catholic social teaching. We learned that the tradition issues from four covenants or agreements between God and His human creation about how people are to understand and respond to God’s will for them on earth: to love God and neighbor. According to Christian tradition, the covenants begin between God and Noah and culminate in the covenant between God and Jesus, God’s Son, through whom humanity becomes united to God in its pilgrimage to the Kingdom. Today we’ll look at the Muslim social-justice tradition, noting its similarities to the Christian tradition as well as its differences. Let us all be careful so that we do not allow comparisons to become judgments. We seek understanding of each other’s traditions, not a reinforcing of any sense of superiority over a tradition that may seem to rival our own.”

Opening Ceremony (5 minutes)

Items Needed: A pillar candle and matches. A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible; an Arabic Qur’an. A pitcher of water. Two small basins, one placed near the Qur’an, the other placed near the Bible. Two towels, one placed near each basin. A small cup placed by the basin near the Bible.

Light the large, central pillar candle. Then ask a Muslim and a Christian to join at your cue in pouring out water from the pitcher into the two basins. Ask a second Christian to help out later in the role of a person being baptized.

Parts for the two readers should be assigned ahead of time.

Ask everyone to sit quietly for a minute in chairs facing the table.

After the pause, the facilitator begins:

We come together for our fourth session under the symbol of Water.

At a cue from the facilitator, the Muslim and the Christian approach the table, each taking turns pouring out water from the pitcher into the basins, the Muslim pouring water into the basin near the Qur’an, the Christian pouring water into the basin near the Bible. They resume their seats.

Muslim reader:

According to our Qur’an, Water is the source of all life, from plants to humankind. Sura an-Nahl 16:10 tells us: “It is He who sends down rain from the sky from which you drink, and from it comes the vegetation you give your cattle to eat.”

Christian reader:

Water is the source of life in our Bible as well. Genesis 1:20 tells us: “And God said: ‘Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.’”

Muslim reader:

Common symbol.

Christian reader:

Common understanding.

Muslim reader:

The Qur’an also says about Water that it should be used in preparation for prayer. Sura an-Nisa’ 4:43 tells us: “O you who trust in God, do not go to your prayers with a mind distracted or in a passionate state, but wait until you know what you are saying and have bathed yourselves...” Sura al-Ma’ida 5: 6 says further: “...When you are about to pray, wash your face and your arms up to the elbows, and pass your wet hands over your head, and wash your feet up to the ankles....” All Muslims follow this command before we pray. The ritual of cleansing is called *wudu*. All parts of our body that come in contact with the everyday world, including feet, hands, ears, mouth, nose, and eyes, are touched and cleansed.

The Muslim who poured the water before comes back up to the basin by the Qur’an, dips his/her hand in the water, and demonstrates the actions of *wudu*. Afterwards, he/she uses the towel placed near the basin as necessary.

Christian reader:

We praise the intention of *wudu* but do not enjoin the practice itself.

Muslim reader:

Yet water is important to you.

Christian reader:

Yes, for water is the substance of baptism.

Muslim reader:

Baptism by the Prophet John, whom we honor as Yahya.

Christian reader:

John’s baptism was an immersion in the Jordan River from which people rose cleansed of their sins.

Muslim reader:

The Qur’an does not speak of this baptism, but it is not perhaps so different from *wudu*.

Christian reader:

But baptism for us Christians is a sacrament, an immersion in water thanks to which we not only die to sin but rise through the Holy Spirit into the life of Christ.

The two Christians approach the basin near the Bible. The Christian who poured the water at the start of the ceremony now takes the cup and dips it into the basin as the second Christian kneels or bows his/her head. The first Christian continues to hold the cup as the Christian reader says the words below. When the Christian reader quotes the words “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” the first Christian pours a little water on the head of the second (mimicking the action of baptism).

Christian reader:

According to the Gospel of Matthew, 27: 19-20, Christ said to his disciples, after his resurrection from the dead, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.”

The first Christian takes the towel and dries the hair of the second Christian. He/she replaces the cup and towel alongside the basin and both resume their seats.

Muslim reader:

Two basins of water, drawn from the same source, identical to the eye, yet very different.

Christian reader:

Two very different understandings of God deeply affect the way we understand our common symbols.

Muslim reader:

Yet neither of us can understand God fully. Our Qur’an says, “Human vision cannot capture God, but God captures human vision.”

Christian reader:

And the First Letter of John says, “No one has seen God.”

Muslim reader:

Our common symbol of Water points to a reality beyond our grasp.

Christian reader:

Yet the symbol of Water helps us to maintain our progress along the way, by cleansing us of the dust of attachment, inaction, and lack of zeal.

Muslim reader:

Water that in God’s time will cleanse us even of our differences.

Christian reader:

Water even purer than the waters of wudu and baptism.

Facilitator:

Let us bathe in the waters we are given even now, confident that by sincerely cleansing ourselves according to our present understandings, we will be freed to pursue the common good and to enter at last into the Salaam prepared for all who sincerely love God and neighbor.

Muslims:

Amin.

Christians:

Amen.

After a minute of silence, the facilitator extinguishes the large candle. The session begins.

Review Discussion of Common Prayer, if necessary (5 minutes)

Before asking the participants to turn to the reading assignment, give ask them the chance once again to continue the discussion of whether and how to pray in common. If need be, refer back to Session Three and the questions provided for this discussion.

When participants have reached consensus about where they presently stand on the question of common prayer, move immediately to the discussion of the reading assignment for this session.

NOTE: If consensus about use of the prayer cannot be reached in 5 minutes, move on with the statement that the group will not use a common prayer.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (30 minutes)

Use the questions immediately following Chapter Four of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* (pages 108-109). Divide the whole group as you did for previous sessions, and, again, encourage different combinations of Muslim and Christian participants. The directions are the same as with previous sessions:

Small group: 5-10 minutes

Assign one or at most two questions to each of the groups. Allow five to ten minutes for the small groups to decide together on their answers. Urge them to keep their answers brief, so that all groups have an equal chance to report back.

Large group: 20-30 minutes

But once they've done so, encourage them, as a whole group, to respond to what they've read and heard from each other's reports. What additional information and insights do members of the whole group wish to contribute, based on their reading of Chapter Four?

The Qur'an (25 minutes)

Ask the Muslim volunteers (who had the information in the Participants' Packet to prepare) to present the Qur'an to their Christian colleagues and then to facilitate a discussion.

Your job as facilitator is simply to help the participants observe the suggested time-limits (10 minutes for the initial presentation, 15 for Q&A) as well as to make sure the discussion afterwards doesn't become anxious or defensive.

Remember, a purely descriptive, non-judgmental approach, from both Christian and Muslim participants, is the goal.

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (5 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for the fifth session, Chapter Five of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people make brief notes about their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter in order to help with time limitations during group discussion of these questions during the next session.
2. Remind participants that the second of the two de-briefings of their visits to a mosque/church is scheduled for the next session, Session Five.
3. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

DVD and Discussion (60 minutes)

View chapters 5-12 of the DVD, "Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet" (43 minutes). Stop the DVD after the deacon's comments in the soup kitchen.

Large Group Discussion (17 minutes)

Here are a few starter questions for the discussion of the DVD. Be sure to spend some time on question #3.

1. The DVD shows a number of Muslim Americans in various professions. What do we learn about the Muslim way of life and values from their words and actions?
2. Daisy Kahn says that "what Muhammad did for women was amazing." Explore the meaning of that statement and the role of women in various Islamic countries today.
3. Jameel Johnson said we must work to make changes, we must seek justice. Do you agree with his perspective? If so, how could Muslims, Christians, and all people in your community work together for justice?

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Facilitator and participants gather in front of the table. Facilitator relights the large candle. The Muslim and Christian who lit the small candles during the opening ceremony do so again and sit down. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers have their scripts.

After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:
From what did God's Water cleanse us this evening?

Muslim reader:

It cleansed our hearts from rivalry as we compared our social-justice traditions.

Christian reader:

And from the temptation to accuse each other of not having lived up to the high standards these traditions entail.

Facilitator:

And did the discussion resolve your questions about why God chose such different covenants in which to root your common commitment to love Him and love neighbor?

Muslim reader:

It did not resolve the question, but it allowed us to acknowledge that that common commitment should govern our behavior as individuals and as representatives of our respective religions.

Christian reader:

And to begin to address charitably our own and each other's failure to behave as we have been taught.

Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us watch as the two waters now become one again.

The Muslim and Christian approach the table and pour the water remaining in the two basins back into the pitcher. They resume their seats.

