

Justice Walking

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

GETTING STARTED

In partnership with



Catholic
Campaign
for Human
Development



breadfortheworld
INSTITUTE



With additional support from: Catholic Charities USA

Making Space for Prayer

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because God has anointed me to bring glad tidings to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

All faithful endeavors begin in prayer. **The way we pray informs the way we live, and the way we live shapes the way we pray.** Before examining the logistics and challenges of coordinating this discipleship journey into Gospel-adjusted living, clear some space for a moment of prayer. Allow the compassionate Spirit of Jesus to guide your hopes and shape your expectations. Trust that, although it takes *your* hands, *your* heart, and *your* work to form a J-Walking group, it is God's movement *through you* that allows the work to be done.

Come, Spirit of justice; overwhelm us.

Fill our hungry hearts.

Ignite in us the fire of compassion.

Reshape our lives and send us out to restore and renew the beauty of your Creation.

(Pause and repeat)

General Information

Welcome to JusticeWalking (J-Walking), an initiation into gospel living!

This step-by-step guide is intended for adults who plan to coordinate a J-Walking group in their diocese, parish, or high school. You should already be generally familiar with the J-Walking process and its core components.

The JustFaith Ministries staff is available to walk with you throughout the planning and implementation phases of the program. We are available by phone or email to answer your questions and consult with you on any issue or concern you might have. We hope that you connect with us as you need!

Please read through this entire document and then follow the steps outlined below to launch your J-Walking group.

Please note that you must re-register your group with JustFaith Ministries each year, even if you have registered and done the program in a previous program year.

Step One: Choose Coordinators

J-Walking builds covenant community with all participants – younger and older. The process is founded on the support and guidance of two coordinators.

The recommended model for a JusticeWalking group involves two coordinators—mature, faithful adults over 21 years of age with a strong commitment to gospel living. J-Walking coordinators encourage participation, inspire prophetic insight, and set the tone for the process. They model commitment for the other J-Walkers. Coordinating a J-Walking group is a life-giving commitment that requires a willing, open, and prayerful spirit.

The most important qualities of a JW coordinator include:

- the ability to truly listen to young people and receive their wisdom with faith
- the willingness to affirm or challenge a group to go deeper and stretch boundaries

Who might be an adult J-Walking facilitator?

- Youth minister
- Teacher
- JustFaith Ministries program graduate
- Parent of a J-Walker (with the consent of the young person involved)
- Volunteer in youth ministry

***If you have no direct experience in ministry with youth, seek the guidance and support of a youth minister or teacher.*

Before implementing the following steps, coordinators should identify a general start and end date for the process.

Step Two: Form a Group of Advisors (Optional)

This optional step is intended to cultivate ongoing support of JusticeWalking coordinators.

A supportive group of adults that meets periodically will enhance the J-Walking experience, especially for the J-Walking coordinators. Create an advisory group by compiling a list of potentially interested adults, such as parents, graduates of JustFaith Ministries programs, pastors, principals, parish or diocesan staff, teachers, and others:

- Personally invite four or five of these people to meet with you.
- Outline the J-Walking process for them.
- Invite those gathered to consider serving as advisors: committing to two or three meetings over the course of the journey. A first meeting could include offering assistance to the coordinators as they establish a J-Walking group. At subsequent meetings, advisors may listen to coordinators' stories of success or struggle and offer support or advice as needed.

Step Three: Find a Sponsoring Agency

J-Walking builds community within a receptive parish, school, or diocesan office.

This organization provides a gathering place and a broader community with whom J-Walkers can share the journey. It also guarantees oversight and support, especially in screening adults and providing insurance coverage. J-Walking is designed to complement existing parish, diocesan, or high school ministry; many of the gatherings should be located on church or school property.

Use the promotional materials from the Promotion Toolkit to explain the J-Walking process to interested campus staff, faculty, or diocesan staff. Make the following points:

- J-Walking creates a small community of adults and young people who try to integrate the gospel message and the challenges of Catholic social teaching into their lives.

