



A Sneak Peak of Our New Program!

Dear Member of the JustFaith Network,

We are grateful that you are a part of our JustFaith community. Whether you are a graduate of one of our programs or you are just getting to know us, we hope this offering will help sustain you spiritually and equip you to work for justice.

Our bi-monthly resources are sent the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month; you can access an archive of past resources by logging into your JustFaith account. You can use these resources for personal reflection, or you can invite your friends, family, Sunday School class, or current or past JFM small group to join you in-person or via video conferencing. If you are new to video conferencing, Zoom tutorials are available on our YouTube page – [Click here to access.](#)

While we hope that these twice-monthly resources will inspire and sustain your community while distancing, now is also the perfect time to start one of our regular programs. This resource is an excerpt from our brand-new 8-session program called **“Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times.”** For more information, click [here](#); scroll down to the square labeled “Civil Dialogue,” and click on “Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times.”

Note: If you are doing this resource with a small group, ask participants to complete the following steps before attending your gathering:

- Print or download the following documents:
 - Feelings list: <https://www.cnvc.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/CNVC-feelings-inventory.pdf>
 - Needs list: <https://www.cnvc.org/sites/default/files/2018-10/CNVC-needs-inventory.pdf>
- Bring a journal or blank sheet of paper and a pen.
- Think of something somebody said to you that you didn't like hearing. This should NOT be something traumatic, but it should still be stimulating enough to generate some emotional heat.



Last but not least, all of our work is a collaboration with people like you. When you donate, your gift helps us sustain and equip individuals committed to making the world better. [Click here to help out.](#) Also, please feel free to forward this resource to friends and family!

With gratitude,

The JustFaith Ministries Staff



Welcome and Opening Prayer (10 minutes)

Ask participants to have the Feelings List and journal handy for the opening meditation. Begin your time together with these or similar words.

Welcome, friends! It's so good to be with all of you. Today's session is an excerpt from JustFaith Ministries' new program called "Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times." We'll begin with an opening meditation and spend a few minutes checking in with each other. Then we'll watch a video and engage in an introspective exercise together, which will introduce us to a body of wisdom called Nonviolent Communication. 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 meditation. Share your screen as you read the following poem aloud, pausing between sentences.

The Guest House

This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.

A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.

Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.

The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.

Be grateful for whoever comes,



because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

– Rumi

Then say:

Let's look back at our lists of feelings. Now take a moment to silently welcome each feeling – regardless of whether you deem it positive or negative, regardless of whether you feel justified in having felt it, and regardless of whether it led to words or actions you now regret. Welcome each feeling as if you are welcoming a guest into your home.

Pause for about a minute.

Re-read the final stanza of the poem:

Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.

Check-In Time (10 minutes or so)

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

- **Before we begin our 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).
- **Today we'll learn a basic tool that can help us to navigate conversations during this era of polarization and division. Has political polarization affected your congregation, community, or family? If so, how have these divided times affected you spiritually and emotionally?**



What is Nonviolent Communication? (10 minutes)

Introduce the video with the following words:

Nonviolent Communication, or NVC, is one communication tool introduced in JustFaith Ministries' new program, "Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times." We'll now hear from Roxy Manning, whose work is heavily featured in the program, about what NVC is and how it can be useful.

Play "An Introduction to NVC": <https://www.roxannemanning.com/an-introduction-to-nvc/>. Stop the video at 5:25. Move directly to the feelings and needs activity.

Feelings and Needs Exercise (30 minutes)

Introduce the next activity with the following words (read slowly, as there is a lot of important information here):

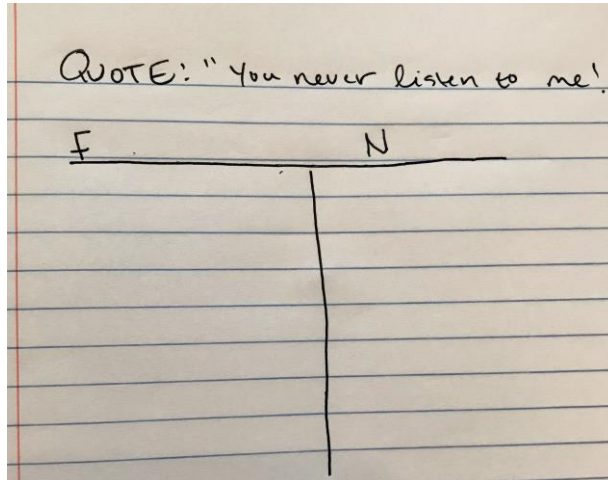
We will now take some time to learn an exercise – which is actually called *The Exercise* – that is a core tool for practitioners of Nonviolent Communication. In this exercise, we'll dig beneath our judgments in order to excavate the universal human needs below and connect with the image of God within ourselves and others.