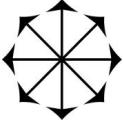
Facilitator:

The Water of God cleanses believers of both religions but is wholly contained in neither. Human understanding cannot grasp this paradox. Let us leave further enlightenment to God and go in peace, confident that God is guiding us step by step towards the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

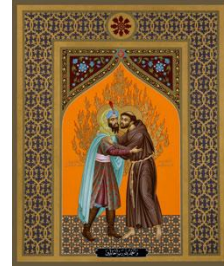
Muslims: **Amin.**

Christians: **Amen.**

After a minute of silence, the Muslim and Christian approach the table to extinguish the large candle together and the session ends (unless the participants have decided to conclude with the common prayer).



Session Five



Christians and Muslims Today: Blessings of Religious and Cultural Sharing

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Five of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur'an.
- A portable clock with a large dial
- A map of the solar system propped up on a stand
- Refreshments for the break
- DVD player, TV and the DVD, *Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet*

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	5 minutes
Discussion of Reading	40 minutes
Debrief Visit	25 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	10 minutes
DVD and Discussion	45 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	150 minutes

Note to Facilitators

If the previous sessions proved challenging, *especially when the participants engaged in discussion of the differences in belief that separate them*, this session and particularly the sixth session might make those earlier sessions seem mild by comparison.

One reason for the greater challenge of this session and the next is that they bring participants out of the relatively safe realm of theology into the turbulent waters of Muslims' and Christians' past and present relations. A second reason is that these two sessions ask participants to determine the degree to which the behavior of Christians and Muslims is rooted in religion as opposed to culture and politics.

Separating religion from culture and politics can never be a neat and easy task. Islam and Christianity are revealed religions, not philosophies. They are not abstract theories developed above and apart from the confusion of real life. They are instead divine interventions in human life as it is lived and suffered right in the midst of that confusion. Islam and Christianity's aim is to transform individual lives and to call forth communities of those so transformed into a new kind of polity: a polity dedicated not to simple survival or power-over but to the advancement of the common good. This advancement does not occur within a perfect world of angels but within the messiness of cultural and political stresses and strains.

A third reason for the greater challenge of sessions five and six is that they confront participants with the mystery of human motives. Assessing motives is always a risky business even when dealing with contemporaries. Doing so becomes even riskier when dealing with people who lived long ago, in eras where people's primary concerns were different from what they are now, or were at least expressed differently.

For example, participants learned from their reading for Session Five that at least during the eras of the Abbasid caliphate of Baghdad and of the Umayyid caliphate of Córdoba, Spain, Christians and Muslims were able not only to tolerate each other but even to work together to advance the common good in many fields: in governance, in intellectual achievement, and in the arts.

Yet a key question arises: Was the Muslim-Christian solidarity observed in these periods motivated by religion? Or by cultural factors? And how can one distinguish the difference? Perhaps the intellectual achievements of the Abbasid era and the flowering of Córdoba were the result of a happy combination of social and political conditions that allowed talented people of different religious traditions to work together peacefully and productively for the good of the whole. Perhaps religion played but a minor role in motivating people towards peace and mutual cooperation.

How can we responsibly disentangle religious from cultural and political motives, whether in earlier eras or our own? And how can we know for sure what people's motives during earlier eras actually were? We can't simply read back into history our own wishes and ideals. Many people today — and certainly this includes those who are attracted to JustMatters modules such as the present one — are eager to see signs in our

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ancestors of the yearning for interreligious solidarity that has become a characteristic of our own time and place. But it's not clear that our ancestors felt such yearning. Or that if they did, that they felt it in the ways we do today. Certain mystics and poets can be said to have anticipated the yearning. For example, the great Sufi poet Rumi (1207-1273 CE) often wrote as if religious differences disappeared in the light of God's face. For him and for his Sufi followers, the divine face illuminates with equal intensity the heart of every believer, whether Christian or Muslim. But there's little evidence that the majority of Christians and Muslims of that era understood their faiths this way. Not even Francis and the Sultan, for all the intensity of their mutual appreciation, engaged in interreligious dialogue as we presently conceive it.

For our own era is marked, among other things, by mass communication and a greater intermingling of peoples. These changes have caused misunderstanding and conflict. But they have also spurred the conscious pursuit of interreligious understanding on a far broader scale than either Francis or the Sultan could have imagined. This pursuit occurs not just among elites that include Sufis, saints, and sultans but also among people at the grass roots, like ourselves. In this sense, interreligious dialogue has become a cultural expression of what large elements of today's Muslim and Christian communities believe to be a great need. And yet: Does the fact that interreligious dialogue has become a cultural expression (instead of the singular achievement of extraordinarily gifted people, like Francis and the Sultan, or like Rumi and other great Sufis) mean that it can't also be a religious expression? That the main strength of its motivation doesn't flow from the sincere desire on both Muslims' and Christians' parts to love God and neighbor above all things?

We raise this question now in Session Five in anticipation of the difficulties participants will face in Session Six. For in Session Six we'll be looking at expressions of both Christianity and Islam which, while presented as religious expressions, can be seen as having fallen captive instead to cultural and political forces. And not to benign cultural and political forces this time — no Córdoba in sight anywhere — but to forces employing religion to motivate “wars on (and of) terror” in which the enemy is the Christian or Muslim “other.”

Your job in Sessions Five and Six is to help participants navigate discussions about Christian and Muslim religious expression calmly and thoughtfully. Don't be surprised if more questions arise than answers. Your main task will be to remind people of what the first four sessions have been teaching: that despite all their many and significant differences, Islam and Christianity owe allegiance to the prophetic commandments to love God and neighbor. Yes, Muslims and Christians are obliged to express that allegiance according to the cultural and political norms of their times. And yes, their motives may be forever unknowable. But the evidence of their basic religious allegiance should always be clear, for, as Jesus in Matthew 4:16 declares, “By their fruits you shall know them.” Do the Christians and Muslims in question *show* that they love the neighbor? Keeping this measurement in mind will help participants judge whether it really is Islam or Christianity that motivates a community. Or whether the motivation, while bearing Islam's or Christianity's name, is really something quite different.

Session Five Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: “In last week’s session we concluded the discussion of our respective social-justice traditions by focusing on the Muslim social-justice tradition. We noted similarities with and differences from the Christian tradition and took care not to let our comparisons become judgments. As challenging as that discussion was, we tackle an even more challenging topic both today and particularly in the following session – that is, our actual behavior vis-à-vis one another. We will start out on a hopeful note and look today at the positive historical relationships between Muslim and Christian communities. We will reserve consideration of our negative relationships for Session Six. Also, we will see if we can begin to make distinctions between expressions of religious belief which really do flow from the command to love God and neighbor and other expressions which have fallen captive to negative cultural and political forces.”

Opening Ceremony (5 minutes)

Items Needed: A pillar candle and matches. A Bible; a Qur’an; a map of the solar system and a portable clock with a large face (preferably not a digital clock).

The Qur’an and the Bible are placed on either side of the candle, with enough space between them and the candle for the portable clock and the map. The holder for the map is placed ahead of time between the candle and either of the Scriptures.

Parts for the two readers should be assigned ahead of time. Ask the Christian reader to keep the map by the side of his/her chair; the Muslim reader, the clock.

Light the large, central pillar candle.

Ask everyone to sit quietly for a minute in chairs facing the table.

After the pause, the facilitator begins:

We come together for our fifth session under the symbols of Space and Time.

Christians and Muslims mark their orientation to God by honoring in worship particular directions in Space.

After the facilitator has spoken, the Christian reader gets up and places the map in the holder on one side of the pillar candle, then returns to his/her seat.

Facilitator:

Muslims and Christians mark their orientation to God in another way, by honoring in worship particular moments in Time.

After the facilitator has spoken, the Muslim reader gets up and places the clock in the holder on the other side of the pillar candle, then returns to his/her seat.

Muslim reader:

Common symbols.

Christian reader:

Common meanings.

Facilitator:

Yet, while Christians and Muslims share the symbols of Space & Time in their prayer, they understand the symbols differently.

Muslim reader:

When we pray, we are always to orient ourselves in space toward the Ka'bah. The Holy Qur'an says: "So from wherever you start, turn your face in prayer towards the sacred place of prostration, for this is a true command of your Cherisher and Sustainer, and God is not unaware of all you are doing." (Sura al-Baqarah 2: 150)

The Ka'bah is the cube-like structure in the holy city of Mecca. The Ka'bah is located on the site of the altar built by Abraham and his son Ishmael from the ruins of the first of all altars to God, the altar built by Adam. Our always directing ourselves towards the Ka'bah whether praying alone or in community is a sign of our desire for unity.

Christian reader:

We Christians once prayed towards the East, in expectation of Christ's Second Coming. Some Christians still do so. But we have always directed ourselves in our public worship towards the pulpit and altar of the local church where the risen Christ becomes present in word and sacrament.

