

# Engaging Spirituality

*Live deeply. Love broadly.*

For Potential Engaging Spirituality Participants and Facilitators

## Program Overview

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## Breathing Space in Turbulent Times

*Jesus came and stood among them and said "Peace be with you..." When he had said this he breathed on them and said,  
"Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

-John 20: 19, 22

Take time to reflect as you review this outline of the scope and focus of Engaging Spirituality, including:

- ☉ A description of spirituality that compels us to embrace the world from our depths.
- ☉ An outline of the themes and components of this process.
- ☉ Resources, requirements, and steps for implementation

### Make Space for Prayer

*The way we pray informs the way we live. The way we live shapes the way we pray.*

All faithful endeavors begin by opening a space for prayer.

Before investigating the opportunities outlined in the pages ahead, quiet yourself.

Invite the compassionate Spirit of Jesus into this moment with you, to open your mind and stretch your heart.

*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

### Signs of Gospel Integrity

Moving away from attachment to outcomes.

Moving toward humility and simplicity.

Moving from willfulness to willingness.

Moving gracefully in and out of silence and solitude.

Moving out to embrace the world with a broader sense

of connection, compassion, and co-responsibility.

### Indications of Spiritual Vitality

Becoming... Connected, Contemplative, Compassionate, Communitarian

*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 the earth.*

## We All Hunger for Integrity

*What moves you deeply, guides your thoughts and actions?*

*What lies at the heart and center of your world?*

Spirituality fuels our life-long journey to God, who is source and wellspring of life.

We could also describe it as the deep motivating force for our lives.

In this sense, spirituality determines the quality of our being.

Whether we are aware of it or not, we all operate out of some kind of spirituality. Jesus explained it as *where you put your heart*.

### Set your heart on God's Reign and justice!

-Matthew 6:33

*The one who attempts to act and do things for others or for the world without deepening (his/ her) own self-understanding, freedom, integrity, and capacity to love, will not have anything to give others.*

-Thomas Merton

### Sooner or later, we all deal with fragmentation, dislocation, disintegration...

As the loves, labors, losses, and longings of our lives ripen us, we search ever deeper for connection.

We hunger for intimacy – *the closeness that is capable of changing us*.

We yearn to be whole, without the constricting bonds, separations and mindsets that shrink our hearts and limit our lives.

In our fractured world, many people presume this level of communion to be beyond the scope of regular folk, believing at best that we might glimpse it by retreating from or rising above our ordinary lives.

Humble mystics like Brother Lawrence of God and Thérèse de Lisieux remind us, that we can all *practice the presence of God*, even while we wash the dishes!

Engaging Spirituality offers daily practices for living deeply (*a contemplative life*) and loving broadly (*a compassionate life*). These practices include activities and attitudes that foster reverence such as:

-  mindful attention to the moment,
-  recreation and rest,
-  compassionate outreach,
-  spiritual reading,
-  prayerful listening...

## We All Hunger for Integrity

Integrating practices like these into our daily living develops *holy patterns* that do justice to mystery and sacredness in every aspect of our lives. As we engage spirituality with other seekers, we become acutely aware of the **wonders** as well as the **wounds** in our daily communion with life.

*Don't think about what we should do; think about what we should be.*

-Meister Eckhardt

### Spirituality is never a private matter!

It informs and shapes our social order (*and vice-versa*).

Our human communities, and the social systems we create, reveal the state of our soul. The quality of our relationships to life reflects what lies within us.

EngagingSpirituality invites us to live our lives in creative tension with two powerful Spirit impulses:

☉ *to withdraw* from the bustle and complexities of the world

☉ *to immerse* ourselves in the gospel tasks of tending to the most vulnerable and working for justice in the social dimension of life

*Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part.*

-Luke 10:41-42

### Spirituality for Today's Disciples

Jesus clearly encouraged his followers to adopt a receptive, contemplative attitude over busyness. Yet he was also fully engaged in this world, a minister of God's love, a healer, a feeder and a prophet. His message to Martha is a reminder to us all that we too will experience *the undivided life* when we focus our life's energy on becoming disciples, living into God's Reign, here and now.

The EngagingSpirituality process looks to Jesus, the active-mystic, as our model of integrity or holiness.

The life-goal of EngagingSpirituality is to taste that freedom which Jesus embodied and modeled by pouring out his life.

By his words and his witness, Jesus invited his followers to be actively AND compassionately involved "IN" this world, without allowing themselves to be dominated or defined by it.

Following Jesus requires our willingness to enter into places of suffering and darkness with a listening heart.