- J-Walking is a program of JustFaith Ministries. JustFaith Ministries works in partnership with Catholic Relief Services, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Bread for the World, and Maryknoll Affiliates (with additional support from Catholic Charities USA).
- J-Walking does not replace religious studies or youth ministry; it is a discipleship process that will deepen and broaden existing spiritual formation efforts.
- J-Walking groups are self-sustaining and require minimal oversight from the sponsoring agency.
- If you live in an area where J-Walking has been offered in the past, invite someone who has completed the program to speak firsthand. Personal stories of transformation are powerful resources to use when talking about the program.

Step Four: Choose a Meetings at the Margins Site

Every other session of J-Walking is held at a local social service agency. These sessions are known as the Meeting at the Margins sessions.

The core purpose of Meeting at the Margins sessions is to form relationships with people J-Walkers may not otherwise meet. These visits are NOT service opportunities; rather, they are invitations to share life together and learn the names, faces, and stories of those on the margins.

Selecting and contacting the agency are the J-Walking coordinators' responsibility, and **must be accomplished before scheduling the J-Walking calendar**. Each community will offer its own unique possibilities. Some of these might be:

- eating at a soup kitchen and talking with clients
- playing games with residents at a low-income nursing home
- tutoring refugees or immigrants at an ESL school
- sharing activities with developmentally disabled adults at a day care center
- doing crafts with folks at an addiction recovery center
- offering child care at a family homeless shelter
- participating in a weekly potluck dinner at a Catholic Worker House
- spending time with students at an after-school program in a poor neighborhood

Please refer to the *Meeting at the Margins* document for a more detailed introduction to the Meeting at the Margins sessions and for more detailed instructions on how to select and contact an agency with which to partner.

Step Five: Find a Meeting Space

J-Walkers need a gathering space, such as a meeting room or classroom, for regular two-hour sessions.

J-Walkers meet for twelve sessions. These meetings can be scheduled on a weekly or bi-weekly basis. Only **six** of the twelve sessions are located at the parish or school; every other meeting takes place at a social service agency with which the group forms a relationship (see Step Four).

Any multi-purpose room that is small enough to foster a sense of intimacy for prayer and dialogue will work well as a meeting site. The setting for J-Walking gatherings is a small circle of people, seated on chairs or directly on the floor. Avoid sitting at tables, or in any arrangement that breaks up the circle. Request permission to rearrange tables and chairs for your gatherings.

Step Six: Create a Safe Environment

J-Walking coordinators observe safe environment protocols and maintain healthy boundaries.

Ministry with young people necessarily involves a degree of risk and a great deal of care. Dioceses, parishes, and schools have implemented policies to ensure the safety of young people and adults in ministry settings.

J-Walking coordinators should consult with staff at the sponsoring agency (a youth minister, a teacher, diocesan staff, etc.) for information about training requirements and policies. All dioceses require that adults in ministry with minors (under 18 years) comply with a required criminal records check, though practices may vary. Parishes or schools may require additional training sessions. Risks can be minimized by maintaining clear boundaries, communicating with and involving parents, keeping a healthy adult-youth balance, and using common sense.

Obtaining parental permission is a necessary part of the J-Walking registration process. Additional permission/release forms are included in the program materials for the Meeting at the Margins sessions, retreats, and the Justice Pilgrimage.

As with all ministries involving young people, adults are strongly cautioned to avoid situations in which they are the lone adult with young people.

Step Seven: Set a Program Schedule

J-Walkers make time for what matters most. People lead busy lives and struggle with conflicting school, work, and social commitments, but not all of these commitments bear equal weight or merit.

J-Walking coordinators should determine the timeline *before* inviting prospective participants into the process. Participants and their families should be aware of the demands and benefits of this long-term commitment *before* entering into the process. A J-Walking schedule is provided in this document to assist you in putting together a program timeline.