Muslim reader:

We Muslims orient our prayer in time according to the movements of sun and moon. The times of our daily prayer are precisely set by the rising and the setting of the sun. Our months are determined by the rising and setting of the moon. The holy month of Ramadan is precisely marked by sightings of the moon. In this way we praise God the Creator who sustains all things in being from second to second.

Christian reader:

Our monastic communities still connect daily prayer with the passing of time. But for all of us the day of greatest honor is the day after the Sabbath, Sunday, because Sunday is the Eighth Day, the day when time itself will be fulfilled in the coming of Christ.

Muslim reader:

Common symbols.

Christian reader:

With different meanings. Yet the differences do not tell the whole story.

Muslim reader:

Yes: for our Qur'an also says, "Every community faces a direction of its own, whose focal point is God. So run as in a race, competing with each other to do good works. God will gather you all, from wherever you come, to Himself, for God has the direction of all things." Sura al-Baqarah 2: 148. Large as the symbols of Space and Time are, they are not large enough to capture God.

Christian reader:

Yes, for we Christians read in the Book of Acts about what the angels said to Jesus' disciples after his Ascension: "Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up toward heaven? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven." God is not to be held to a particular time and place. We know only that He is present now and will come again.

Muslim reader:

Our symbols of Space and Time point to realities beyond our grasp.

Christian reader:

Yet the symbols of Space and Time also orient both of us in our present time and place, directing our faces even here and now, even in the midst of war and prejudice, towards God's beauty and glory, the source and stimulus of human enlightenment and spiritual flourishing.

Muslim reader:

Space and Time point towards a wholeness that embraces us all.

Christian reader:

Rather than towards occasions and places that divide us.

Muslim reader:

Symbols that point us to a Space and Time beyond our differences.

Christian reader:

A Space and a Time which we reach by following a Path - our map on that Path a Book, our way forward illuminated by a Light, our bodies purified during the journey by Water.

Facilitator:

Let us walk together now towards the place marked by that Space and Time, confident that by pursuing the common good God will not lead us astray, but will

instead bring us into the Salaam prepared for all those who sincerely love God and neighbor.

Muslims: **Amin.**

Christians: **Amen.**

After a minute of silence, the facilitator extinguishes the large candle. The session begins.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (40 minutes)

Use the Discussion Questions at the end of Chapter Five of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* (page 131). Divide the whole group as you did for the previous sessions, and, as in the past sessions, encourage different combinations of Muslims and Christians participants. The directions are as before:

Small group: 5-10 minutes

Assign one or at most two questions to each of the groups. Allow five to ten minutes for the small groups to decide together on their answers. Urge them to keep their answers brief, so that all groups have an equal chance to report back.

Large group: 20-30 minutes

Encourage the whole group to respond to what they've read and heard from each other's small group reports. What additional information and insight do members of the whole group wish to contribute based on their reading of Chapter Five?

Debriefing of visit to Mosque or Church (25 minutes)

By the time participants have reached this fifth session, they, hopefully, have finished their visits to each other's mosque/church and will be prepared to debrief these visits during the current session. The debriefing (whether of the mosque or the church visit) itself can focus on questions like those below. Note that some questions pertain to all participants, others to members of the "other" faith. You might want to refer to the Note to Facilitators for Session Four for suggestions about your role in handling this discussion.

The Participant Packet also contains the following discussion questions, which you will need to choose among in order to honor the time allotted for this segment.

For all participants:

- What memory of your visit stands out most clearly when you think back on it? Explain why this memory stands out for you more clearly than others?
- Did you find anything in the experience confusing or upsetting? Briefly explain.

For members of the "other" religion:

- Did anything you saw or heard during the visit contradict what you have been learning about the religious beliefs of Christians/Muslims in our sessions? Briefly explain.

- Did any of the practices you witnessed resemble practices of your own religion? Briefly explain.
- What practices seemed to you most unlike practices in your own religion? How did these differences make you feel (intrigued, offended, surprised, etc.)?

For members of the host religion:

- Were you aware during the visit that you were experiencing your faith in a new way, that is, through the eyes of your Muslim/Christian colleagues? Briefly explain.
- Did you see something different in your faith when you saw it through others' eyes? Briefly explain.

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (10 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for the sixth session, Chapter Six of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Again suggest that people make brief notes about their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter in order to speed group discussion of these questions during the next session.

2. In Sessions Seven and Eight we will be asking participants to turn from cultivating their own particular internal formation as an interfaith community to initiating their engagement in what we will be calling in Session Seven praxis or jihad — that is, a concrete work for the common good. Up to now, participants have discussed with each other their social-justice orientations, using their text as their guide. But in Sessions Seven and Eight, the emphasis shifts to the practical expression of their solidarity with each other ... and with all of God's creation.

In Session Seven, participants will decide what form that expression should take. In Session Eight, they will connect with those for whom that expression is part of an already established, on-going ministry. Remind participants that they are not to reinvent the wheel at this point or to feel that their initial ministries must somehow appear unique. Their specific initial area of ministry is less important than their entering this area publicly and visibly. What we have called the “sign” value of their solidarity with each other and with those who are marginalized is the crucial point.

3. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

DVD and Discussion (45 minutes)

View chapters 13, 14 and 15 of “Muhammad: Legacy of a Prophet” (20 minutes).

Large Group Discussion (25 minutes)

1. The DVD describes Muhammad's decision to fight rather than to be the victim of persecution. Do you agree with his decision? Is this decision similar to the development of the just war tradition in Christianity?

2. Kevin James talks about the “Bigger Jihad” that Muhammad taught his followers. How has Mr. James applied this Jihad in his own life?
3. Kevin James said the attack of 9-11 is contrary to Islam. What are his reasons for saying this? Do the Muslim participants support his approach? Explain.

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Gather in front of the table with the Scriptures, the clock and the map, and relight the large candle. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers have their scripts.

After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:

How did the Symbols of Space & Time serve us this evening?

Muslim reader:

They revealed an occasion and a place where we could compare our social-justice traditions calmly and without prejudice.

Christian reader:

And where we could begin to distinguish between motivations that reflect those traditions and those that do not.

Facilitator:

And did you find that it was easy to make such distinctions?

Muslim reader:

We did not find it easy. But we found guidance in the standard of behavior that must flow from those who love God and neighbor: mildness, peaceableness, creativity, openness, hospitality.

Christian reader:

The very behavior exemplified long ago uniquely by Francis and the Sultan, but enjoined on all of us today.

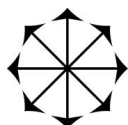
Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us leave further enlightenment to God and go in peace, grateful that God has brought us so far along the Path in only five weeks, to a Space & Time already made holy by his guidance, and confident that he will bring us even closer to the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

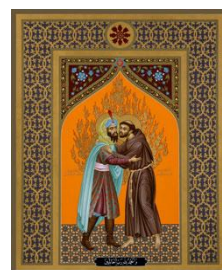
Muslims: **Amin.**

Christians: **Amen.**

After a minute of silence, the facilitator approaches the table to extinguish the large candle and the session ends (unless the participants have decided to conclude with the common prayer).



Session Six



Facing Demons and Challenges

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Six of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur'an
- A small prayer rug
- Refreshments for the break

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	10 minutes
Discussion of Reading	30 minutes
Websites Discussion	35 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	5 minutes
Islamophobic Materials	45 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	150 minutes

Note to Facilitators

Session Six will almost certainly challenge everyone, facilitator and participants, to the fullest. That's because we bring into direct focus here the images and the suspicion and fear that continue not only to divide Muslims and Christians but, even worse, to make mortal enemies of us.

While we might wish to avoid confronting the forces that set us so painfully at odds, we have to resist the temptation. Failure to face openly our mutual grievances will weaken our solidarity. Dealing with the grievances honestly, while painful at the outset, will eventually strengthen our solidarity. Besides, both of our religions demand honesty towards ourselves and others, and even more than honesty, a desire to overcome enmity in obedience to the One God who has called us, not in spite of but because of our diversity, to act as one human community.

Your job in this session is to promote an atmosphere in which participants feel able to “get it off their chests” —

- to express openly and freely their deepest fears about the Christian or Muslim “other,” and
- to express openly and freely their deepest shame or confusion about the behavior of some of their own co-religionists – i.e., of those Christians or Muslims whose behavior seems to belie everything that has been said so far about each religion’s common call to love God and neighbor.

