



Farming and Eating for a Healthy World October 5, 2020

Dear friends,

We humans are built for community. During this time of social distancing, it's crucial that we remain connected, holding one another in love and support. It's for this reason that **each week during the COVID-19 crisis, we'll be sending you a short resource** to use in a virtual meeting held over the phone or via video conferencing. This weekly resource is a great tool to stay connected with your current and past JFM small groups. It is also a great resource to use individually, or with groups of friends or family to stay connected and engaged in a meaningful way. These reflections will provide a time to pray together, check in with one another, and have conversation around a topic of importance.

This week's offering includes two pieces of writing: Jack Jezreel's reflection in the October 6 edition of JustNews (<https://justfaith.org/resources/newsletter/>) and Wendell Berry's "The Pleasures of Eating" (<https://www.ecoliteracy.org/article/wendell-berry-pleasures-eating>). **If you plan to use this resource with a group, please forward both articles in advance of your meeting.**

In the meantime, we're offering tips and tools for facilitating all of our current programs through videoconferencing. While we hope that this weekly resource will spiritually sustain your community while in quarantine, **[now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs](#)**. Our new eco-justice program, "Sacred Land: Food & Farming," will be launched on October 15! The call to seek justice for the planet is as important as ever!

Last but not least, generosity is, at its core, a benefit to everyone. When you donate today, your gift helps us sustain individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out](#). Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

Thank you for continuing to care for one another during this time of heightened anxiety. Know that we are praying for you!

Stay well,
The JustFaith Ministries Staff



Welcome and Opening Prayer (5 minutes)

When everyone has dialed in, begin your time together with these or similar words:

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you, despite that we can't be together in person. Today we'll begin with prayer and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll have some conversation around two articles you were sent in advance. Finally, we will close in prayer. Most importantly, though, this will be a time to care for one another and to be the community we're called to be.

Let's take a few seconds of silence to pause, to listen to our breathing, and to be present in this space.

Pause for 30 seconds before beginning the opening prayer.

Let us pray.

As we are together, praying for peace, let us be truly with each other. (pause)

Let us pay attention to our breathing. (pause)

Let us be relaxed in our bodies and our minds. (pause)

Let us be at peace with our bodies and our minds. (pause)

Let us return to ourselves and become wholly ourselves. Let us maintain a half-smile on our faces. (pause)

Let us be aware of the Source of Being common to us all and to all living things. (pause)

Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own Compassion – towards ourselves and towards all living beings. (pause)

Let us pray that all living beings realize that they are all brothers and sisters, all nourished from the same source of life. (pause)

Let us pray that we ourselves cease to be the cause of suffering to each other. (pause)



Let us plead with ourselves to live in a way which will not deprive other beings of air, water, food, shelter, or the chance to live. (pause)

With humility, with awareness of the existence of life, and of the sufferings that are going on around us, let us pray for the establishment of peace in our hearts and on earth. Amen.

– Thich Nhat Hanh, Earth Prayers, p. 381

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

Ask these open-ended questions. If you're by yourself, journal about them.

Note: If you're with a group, these questions have the potential to take up a lot of time. Some weeks may require more check-in time than others, depending on the needs of the group. To provide a shorter yet meaningful check-in time, choose ONE of the questions below, and ask participants to share a ONE sentence response.

- **Before we begin this week's reflection, let's take a few minutes to check in. How is everyone feeling?** (It will be a bit more difficult via phone to know if someone is being talked over or is trying to get a word in.... Be sure everyone has a chance to speak).
- **What is something you're struggling with this week?**
- **Where have you seen a sign of hope this week?**

Other optional questions include: What is something you've learned about yourself during this time of social distancing? Where have you experienced a "thin place" in the last week? Where have you seen beauty this week? What is one new behavior you'd like to continue doing when the virus has passed us by?

Reflection (20 minutes or so)

Re-introduce the readings by Jack Jezreel and Wendell Berry, **sent to the group in advance (see note on page 1).**



Then ask:

- How are these essays speaking to you today? What wisdom can you receive from them?
- Berry offers seven suggestions about how people can reconnect themselves with responsible eating. Which of these have you already practiced? Which ones seem compelling?
- Jezreel describes his experience working and relating to land as an “experience of the divine.” What experiences of the outdoors have been sacred moments for you?

Announcements (10 minutes-ish)

- Remind participants that today’s conversation offered only a brief insight into a huge topic. If they would like to take a deeper dive into this subject matter, **they should consider the NEW eight-week program, “Sacred Land: Food & Farming,” which is available starting October 15.**
- Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff in order to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. In order to support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.
- JustFaith Ministries is currently hosting a monthly webinar series called “Acting for Justice While Sheltering in Place,” in which an expert on a justice-related topic will offer tips for taking action during COVID-19. **Join us for our next gathering on October 8, 7:00 p.m. EDT, when Shantha Ready Alonso from Creation Justice Ministries joins us to discuss care for the earth.** Visit the [JustFaith Ministries Facebook page](#) for more information on other times and topics.
- Are there any opportunities for action or advocacy happening in your community this week? Invite participants to share ways to support the work of local groups working for justice.

Closing Prayer (10 minutes-ish)



Then say: Before we join in the closing prayer, let us pause to acknowledge the presence of the Holy Spirit, who is as close as our very breath.

Pause for 30 seconds

Let us pray.

The food which we eat
Is Earth, Water and Sun, compounded through the alchemy of many plants.
Therefore Earth, Water and Sun will become part of us.

The food which we eat
Is also the fruit of the labor of many beings and creatures.
We are grateful for it.

May it give us strength, health, joy.

And may it increase our love. Amen

Adapted from “Unitarian Prayer,” Earth Prayers, p. 345

Then, in these words, invite any participants who have a prayer, a concern, or a request to briefly share it:

We are disciples on a journey.

We are the body of Christ, broken for the world.

We hold one another as we carry the concerns of our neighbors.

If you feel moved, please share your prayer aloud.

Leader: We pray also for the members of the JustFaith community across the country. Unite us through the power of your Holy Spirit, that together we might participate with you in the building of your Kingdom, in order to create a more just and peaceful world. Amen.