Session Dates

Be attentive to school and parish calendars, and seek the advice of teachers, parish staff, and parents in order to avoid conflicts. Planning sessions around a regular pattern enables J-Walking to become a natural part of the rhythm of life. For example, J-Walkers might meet for the 'at-home' sessions on Wednesdays at 7:00 PM, while alternating sessions (Meeting at the Margins sessions) meet on Saturdays at noon at a local soup kitchen.

Planning Retreats and the Public Dialogue

Three retreat experiences are incorporated into J-Walking: the Opening Retreat (overnight), the Justice Pilgrimage (two-day immersion), and the Closing Retreat (one-day). Retreats are vital to the experience and each fulfills a unique purpose. Any attempt to bypass or shorten these retreats will

seriously impact the quality of the J-Walking experience. Please use the J-Walking Schedule to assist you in selecting dates for the retreats.

An opportunity for J-Walkers to share their experience of transformation is built into the process. The Public Dialogue is a forum in which parents, families, teachers, and other community members gather to hear participants' prophetic witness. Securing a space and planning for this event well in advance will empower J-Walkers to spend time tapping their wells of wisdom to offer inspiration to others.

Committing to a Schedule

Committing to a process requires personal sacrifice for the benefit of all. Participants will need to make space for J-Walking. This is a counter-cultural message. As with commitments to studies, sports, and extracurricular activities, participants remain faithful when teachers, mentors, and ministers support and affirm their efforts.

Flexible Scheduling

The J-Walking process is divided into three stages, each comprising four sessions and an activity (retreat, pilgrimage, or public dialogue). These sessions can be scheduled weekly or bi-weekly. J-Walkers are expected to read, reflect, and journal between meetings. Since this is an intensive process, you are advised to insert breaks between the three stages to make space for "down-time." Encourage J-Walkers to organize occasional social gatherings to deepen community and enjoy the blessing of each other's company.

Step Eight: Form a J-Walking Group

The size of a J-Walking group varies between seven and twelve people.

In contrast to our cultural bias for activities "en masse," J-Walking imitates Jesus' invitational model of a small, hand-chosen band of companions. The task now turns to recruiting a small group of older teenagers. Resist the temptation to enlarge the group beyond twelve members. If a large number of people apply, look for additional adults to coordinate a second J-Walking group.

Introduce J-Walking to young people by making general and personal invitations. Use the promotional resources to make announcements for parish bulletins, school newsletters, or the diocesan newspaper. Announcements are most effective when followed by a personal invitation. All invitations should be directed to young people **and** their families.

Personal Invitations

People – young and old – respond most readily to a personal connection. Pattern your invitation after Jesus' example: call people by name and challenge them to put aside life's entanglements to walk together as disciples. If possible, ask young people who have already experienced J-Walking to make a presentation at a youth event or class.

Keep these points in mind:

- **Be direct about the limited size of the J-Walking group.** Avoid accepting nominations to bolster the number of participants. It is better to have five committed people than twelve who are willing to "give it a try."

- **Be clear that this process is not for everyone, only for those who want it.** J-Walking is counter-cultural and demanding, not for those who are mildly interested. Participants must choose willingly to enter into the process.
- **Be honest about the level of commitment expected.** Motivated people tend to over-commit and spread their lives thinly. Offer the challenge to **make** time for this process as a priority, rather than trying to **find** time to “fit it in.”
- **Be attentive to signs of interest expressed by the young people.** Follow up with an invitation to answer questions or share more information with families.
- **Make sure that the application deadline is clear.** Allow everyone at least two weeks to respond.

Step Nine: Register with JustFaith Ministries

Visit our website or call our office to renew your user license each program year.

Our staff is always available to help accompany you in this process.

Step Ten: Host an Informational Family Meeting

Schedule the Informational Family Meeting three to four weeks in advance of the time you intend to begin the J-Walking process.