Your challenge will probably reach its climax when the participants view, just before break, the contemporary Islamophobic materials on the websites for the videos “Obsession” and “The Third Jihad.” You will need to allow some “venting” here. Some Christian participants may be confused or troubled by some of the claims these websites make about Islam and Muslims. But you will be able to rely on the good will the group has built up over the course of the previous sessions. Mutual trust will allow the Muslim participants to rebut outright lies and reveal subtle insinuations without arousing defensive reactions. Remind the group too that after the break, participants will focus on the positive, on how to help those who have been infected by anti-Muslim lies and insinuations. Developing strategies of this type will be essential once the group “goes public” with its praxis/jihad.

Reassure participants that if “the temperature” is a little “hot”, it will cool down in the two remaining sessions! We have to pass through fire in order to know ourselves and each other better. We will be stronger for it as we turn to what is after all the focus of our coming together, building a community strong enough to weather the current negative climate towards Muslims and to work together to build a counter-sign of solidarity for the common good.

NOTE: You will need volunteers for opening prayer. Also, the second half of the DVD, *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan, A Model for Peacemaking*, addresses the use of images. You might want to share this with the group and see if individuals would like to view this part of the DVD during the week.

Session Six Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: “Well, here we hit a low point of our trajectory: the confrontation with the demons that have plagued Muslim-Christian relations since at least the late 600’s, when the Muslim armies invaded eastern regions of the Byzantine empire. Those demons plague us today. We can’t turn our backs on these sad facts. Yet neither can we allow them to discourage us. Our respective religions do not permit us the luxury of despair. Instead, they enjoin on us effort and trust: the effort to love God and neighbor and the trust that God will not abandon us on our common path, no matter how gloomy the outlook.”

Opening Ceremony (10 minutes)

Items Needed: A pillar candle and matches. A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible; an Arabic Qur’an. A small prayer rug.

The facilitator lights the large, central pillar candle.

Parts for the two readers should be assigned. The readers are to read *only* the lines in bold-face print, not the intervening instructions. The Christian and the Muslim who will demonstrate body positions during prayer will have met with the readers briefly to go over the parts of the opening ceremony that apply to them and to decide how best to demonstrate each action.

Ask everyone to sit quietly for a minute in chairs facing the table.

Facilitator:

We come together for our sixth session under the symbol of Posture.

Christians and Muslims symbolize their spiritual intention to love God and God alone in their physical Posture during prayer.

Muslim reader:

Common symbol.

Christian reader:

Common meaning.

Facilitator:

Yet while Christians and Muslims share the symbol of Posture in their prayer, they understand the symbol differently.

Muslim reader:

When we Muslims pray, we assume a prescribed series of postures in unison, as one body. We refer to this form of prayer as Salat, one of the Pillars of Islam. The postures themselves derive from the practice of the Prophet Muhammad, peace and

blessing on him. By imitating his actions during prayer, we draw closer to the man whose beautiful example we take as our model in all things. And by drawing closer to the Prophet, peace and blessing on him, we draw closer to God. For the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing on him, embodied the perfection of human obedience to God’s will.

The Muslim who has volunteered to demonstrate the postures of Salat goes to the front of the table, then turns to face the others. He/she takes his/her cues from the Muslim reader for what follows. The Muslim reader and demonstrator should practice beforehand so as to be able to enact the postures clearly and unhurriedly.

Muslim reader:

- **We begin by cleansing ourselves with Water.** The Muslim in front faces the other participants and mimics the actions of *wudu*. (Note: In what follows, we are asking that the prayer rug be oriented in such a way that the demonstrator *faces the other participants*, that is, with his/her back to the table and facing front. If Mecca corresponds to that direction, so much the better. But for purposes of modesty and clarity, the demonstrator should face front regardless of what the actual, canonical direction might be.)
- **Then we prepare a clean place for prayer by spreading a rug on the floor or ground. Normally, we align the rug in the direction of the Ka’bah.** The demonstrator gestures in that direction. **But for our purposes here we will face away from the table.** The demonstrator faces forwards, then takes the prayer rug from the table, unrolls it in front of him/her.)
- **We begin in a standing position, if we are physically able.** (After this bulleted statement and all subsequent ones, the Muslim reader pauses while the Muslim demonstrator carries out the action referred to.)
- **We then form our intention to pray our prayer as if it were our last prayer on earth, symbolizing this intention by bringing our spread hands to the level of our shoulders and reciting “God is great” in Arabic.**
- **We recite the Fatihah.**
- **We bow our body until our hands are on our knees, reciting “Praise be to God” in Arabic.**
- **We straighten up again and stand while reciting “God is great” and “Praise be to God.”**
- **We prostrate ourselves, putting the following parts of the body — the bare forehead, both palms, both knees, the base of the toes of both feet — on the place of prostration. We envision ourselves prostrated at God’s very feet.**
- **We sit back, asking in Arabic God’s forgiveness.**
- **We repeat the previous sequence of standing, prostrating, and sitting.**
- **While sitting for the second time, we say additional prayers.**
- **We turn to our right to say a blessing to the angel at our right shoulder (the angel recording our good deeds); we turn to our left to say a blessing to the angel at our left shoulder (the angel recording our transgressions).**
- **We stand.**

This is the basic form of Salat.

The Muslim demonstrator rolls up the prayer rug, replaces it on the table, and sits down.

The Christian who has volunteered to demonstrate the postures of Christian prayer goes to the front of the table, then turns to face the others. He/she takes his/her cues from the Christian reader for what follows. The Christian reader and demonstrator should practice beforehand so as to be able to enact the postures and gestures clearly and unhurriedly.

Christian reader:

Posture during Christian prayer has always been and continues to be diverse. But in all its forms our posture during prayer symbolizes our identification with the crucified and risen Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Depending on their denomination and their culture, Christians at various moments during prayer or liturgy:

- **stand** (After this bulleted statement and all subsequent ones, the Christian reader pauses while the Christian demonstrator carries out the action referred to.)
- **bow**
- **kneel**
- **in some places, some congregants may approach the altar or holy shrine on their knees**
- **while some may even prostrate themselves fully.**

Certain gestures may accompany certain postures:

- **Roman Catholics make the Sign of the Cross when they bow or kneel before the altar and the Blessed Sacrament and when they respond to the Priest's blessing during Mass. They make the gesture by using the fingers of the right hand to touch the forehead, the lower chest or abdomen, the left breast, and the right breast. The phrase "In the name of the Father" accompanies touching the forehead; "and of the Son" accompanies the touching of the left breast; "and of the Holy Spirit" accompanies the touching of the right. (The Christian demonstrator illustrates.)**
- **After the reading of the Gospel at Mass, they stand while making with their thumb the Sign of the Cross over their forehead, mouth, and heart, accompanying the gesture with the phrase: "May Christ's words be in my mind, on my lips, and in my heart." (The Christian demonstrator illustrates.)**
- **In the Orthodox tradition, the same gesture is made but with the thumb, index, and third finger brought together to form a point, symbolizing the Trinity. The other two fingers curve together towards the palm, symbolizing Christ's two natures, as both human and divine. Another difference from Roman Catholic practice is that Orthodox believers cross themselves from the right breast to the left rather than from left to right. (The Christian demonstrator illustrates.) The sign of the cross in all its forms symbolizes our union with Jesus.**

- **Some Protestant traditions use the Sign of the Cross, but many others rejected it during the Reformation, as they also rejected bowing and kneeling.**
- **In other Protestant traditions posture reflects the spontaneous movement of the Holy Spirit within the believer.** (The Christian demonstrator illustrates with gestures suggesting a charismatic form of worship.)
- **Yet all Christians acknowledge God’s presence to us in the Risen Christ through the Holy Spirit by bringing our hands together in supplication or by spreading our arms outward, palms up.** (The Christian demonstrator illustrates.)

Muslim reader:

Posture — common symbol of our dedication to God’s word.

Christian reader:

A symbol with different meanings. Yet the differences do not tell the whole story. For Posture may not reflect the true disposition of the heart.

Muslim reader:

Yes: for our Qur’an says, “Woe to those praying ones whose hearts are in one place, their prayer in another: those who want only to be seen and to be praised, and deny all help to those less fortunate.” Sura al-Ma’un 107: 4-7.

Christian reader:

Yes: for Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew says, “And whenever you pray. Do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward.” (Matthew 6: 5)

Muslim reader:

Our symbol of Posture points to a fidelity to God we can at best only approximate.

Christian reader:

And then only with the help of God’s grace.

Muslim reader:

Yet the symbol of Posture orients both of us in our present time and place, even in the midst of prejudice and war, reminding us of our goal, of our yielding of ourselves fully and totally to God and no other.

Christian reader:

Enabling us to pray that “thy will be done,” for only when our intention to love God and neighbor is pure can we hope to glimpse God’s beauty and glory.

Muslim reader:

Posture prepares our bodies for the journey that still lies before us.