## Breathing In and Breathing Out

### Where has following Jesus taken you?

#### **WARNING!**

*Engaging Spirituality picks up the trajectory of Jesus' prophetic ministry and mission.*

*It calls us to engage injustice with a spirit of compassion, opening our lives to gospel justice and peace.*

*It invokes the disturbing Holy Spirit, to unsettle us from complacency.*

*It requires a willingness to grow a wider, tender heart, an open mind, a deeper love for poor and vulnerable life.*

To follow Jesus means to live broadly and love deeply, balancing our lives between being an active AND a reflective presence.

This involves deepening our awareness of suffering and injustice, coming to terms with mystery, and becoming *present to Presence in all and through all*—honing our sensitivity to the sacred presence of God in *the now*.

When we welcome the world into our depths, when we practice contemplative attention AND reach out with compassion, we deliberately place ourselves into the path of grace.

### **All spirituality is linked to some kind of action.**

Rather than withdrawing from the world and its complications, Engaging Spirituality leads us DEEPER into the field of relationships and connections.

The mundane tasks of our work, the challenges and joys of our relationships, and the great global struggles, all combined, form rich soil in which to root our lives, and sharpen our awareness of the *holiness* at the heart of it all.

### **Engaging Spirituality opens up space...**

*to revive our souls, deepen our awareness, uncover pathways to simpler, focused and connected living.*

### **Great Crises... Spiritual - Moral - Social - Environmental ...Great Awakening**

Across the globe the human family is waking up to the realization that we are living through an unprecedented period of crisis.

## Engaging Spirituality is...

Those who are painfully aware of the tragic realities of these times remind us with urgency that “things” must change.

*But these things do not begin to change until we do.*

Some see our current age as a time of transition and suggest that we are on the cusp of a great awakening. Changing our perspective can lead to new understandings and attitudes that generate unforeseen *avenues* and *opportunities*.

Engaging Spirituality can enable us to tap into a spirit-reservoir of energy for renewal and restoration.

- ...searching for an undivided and connected life.
- ...an invitation to practice living spaciously and gracefully.
- ...an exploration that reinforces our link to God and our responsibility to life.
- ...all about connecting — widening our circle of care.
- ...other-focused — offering our presence in concrete ways to crying need.
- ...bold and risky discipleship.
- ...being present, aware, awake, and seeking to live simply.
- ...choosing courageous involvement with life.
- ...open to reconciling, healing, blessing, and growing.
- ...resolutely gentle and challenging.

## A Small-Group Process

- 🌀 8-10 individuals in a group
- 🌀 Twenty-one 2½ -hour sessions
- 🌀 Spiritual practices, engagement at the margins, mutual accompaniment
- 🌀 Intensive and resource-full
- 🌀 Spiritual reading texts, a prayer journal, video presentations
- 🌀 Essays by spiritual teachers
- 🌀 Personal contributions (*Bearings Letters*) by contemporary spiritual pathfinders

## Unique Components

- 🌀 2 Retreats and 2 Prayful Immersion Experiences.
- 🌀 Personal Outreach Engagement. *Participants commit to regular visits to a ministry placement.*
- 🌀 Prayerful Listening Sessions.
- 🌀 6 Engaging Practices.

## 3 Movements toward a Prayerful Engagement of Life

### COME

**Out to the LIGHT:  
The Positive Current**

*Engaging*  
Sacred Space...

*Engaging*  
Wonder...

*Engaging*  
Gratefulness...

### HOLY

**Into the DARK:  
The Negative Current**

*Engaging*  
Violence & Suffering...

*Engaging*  
Mystery...

*Engaging*  
Darkness and Loss...

### SPIRIT

**Down to EARTH:  
The Grounding of Holiness**

*Engaging*  
Oneness...

*Engaging*  
Healing & Reconciling...

*Engaging*  
Justice and Joy...

### Right Relationships

The relationships that develop among participants provide the intimate context for the integration of spiritual deepening and broadening social awareness that we seek by engaging spirituality.

## Implementing the Process: Resources and Requirements

### Rich Resources

The content for Engaging Spirituality is communicated through a rich array of online resources that outline the practices of quiet prayer, prayerful listening, heart sharing dialogue, Bearings Letters, and journal reflection.

Additional resources include the purchase of a small number of books and DVDs. Facilitators can order these directly through **JustFaith Ministries Books & Videos.**

### A Pair of Co-Facilitators

Each Engaging Spirituality group is led by 2 co-facilitators supported (as needed) by JustFaith Ministries' staff. After registering online, co-facilitators receive access to comprehensive session materials and outlines for each component of the process

### 8-10 Participants

Co-facilitators invite and convene participants for their small group. Support materials for recruitment include: bulletin announcement, flyer, and online video. Co-facilitators lead a 45 minute **Introductory Session** that offers a taste of the process and a forum to address questions. Co-facilitators distribute a **discernment** resource. To complete the discernment, prospective participants arrange a brief **participant interview** with facilitators.