Here are a few important notes before we begin: this exercise may feel strange or uncomfortable, and, for various reasons, you may feel compelled to make adaptations to the instructions. Know that these feelings and impulses are normal! However, JustFaith Ministries encourages us to give *The Exercise* a try exactly as it is written and to follow the instructions carefully.

Walk the group through the following exercise, in which they'll engage silently.

1. At the top of a blank page in your journal, write down something somebody said to you that you didn't like hearing.
 - Choose something that is NOT traumatic, but is still stimulating enough to generate some emotional heat.
 - Try to think of the exact quote. No story line or background is needed for this exercise, just the quote.

- Examples: “You never listen to me!” “You’re so judgmental.” “Some people actually work for a living.”
2. Now draw a “T” shape on the top half of the paper and write an “F” on the left side and an “N” on the right. *If participants are confused, share your screen and show them the picture below (if you are meeting in person, draw the chart on a piece of paper and hold it up).*



3. On the left side, under the “F” column, write down how you’re feeling when you think about the quote you wrote at the top of the page. Select feelings from the Feelings List. *Note: Double check that participants are looking at the correct list. Also, encourage participants to stick to the list, and to refrain from making up feelings they think “should” be on the list.*
4. On the right side, under the “N” column, write down what you are (or were) needing and not getting, the moment you heard the words. Select needs from the Needs List. *Note: Double check that participants are looking at the correct list. Also, encourage participants to stick to the list, and to refrain from making up needs they think “should” be on the list.*
5. Take a minute to close your eyes, and relax. *Pause for 30 seconds.* Now look at the list again. Does this list represent what you were experiencing? If you feel like something’s missing, go back to the Feelings and Needs Lists and add to your chart.
6. Draw a second “T” shape on the bottom half of the paper, with an “F” on the left side and an “N” on the right, just like before.
7. On the left side, under the “F” column, write down what you imagine the other person was feeling when you heard what they said. (If you really can’t think of what they



were feeling, you can try double-checking your own list. Most people have difficulty completing this step until their own list is really complete).

8. On the right side, under the “N” column, write down what you imagine the other person was needing and not getting in the moment you heard their words. (Again, if you really can’t think of what they were needing, you can try going back and double checking your own list. Most people have difficulty completing this step until their own list is really complete).
9. Take a minute to close your eyes, and relax. After some time, look at all the lists (your feelings and needs, their feelings and needs). Do you feel comfortable that these lists represent what both of you were experiencing? If you feel like something’s missing, go back and look at all the lists again, until you are sure they are as complete as you can get them.

When everyone has finished writing, guide participants through the following reflection questions.

- After completing this exercise, did you notice a “shift” in how you feel toward the person or situation? Elaborate.
- How might naming needs and feelings help to transform our judgments into a way of thinking and speaking that honors God’s image in ourselves and others? (You might need to repeat this question twice).
- Are there any other insights you gained as a result of this exercise?

Announcements (5-10 minutes)

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- Remind participants that today’s materials are excerpted from the 8-session program “Want to Talk? Communication Tools for Divided Times.” If they found today’s gathering helpful, they may consider exploring how they can offer the program in their community. Visit <https://justfaith.org/want-to-talk/> to learn more.
 - Let participants know that the materials for this gathering were free, put together by the JustFaith Ministries staff to equip more people for the work of peace and justice. To support the creation of more resources and programs, participants are encouraged to donate to JustFaith Ministries through justfaith.org.



- 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 or care for the environment.
- On Thursday, November 18, 7:00 p.m. ET, JustFaith Ministries' "Acting for Justice" Series will continue with guest speaker, Tom Ulrich, author of *ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN: Organizing Social Justice Ministry in Faith Communities*. Tom, a veteran of social justice ministry, will give a presentation entitled "A Spirituality for Social Justice Ministry." You can register [here](#).

Closing Meditation (10 minutes)

Introduce the closing meditation with these words:

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

Pause for 30 seconds.

Slowly re-read "The Guest House":

**This being human is a guest house.
Every morning a new arrival.**

**A joy, a depression, a meanness,
some momentary awareness comes
as an unexpected visitor.**

**Welcome and entertain them all!
Even if they're a crowd of sorrows,
who violently sweep your house
empty of its furniture,
still, treat each guest honorably.
He may be clearing you out
for some new delight.**

**The dark thought, the shame, the malice,
meet them at the door laughing,
and invite them in.**



**Be grateful for whoever comes,
because each has been sent
as a guide from beyond.**

– Rumi

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.**

Pause

**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.**