Christian reader:

Away from occasions and places that divide us.

Muslim reader:

Towards a Space and Time beyond our differences.

Christian reader:

A Space and Time which we reach by following a Path — our map on that Path a Book, our way forward illuminated by a Light, our bodies purified during the journey by Water and disciplined by Posture.

Facilitator:

Let us walk together now towards the place marked by that Space and Time, confident that by pursuing the common good God will not lead us astray, but will instead bring us into the Salaam prepared for all those who sincerely love God and neighbor.

Muslims:

Amin.

Christians:

Amen.

After a minute of silence, the facilitator extinguishes the large candle. The session begins.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (30 minutes)

Use the Discussion Questions at the end of Chapter Six of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan* (page 150). Divide the whole group as you did for the previous sessions, and, as in the past sessions, encourage different combinations of Muslims and Christians participants. The directions are as before:

Small group: 5-10 minutes

Assign one or at most two questions to each of the groups. Allow five to ten minutes for the small groups to decide together on their answers. Urge them to keep their answers brief, so that all groups have an equal chance to report back.

Large group: 20-30 minutes

Encourage the whole group to respond to what they've read and heard from each other's small group reports. What additional information and insight do members of the whole group wish to contribute based on their reading of Chapter Five?

Websites Discussion (35 minutes)

Participants review together material from the “Obsession” and “The Third Jihad” websites, along with other samples of current Islamophobic material the participants may have collected. See Participant Packet for more details about this assignment.

Our guidelines here must be general, since no two JustMatters module groups will be looking at exactly the same things in Session Six. The main focus of your discussion of the websites (and any other Islamophobic material participants have brought to Session Six) should be on helping each other be clear about where these websites are distorting truth and on analyzing the techniques the websites use to make the distortions seem believable.

Some typical techniques involve:

- Showing footage only on fanatical Muslims, giving the impression that this is the way all Muslims think.
- Masking the social/political context for images of Muslims behaving angrily or in protest.
- Masking the full scriptural context for apparently “damning” quotations from the Qur’an
- Masking the backgrounds or political affiliations of “authorities”; masking the basis for choosing these authorities and not those advancing differing interpretations.
- Substituting the part for the whole, or the extreme case with the normative one.
- Blending well-attested facts about Islam or the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing on him) with falsehoods.

This is a necessary if unpleasant exercise, a “reality check” for each participant involved. But it is more. It is a necessary step in forging a stronger group identity. This strength will be tested once you finish the module and “go public” with your social-justice project (to be identified in Session Eight).

Note: The second half of the DVD, *In the Footprints of Francis and the Sultan, A Model for Peacemaking*, addresses the use of images. You might want to share this with the group and see if any individuals would like to view this part of the DVD during the week.

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (5 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for the seventh session, Chapter Seven of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people make brief notes on their answers to the five discussion questions at the end of the chapter (in order to speed group discussion of these questions during the next session).
2. Ask participants if plans are in place for the visit of the speaker(s) for Session Eight.
3. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

Islamophobic Media Materials (45 minutes)

Discuss ways to respond helpfully and constructively to those infected by Islamophobic media materials. See Participant Packet for more details.

You will be confronted from time to time by those who have been influenced by “The Third Jihad” or other media products like them. How should you handle such confrontations? That’s exactly the question you’ll begin to address. We put it that way, “begin to address,” because the question can’t be resolved in thirty minutes, or in an hour. The question is one you’ll need to come back to again and again as you engage the world through your praxis/jihad.

Here are some additional questions that may help you not only with this discussion but with others you may have in the days to come. The questions are based on your assessment of the tone/state of mind and spirit of the person or group confronting you. As facilitator, you will need to choose the questions that are most appropriate for your group. We offer the following as possibilities, although you can use your own questions.

- If the person or group is openly hostile, should you answer them in kind? What do your respective scriptures say about dousing fire with fire? Muslims can offer Qur’an 25:63, “The servants of God are those who walk humbly on the earth; and when ignorant, vicious people harass them verbally, they say, “Peace be upon you.” Christians can offer Matthew 5:44, “Love your enemies and pray for your persecutors.” Facilitators can ask if any are familiar with the work of the International Fellowship of Reconciliation (FOR). If not, encourage one member of the group to visit their website (forusa.org) and report back on what this long-standing international organization has to say about non-violent responses to hostile behavior. At some point, your group might want to take part in one of FOR’s non-violent training workshops. Check the FOR website to see if such a workshop is scheduled in or near your town.
- If the person or group has been partly persuaded by Islamophobic material but still seems open to a different view, how should you proceed? Should you immediately advance counter-arguments? How important is it to assess, before you say anything, the level of fear the person or group has been brought to? In general, how susceptible to rational argument is a person or group damaged by fear? What other kinds of response might be more helpful initially? At what point in your developing relation with the person or group would rational argument become most effective?
- To those who are sincerely open to a different understanding of Islam and Muslims than the one Islamophobia proposes, what are the most cogent responses you could offer? Imagine yourselves sitting with open-minded non-Muslims at a viewing of “The Third Jihad.” What would you say in response to that video’s various lies and insinuations?

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Once again gather in front of the table with the Scriptures and the prayer rug in place, and relight the large candle. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers have their scripts.

After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:
How did the symbol of Posture serve us this evening?

Muslim reader:

It revealed our obligation to discipline our bodies to express faithfully our intention to love God and neighbor.

Christian reader:

It revealed also our sinful tendency to turn the obligation against itself: to pray piously on the outside but to harbor prideful, even violent thoughts within.

Muslim reader:

Behavior all too clearly documented in the ongoing acts of enmity perpetrated against each other by our respective communities.

Facilitator:

And did you find that it was easy to talk about these transgressions and hypocrisies?

Christian reader:

We did not find it easy. But we found hope in the standard of behavior exemplified by Francis and the Sultan: mildness, peaceableness, creativity, openness, hospitality. The standard of behavior not even Francis and the Sultan could have reached without God's grace.

Muslim reader:

Grace always available to us, for God is Most beneficent, Most Merciful.

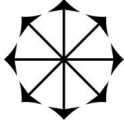
Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us leave further enlightenment to God and go in peace, grateful that God has brought us so far along the Path in only six weeks, to a Posture disciplined by his guidance, and confident that he will bring us even closer to the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

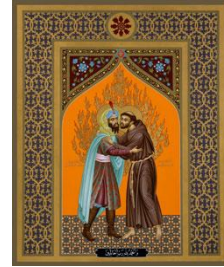
Muslims: **Amin.**

Christians: **Amen.**

After a minute of silence, the facilitator approaches the table to extinguish the large candle and the session ends (unless the participants have decided to conclude with the common prayer).



Session Seven



Common Ground. Common Action

Participants will have read:

- Chapter Seven of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*

Items Needed for this Session

- A pillar candle and matches
- A handsome, hardback edition of the Bible
- An Arabic Qur'an
- Around the candle are arranged the following: two or three place settings (plates and cups) as if for a meal; two baskets containing necessary silverware and cups; some breads and fruit; a pitcher of water
- Copies for everyone of Session Seven-Attachments A and B
- A copy of Session Seven-Attachment B chart should be reproduced on a large piece of flipchart paper or on a white board
- Extra flipchart paper and markers or a large white board
- Post-It dots
- Refreshments for the break

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	10 minutes
Discussion of Readings	75 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Business and Announcements	5 minutes
Finding a Focus of Action	45 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	160 minutes

Note to Facilitators

You can breathe a sigh of relief. In the previous session, Session Six, participants reached the hardest stretch of their journey together. We hope that the purpose of our taking them to Islamophobic websites was clear to them all and that they are beginning to experience the benefits of getting the bad news behind them: benefits such as greater trust of each other, along with deeper resolve to work together against Islamophobia and other social evils for the building up of the common good.

Though the way forward will be smoother both in this present session and in the last (session eight), each of these sessions separately and together will present its challenges. That is because we are leaving our initial stage of reflection and community-building (the work of sessions one through six) and are entering the stage of practical action for social justice— or, in the terms of our text, praxis and jihad. Accordingly, your task in these two last sessions is to help the group make the transition from an inward focus of their efforts to an outward one. You should make clear to the group, however, that the transition doesn't imply that the inner work of solidifying their communal identity is more important than the outer, or that the inner is naturally superseded by the outer (self-reflection superseded by praxis). Reflection and praxis are equally and reciprocally necessary in maintaining the health of any faith group. They're dynamic tendencies within the continuous unfolding of group identity. Praxis is not an end point. Praxis leads back to further reflection and prayer, and further reflection to a reinvigorated understanding of and commitment to praxis. (In Catholic parlance, this process is known as the “pastoral circle.”)