This hour-long information session should be a prayerful time, offering family and participants a taste of what lies ahead. Request the use of a room at the sponsoring agency for this meeting, ideally in what will become the regular J-Walking gathering space. Inform parents of the date, time, and location of this meeting when you notify them of the young person’s acceptance into the process. If possible, coordinators may want to have a copy of the J-Walking books and other resources to display at this meeting. Invite potential participants to bring their calendars or planners.

Walking in the Reign

J-Walkers join a wider group of seekers, walking confidently against the flow into a world where God’s compassionate justice reigns.

It is the Spirit, and the passion of our convictions, that draws people into community and inspires us to choose uncommon paths toward abundant life. May you be guided through prayer to committed discipleship and led into life-affirming relationships along the margins of society.

JusticeWalking Planning Guide

Task	Responsible	Target Date	Done
1. Step One: Choose Coordinators.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure two adult coordinators. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review the program preparation documents. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a general start/end date for the process. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
2. Step Two: Form a Group of Advisors (optional).			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and invite three to four people to meet with the coordinators during the JW process. 			
3. Step Three: Find a Sponsoring Agency.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify a sponsoring agency. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet with potential sponsoring agency contact(s) to introduce them to JW and secure their support. 			
4. Step Four: Choose a Meetings at the Margins Site.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read the <i>Meeting at the Margins</i> document. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List potential agencies to approach about hosting your group's meetings at the margins. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discern together at least two different sites to investigate. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each coordinator connects with one or more sites: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Call to schedule a visit. ○ Send a follow-up letter/email. ○ Make a site visit. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet to share feedback and select one agency with whom the group will commit to have six sessions at the margins. 	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
5. Step Five: Find a Meeting Space.			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure a meeting space for the six meetings to be held at the sponsoring church, school, etc. 			

6. Step Six: Create a Safe Environment.			
• Consult with sponsoring agency staff about diocesan requirements for adult ministry with minors.			
• Undergo screenings/trainings required by the diocese (and the school/parish, if they have additional requirements).			
• Adapt permission slip to meet requirements.			
7. Step Seven: Set a Program Schedule.			
• Use the J-Walking sample schedule and program outline to assist you in setting dates.	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
8. Step Eight: Form a J-Walking Group.			
• Adapt the flyer, bulletin inserts, etc.			
• Contact youth ministry staff, pastors, teachers, etc. about the program.			
• Make personal invitations and distribute applications.	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
• Review applications and select candidates.	<i>Both coordinators</i>		
9. Step Nine: Register with JustFaith Ministries.			
• Notify applicants.			
• Register and submit payment.		<i>Ideally 5-6 weeks before start date</i>	
• Order program books, journals, DVD, and CD.		<i>3 weeks before starting</i>	
• Calculate projected expenses and determine the cost for J-Walkers to participate in the process.			
10. Step Ten: Host an Informational Family Meeting.			
• Establish meeting date/location.			
• Invite applicants.			
• Delegate facilitation of the meeting.			

JusticeWalking Schedule

Event	Co-Facilitators†	Date(s)	Time(s)	Place
Family Meeting	<i>Coordinators</i>			
Opening Retreat (<i>Overnight</i>)	<i>Coordinators</i>			
Session One				
Session Two*				
Session Three				
Session Four*				
Justice Pilgrimage (<i>two days</i>)	<i>Coordinators</i>			
Session Five				
Session Six*				
Session Seven				
Session Eight*				
Public Dialogue (<i>two hours</i>)	<i>All J-Walkers</i>			
Session Nine				
Session Ten*				
Session Eleven				
Session Twelve*				
Commissioning Retreat (<i>one day</i>)	<i>Coordinators</i>			

*** These sessions take place at the site for Meeting at the Margins sessions.**

† **Each J-Walking session will be co-facilitated by one coordinator and one participant** (with the exception of the Family Meeting, Opening Retreat, Justice Pilgrimage, Public Dialogue, and Closing Retreat).