Session Seven is dedicated to smoothing the way for the transition and for the entire process of which the transition is a part. Participants will know from the reading that the Muslim and Christian elites are eager for dialogue to take this practical turn. The elites are eager too that all believers, at the top and at the grass-roots, should be engaged in it. Participants can feel supported as they move forward. And they can move with more freedom knowing that all Christians and Muslims of good will, including those among the elites, are to a certain extent feeling their way. The Pope's Regensburg's speech shows that blunders on all levels are possible — and not fatal to the process. Muslims and Christians all over the world are doing something new and beautiful here as they gather to build the common good. It's about time such an effort got underway!

Session Seven Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in the present one. You might want to say something like the following: “We hit rock-bottom in last week's session. We confronted there the worst of what the nations of the West have said and pictured about Islam and Muslims. We emphasized the toxic anti-Muslim atmosphere brewed up in the contemporary videos “Obsession” and “The Third Jihad.” We hit rock bottom by design,

however, not by accident. We felt that, given the strong community-building we'd done during the first five weeks of the Module, we would be able, not only to withstand this bitter dose, but to discover in our respective faiths and in our own solidarity the means to turn the toxicity into healing. In these two final sessions we will urge that this healing take the form of praxis or jihad —our solidarity focused now not so much on our own up-building as a group, but rather on our acting together practically and concretely for the common good.

The “Common Word” document we just read about in Chapter Seven of the book rivets our attention on the central teaching of Christianity and Islam: love of God and love of neighbor. In these next two sessions the group will put that teaching into action by undertaking an outreach ministry, service, or advocacy effort. The planning process begins in this session and continues in Session Eight. Soon the world will know us as “Christians and Muslims working together for the common good.”

Opening Ceremony (10 minutes)

Items Needed: A pillar candle and matches. A Bible; a Qur'an. Around the candle are arranged two or three plates with cups as if for a meal. Two baskets containing necessary silverware and cups along with breads and fruits. A pitcher of water.

Light the large, central pillar candle.

Parts for the two readers should be assigned ahead of time.

Ask everyone to sit quietly for a minute in chairs facing the table.

After the pause, the facilitator begins:

Facilitator:

We come together for our seventh session under the symbol of Meal.

The Christian and the Muslim readers have the baskets at their side. They rise as one, each carrying their basket to the table, where they fill the plates with the fruits and breads. They take turns filling the cups from the pitcher. When finished, they resume their seats, moving together.

Christians and Muslims symbolize their vision of shalom, salaam, fullness of being, as a sacred meal, in which the love of God and neighbor are celebrated and perfected.

Muslim reader:

Common symbol.

Christian reader:

Common meaning.

Facilitator:

Yet while Christians and Muslims share the symbol of Meal in their vision of shalom/salaam, they understand the symbol differently.

Muslim reader:

We envision meal as our reward in the next life for our self-yielding to God in this. For we believe that after death we will reunite with our spouses in our resurrected bodies. We will be perfectly at one with each other and with all other pairs and with God, delighting without weariness in the good gifts of creation and in human exchange that has been purified of all harm.

The Holy Qur'an says: (Note: Read the separate Qur'anic passages below as one continuous passage.)

Those foremost in the next life will be those foremost in faith in this:

Those drawn closest to God.

They will dwell in gardens of joy,

Many from former times,

Only a few from our own.

They will recline on couches inset with gold,

Facing each other in perfected love,

Waited upon by youths who will never know death

Who fill goblets, pitchers, and cups with a pure liquid

Causing no ache, confusion, or intoxication,

And who offer whatever fruits they wish

And whatever flesh of fowl they desire. (Sura al-Waqi'a 56:10-19)

They will recline among lote-trees heavy with fruit,

under acacias with tiered flowers

in extended shade

and water ever-flowing

and fruits in abundance

always in season

always permitted,

and with them their spouses

raised high among the blessed

for we will bring them all into renewed being

raising them in youth and sinlessness,

loving, perfectly compatible

in age and righteousness... (Sura al-Waqi'a 56:28-38)

No vain talk will they hear there, no mischief,

But only the words "salaam, salaam." (Sura al-Waqi'a 56:25-26)

"Salaam"— a word from their Most Merciful Cherisher and Sustainer. (Sura Ya-Sin 36: 58)

We anticipate this paradisaal meal even here, while on earth, at the conclusion of our two great yearly feasts, at the end of Ramadan and at the end of the Hajj.

Christian reader:

We envision meal as our fullest union with the Risen Christ, symbolized in the sharing of the wine and bread of his Body given for us at the last supper with his disciples before his death on the cross.

The Gospel of Matthew tells the story this way:

“While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said: ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you; for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father’s kingdom.” (Matthew 26: 26-29)

We anticipate the fullness of this celebration even in this life. We do so in imitation of Jesus’ own love of table-fellowship, for our Gospels tell many stories of Jesus’ delighting to break bread with the people of God, especially those who were poor and marginalized. Yet he always taught that the bread he came to share was the bread of eternal life. We long to eat that bread in its fullness, as resurrected members of the Body of Christ, at table together in the Kingdom of heaven.

Muslim reader:

Common symbols.

Christian reader:

Different meanings.

Muslim reader:

Two meals, similar to the eye, yet very different.

Christian reader:

Different understandings of God deeply affect the way we understand our common symbol of meal.

Muslim reader:

Yet neither of us can understand the symbol of Meal fully. The Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessing upon him, reports God’s saying of this paradisaal Meal, “I have readied for My righteous servants what no eye has ever seen, and no ear has ever heard, and no heart of man has ever conceived.” (See Muhammad Asad’s n. 15 to Sura as-Sajdah 32:17)

Christian reader:

Likewise St Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians, referencing the prophet Isaiah, says, “No eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what

God has prepared for those who love him’ — these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit.” (1 Corinthians 2: 9-10)

Muslim reader:

Our common symbol of Meal points to a reality beyond our grasp: the fullness of our unity with each other and with God.

Christian reader:

Yet the symbol of Meal not only strengthens our faith in the present but also orients us to our goal and fulfillment, directing our faces even here and now, even in the midst of war and prejudice, towards God’s beauty and glory, the source and stimulus of human enlightenment and spiritual flourishing.

Muslim reader:

A goal we reach in a Space & Time by following a Path — our map on that Path a Book, our way forward illuminated by a Light, our bodies purified during the journey by Water, disciplined by Posture, and strengthened by Meal.

Facilitator:

Let us walk together now strengthened by that Meal, confident that by pursuing the common good God will not lead us astray, but will instead bring us into the Salaam prepared for all those who sincerely love God and neighbor.

Muslims:

Amin.

Christians:

Amen.

After a minute of silence, the facilitator extinguishes the large candle. The session begins.

Discussion of Reading Assignment (75 minutes)

There are two major parts to this segment. You will need to make copies of Session Seven – Attachment A for everyone for the first part of segment B.

A. From Blunder to Blessing (20 minutes)

Pope Benedict created a controversy in 2006 with his speech in Regensburg, Germany, as discussed in pages 157-162 in the text. In a large group setting, using the four questions below, review the chronology of events, note how this incident moved from blunder to blessing, and discuss what elements were present that changed an adversarial situation into a situation of deeper understanding and appreciation of the common ground of the two faiths.

1. Chronology of Events:

- Pope’s speech in Regensburg, Germany on September 13, 2006
- 38 Muslims scholars send “An Open Letter to the Pope,” on October 13, 2006
- No response from the Vatican

- Common Word document signed by over 100 Muslims leaders and scholars in 2007
 - Month-long conference of Muslims and Catholics in Rome in Fall, 2008
2. From Blunder to Blessing:
 - Note why the Pope’s use of the quotation of the fourteenth-century Byzantine emperor, Manuel II Paleologus, was problematic.
 - Briefly identify the elements that were present that changed an adversarial situation into a situation of deeper understanding and appreciation of the common ground of the two faiths.
 3. Ask participants who have had a similar experience — something that looked like a disaster turned into a blessing — to *briefly* share the experience.
 4. Discuss what these experiences tell us about the power of God’s grace and the goodness of people.

B. Themes of a Just Society

1. Small Group Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Give everyone a copy of Session Seven-Attachment A

In small groups discuss the seven themes of a “public theology” which provide a framework for a just society. (The themes are found on pages 171-174 of the text.)

If there are 14 participants, seven groups may be formed and each group is assigned one theme. If there are fewer participants, each group will discuss more than one theme.

To move the themes from abstract principles to concrete cases, the group will discuss an example or two of the theme being lived out in everyday life, as well as one or two examples when the principles were violated. The examples and violations should include some from the local community, as well as national and international examples.

2. Large group discussion (40 minutes)

Ask each small group to report back to the large group. Write key words on flipchart paper or a white board. Participants can add additional examples of the principle being honored or violated.

Break (15 minutes)

Business and Announcements (5 minutes)

1. Give the reading assignment for the Eighth and last Session, Chapter Eight of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*. Suggest that people read the chapter in light of the issue which the group will choose later in this session. They may wish to make brief notes as they read the “*Practical Do’s and Don’ts*” on pages 192-193.

2. As part of the planning session the group will benefit from a “listening” conversation from a member of the community the project is intended to help. A staff person at

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Catholic Charities, a meal program, or a Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD) community organization, may be able to identify someone who is willing to share their story with the group. It is also helpful to have the staff person, or informed volunteer attend with the “client.” By the end of today’s session the group will have a focus for their service project. The facilitator will ask for names of resource people who may be able to attend the next meeting and bring a client as part of the listening session. Following the segment below, ask members of the group to volunteer to help with inviting the guests for the next meeting (Attachment B).

3. Remind participant(s) who signed up to bring refreshments for the next session.

Finding a Focus of Action (45 minutes)

Share with participants that the purpose of this section, of the whole module in many ways, is to help the group move into some level of collective action.

Large Group Discussion

Together, review the “violations” of the themes of just society from the flipchart paper to discern what social issues are evident. The group may also add other important issues in the community that were not listed on the summary of the discussion before the break. On another sheet of newsprint (or white board) the issues are listed. Members may speak to the relevance and the importance of addressing a specific area of concern.

Voting with Post-It dots

After 20 minutes or so, give participants three Post-It dots which they will use to vote for the issue they wish the group to address in an action project. A person may use the three “votes” in any way he or she likes, e.g. all three dots or votes can be used for the same issue or can be divided in any way he or she chooses.

Identifying Contact People

For this last piece, a copy of the Session Seven-Attachment B chart should be reproduced on a large piece of flipchart paper or on a white board as a framework for recording information and tasks for members of the group. Also, give everyone a copy of Attachment B.

After the votes are tallied, the group will discuss the top two or three issues to discern the most appropriate course of action for the group. The group will try to arrive at consensus on which issue or human concern will be its focus. The group will identify the organizations in the community which are already addressing the issue, including the contact person. Members of the group may volunteer to invite a contact person and a “client” from organizations that are currently addressing the identified issue.

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Once again the facilitator and the Muslim and Christian participants gather in front of the table with the Scriptures and the rolled-up prayer rug. The facilitator relights the large candle. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers have their scripts.

After a pause for reflection of about a minute, the facilitator begins:
How did the symbol of Meal serve us this evening?

Muslim reader:

It revealed the means of our mutual strengthening and the goal of our intention to love God and neighbor.

Christian reader:

It gave us hope that while differences between us remain, the fulfillment of our desire for salaam will come to fruition in the work we do together for the common good

Facilitator:

And were you able to say what that common work might be?

Muslim reader:

We did not yet able to do that. But we explored and affirmed many principles of social justice which we share not only with each other but also with all people who desire good for their brothers and sisters.

Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening. Let us leave further enlightenment to God and go in peace, grateful that God has brought us so far along the Path in only seven weeks, to the vision of a Meal prepared for all who love Him and Him alone and their neighbor as themselves.

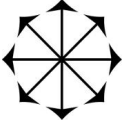
Muslims:

Amin.

Christians:

Amen.

After a minute of silence, the facilitator approaches the table to extinguish the large candle and the session ends (unless the participants have decided to conclude with the common prayer).



Session Seven — Attachment A

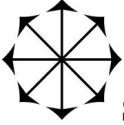
Love of Neighbor in Action
Themes of a Just Society

Small Group Discussion (10-15 minutes)

In small groups discuss the seven themes of a “public theology” which provide a framework for a just society. (The themes are found on pages 171-174 of the text.) If there are 14 participants, seven groups may be formed and each group is assigned one theme. If there are fewer participants, each group will discuss more than one theme.

To move the themes from abstract principles to concrete cases, the group will discuss examples of the theme being lived out in everyday life, as well as examples when the principles were violated. The examples and violations should include some examples from the local community, as well as national and international examples.

Theme	Example	Violation of theme
Dignity of each person		
Common good		
Rights and Responsibilities		
Rights of workers and dignity of work		
Solidarity		
Option for the poor		
Care for creation		



Session Seven—Attachment B

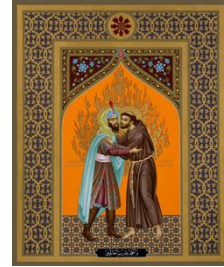
Contact Person and Guest

NOTE: The guests should be invited to bring any audio visual materials (including a short DVD, power point slides, songs, etc.) which will help them clarify exactly what their project entails.

Issue	Current Organizations Addressing issue	Contact person(s) in the organizations	Member of JustMatters' group making contact	Notes or Comments



Session Eight



Leaving the Tent. The Land Ahead.

Participants will have:

- Read Chapter Eight of *In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan*
- Read the material on JFM and its other programs
- Invited a contact person and a “client” from an organization that is addressing the issue which the group has chosen. (These guest will be part of the “Listening and Hearing” described on page 186 of the text and below.)

Items Needed for this Session

- A table spread with a white cloth
- A pillar candle and matches
- The Arabic Qur’an and the Bible standing upright on either side of a pillar candle
- The symbols used throughout the module: the two smaller candles, a small water basin, a clock, a picture of the solar system, a rolled up prayer rug, a plate with cup alongside
- Whatever objects were used in Session One to suggest a path through the desert
The objects should again be arranged on the floor in front of the table as if leading towards it.
- AV equipment that the guest speakers might need

Schedule for this Session

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Minutes</i>
Welcome	5 minutes
Opening Ceremony	10 minutes
Guest Speakers	50 minutes
Break	15 minutes
Discussion and Next Steps	65 minutes
Evaluation	5 minutes
Closing Ceremony	5 minutes
TOTAL	155 minutes

Note to Facilitators

Facilitators will need to be sure to get to the Session early to do all of the set up for the Opening Ceremony and to set up and test any AV equipment the guest speaker may have. It is important that this is done before any participants arrive.

The question for this final session is: How does the newly formed community of Muslims and Christians put in practice the faith commitment it has nurtured during the previous sessions?

Here, religious difference no longer plays the key role that it did in previous sessions. Participants during the eighth session should be able to work from a common basis of understanding, as they look for ways to demonstrate through praxis/jihad their obedience to the prophetic commandment to love God and neighbor.

Yet a group of Muslims and Christians working together for the common good is in a sense its own praxis, its own jihad. The very fact that such a group actually exists, and that its existence is a direct outgrowth of its commitment to love God and neighbor — this fact alone is significant, and can have enormous impact, regardless of the particular issue (homelessness, environmental advocacy, immigration, prison reform, etc.) the group may be devoting itself to. This isn't to denigrate the importance of the area of praxis the group chooses to engage in, or to minimize the importance of the quality of the attention the group gives to it. It's to say that, given the current climate of anti-Muslim sentiment in the US, the group's visibility as living witness to interfaith solidarity is central to its mission. A high priority for the group will be projecting its identity to the greater society through its good works.

Your key task throughout the final session, then, will be in reminding participants of the importance of the public dimension of their future praxis/jihad together, whatever the form the praxis/jihad takes. The group cannot overcome all forces of religious intolerance by serving in a city soup kitchen, but it can, through its service and its public promotion of it, set in motion counter-forces which will, in God's good time, bear much fruit.

You will also need to remind participants of the online evaluation.

Session Eight Outline and Notes

Welcome (5 minutes)

As facilitator, try to begin each session with a few words of transition from the previous session and to say a little bit about what will be covered in this session. You might want to say something like the following: "In Session Seven we discussed the themes or values of a 'public theology' and we related those themes to concrete examples. We also discussed concrete examples where those themes and values had been violated even in our own community. This discussion led us to clarifying the issue or social concern that we will address as a group in our outreach, our "action" (praxis or jihad) together. We

know that we have much to learn about the issue we have chosen to work on, so we have invited two resource people who will deepen our understanding. We are invited to listen with open hearts to our guest speakers. After the break we will discuss what we have heard and continue making plans for our work together.”

Opening Ceremony (10 minutes)

You will need: a table spread with a white cloth; the Arabic Qur’an and the Bible standing upright on either side of a pillar candle; matches. Leave space between the Qur’an on one side and the Bible on the other for a representative collection of the symbols used throughout the module: the two smaller candles, a small water basin, a clock, a picture of the solar system, a rolled up prayer rug, a plate with cup alongside. Arrange chairs as in session one, with whatever objects were used in session one to suggest a path through the desert. The objects should again be arranged on the floor in front of the table as if leading towards it.

The participants and facilitator stand back of the chairs, opposite the table, and facing it, the symbolic pathway once again in front of them. After an appropriate moment of silence, the facilitator goes forward along the path to light the central candle, followed by the Christian and Muslim reader, walking together. The Christian and Muslim light the smaller candles from the central candle, the Christian lighting the candle nearest the Bible, and the Muslim the candle nearest the Qur’an. When the two smaller candles are lit, the other participants come forward two-by-two, a Muslim side-by-side with a Christian (i.e. not in separate religious groups as in session one). They stand alongside the facilitator and the two readers. The facilitator is the first to take his/her seat, followed by the two readers, who sit together. The other participants fill in the remaining seats, alternating Muslim and Christian.

Facilitator:

We come together, Muslims and Christians, for the final session of this module. We are just as eager as we were in Session One to know how we might fulfill the divine command that we love God and neighbor.

Muslim reader:

Yet we are no longer constrained by our differences.

Christian reader: **We are instead energized by them.**

Muslim reader:

We remember that God calls us together so that our very differences might enable us to grow more deeply in holiness. Listen again to the Qur’an, as we did in Session One:

“We have made you different, we have made you male and female, we have made you different tribes and nations, so that you might come to intimate knowledge of each

other; the most generous of you in God's eyes are those most God-conscious; for God is all knowing, most wise." (Sura al-Hujuraat 49:13)

Christian reader:

Yes: God calls us together, not to dissolve our separate identities, but so that we can realize our true oneness in Him. Listen again to the New Testament:

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace; in his flesh he has made both groups into one and has broken down the dividing wall, that is, the hostility between us. He has abolished the law with its commandments and ordinances, that he might create in himself one new humanity in place of the two, thus making peace, and might reconcile both groups to God in one body through the cross, thus putting to death that hostility through it."

(Ephesians 2:13-16)

Muslim reader:

We honor your faith in the power of the blood of Christ to reconcile enemies.

Christian reader:

We honor your faith in God's power to bring humankind to unity through their very differences.

Muslim reader:

We do not need to become baffled or offended by our differences.

Christian reader:

We can rest in "creative tension" as we employ the symbols that both divide and unite us.

Muslim reader:

We trust in the image of the Path to help us move us as one community towards shalom, salaam, fullness of life together.

Christian reader:

We trust in the image of the Message or Book to inform our understanding and to strengthen our will for the journey.

Muslim reader:

We trust in the image of the Light to keep us from straying or forgetting or falling, and to attract us to God's beauty.

Christian reader:

We trust in the image of Water to cleanse us of the dust of attachment, inaction, lack of zeal, or of zeal for the wrong things.

Muslim reader:

We trust in the image of Space and Time to orient us to God's good creation and to God's fulfillment of that creation in the world to come.

Christian reader:

We trust in the image of Posture to discipline body, heart, and mind to act as one in service to God and neighbor.

Muslim reader:

We trust in the image of Meal to nourish us on our journey and to allow us to taste even now, even here, the consummation of our longing.

Facilitator:

Strengthened in faith and hope by these symbols we hold in common, let us move towards a concrete expression of the community we are becoming. Let us embrace a praxis/jihad that is true to our principles and that will act as a positive sign of how Muslims and Christians can work together for the common good.

All:

Amin/Amen.

After a pause for reflection, the facilitator puts out the candle, and the final session begins.

Guest Speakers (50 minutes)

Note: Any AV equipment should be set up in advance of this segment.

This is the time when the group will hear from the guest speakers on the selected issue. A discussion will follow the presentations.

Introductions and presentations (30 minutes)

Those from the group who invited the speakers should introduce them and explain to them briefly the unique or special nature of the present gathering (if this has not been done before). They should reassure them, however, that the same principles that guide other faith-based social action groups guide this group as well.

If a client from the service project is able to join the conversation, he or she would be invited to tell his or her story. The client's story and experience helps to put a human face on the issue and begins to create a sense that "we are all in this together." If possible the issue should be explored from the client's perspective and experience.

Discussion (20 minutes)

Questions at this stage should be focused on soliciting advice from the speakers on practical matters: principally, on how to connect with groups already active in the chosen area, but also on how best to make public the present group's special identity as a faith community composed of Christians and Muslims.

Break (15 minutes)

Discussion of Reading Assignment and Next Step (65 minutes)

Large Group Discussion

A. Debrief the presentation by the guest speakers. (15 minutes)

Some questions to consider:

- What new information did you learn about the issue?
- Did the guest speakers change your understanding of how you can help?
- Is there a way your group can build a relationship with the guest speakers and the organization they represented?

B. Planning for the “praxis” and outreach project (45 minutes)

- Consider the “Practical Do’s and Don’ts” on pages 192-193 of the text.
- Make arrangements for keeping each other informed about taking the next step: connection with those already active in the chosen area. Probably a sub-group, consisting of at least one Muslim and one Christian, should be in charge of the necessary networking.
- Develop a plan for publicity in the local media to highlight that you, a faith community composed of Muslims and Christians, are working for the common good. This message is sorely needed in an atmosphere where a “Christian” pastor burning the Qu’ran gets the world’s attention and where high levels of ignorance and mistrust of Islam and of Muslims poison our national life.
- Agree to a time to meet as a group after the action to evaluate the quality of the experience both in personal terms, as an expression of faith, and the impact on addressing the specific need. If the group feels at this point that deeper understanding of the chosen issue is needed, the group can consider studying the issue (or another one) more deeply. Other JustMatters modules could provide guidance for that study. Their specific Christian focus could easily be adapted by a group such as the present one. See Attachment B for a comprehensive list of other, issue-specific JustFaith Ministries JustMatters modules.

C. Summary of Next Steps (5 minutes)

- Review the next steps and who is responsible for what steps.
- Assign a note taker to keep track of who is doing what.
- After the session, send out the notes to all of the participants so that everyone is “on the same page.”

Evaluation (5 minutes)

Share the following with the participants: JustFaith Ministries provides an online evaluation for this module. This online evaluation is easy to complete and should not take more than fifteen minutes. It can be accessed with the “clickable” link provided in the Table of Contents of the Participant Packet. The evaluations are very important to the ongoing development of this and other JustFaith Ministries JustMatters modules, and we

are asked to complete the online evaluation *within two weeks*. Also, it is important to note that once you start the evaluation, you will need to complete the whole thing at that time.

Closing Ceremony (5 minutes)

Once again the facilitator and the Muslim and Christian participants gather, this time in front of the table. The facilitator relights the candle, the participants, arranged as before in a semicircle around him, alternating Muslim and Christian. The Muslim and Christian volunteer readers (the same ones as before) have their scripts.

Facilitator:

Where did we start from this evening?

Muslim reader:

We started from our common commitment to love God and neighbor.

Christian reader:

And from our decision to bring that commitment to life in dedication to our chosen issue. [The speaker names the issue.]

Facilitator:

And where did our path this evening take us?

Muslim reader:

It took us to a place where we could begin to walk with other groups along a common path of service, in concrete solidarity with those in need.

Christian reader:

And where we could begin to be a sign to others of Muslims' and Christians' true calling, as fellow laborers in the effort to bring shalom, salaam, dullness of life to all God's creation.

Facilitator:

We have come far enough for one evening, and for one Module. Let us leave together along the same path we came in on, confident that God is guiding us step by step towards the goal we both most deeply seek, to love Him with our whole heart and our neighbor as ourselves.

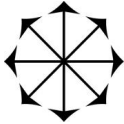
Muslims:

Amin.

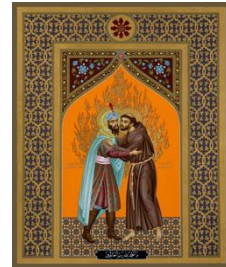
Christians:

Amen.

The participants file out along the symbolic path in the order along which they entered during the Opening Ceremony. The facilitator is last in line.



Session Nine



In the Spirit of St. Francis and the Sultan

A Gathering After the Action!

After the service project the group should reconvene to give thanks and evaluate the action as well as the whole experience of this JustFaith Ministries JustMatters module.

Suggestions for this session include:

- Getting together over a “potluck” meal
- Celebrating the relationships that have been established during the program
- Giving thanks for the ability to work together
- Evaluating the “action” in terms of
 - Impact on the social issue
 - Personal learnings
 - Interfaith witness to the community
 - Other

And afterwards:

- Plan a group reunion in a few months.
- Continue spreading the word about your praxis/jihad, so that others may see Christians and Muslims doing what God has called them to do: love Him and love the neighbor.