

Justice **WALKING** *Just FAITH*

A Discipleship Journey with High School Students

General Overview 2010-2011

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In partnership with:



JustFaith Ministries works in cooperation with the partner organizations listed on this page and receives over half of its funding in the form of charitable contributions from program graduates.

The JusticeWalking Vision

“Set your hearts first on God’s Reign and God’s justice and all these other things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33

Imagine what would happen to us and our world if we really tried to live the Gospel!

JusticeWalking (J-Walking) is a small-group conversion process that initiates older high school teenagers and adult coordinators into life-affirming relationships, transformed by the Gospel and the application of Catholic social teaching.



J-Walking is an experiment in Gospel living.

What would happen to our lifestyles if we tried to live out the Gospel teachings together?

This prayerful, three- to six-month process brings adults and older high school students into a small Christian community in order to practice Gospel-based living. Over the course of twelve weekly (or bi-weekly) sessions, J-Walkers dialogue, reflect, and experiment with the application of the Gospel and Catholic social teaching to their lives.



J-Walkers build relationships that deepen connections and broaden community.

What would happen to our friendships if we let the Gospels guide us?

Transformation happens through **relationships**. The friendships and relationships that develop during the J-Walking process are the core of the program. J-Walking encourages young people to broaden their circles of awareness, and exposes them to the spirit of “*engaged compassion*” which we call Gospel justice.



J-Walkers are pilgrims in pursuit of a better world.

If we put God’s justice first, what and who would we care about? What would we be looking for in life?

The J-Walking process is framed as a pilgrimage, a *spiritual journey* in which J-Walkers:

- look *at* current realities and their life experiences
- look *into* the depths of their own hearts
- look *through* the witness of prophetic people who reveal the potential of life lived with integrity and compassion.

“J-Walking changes your entire perspective on things and takes down the barriers that hold you back so you can move forward into the world to change and be changed.” Sally Wilcox, Presentation Academy



The Justice Walking Mission

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because God has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim a year of God’s favor.” Luke 4: 18-19

Imagine where a journey as “pilgrims in search of Gospel justice” could take us!

J-Walking means: going against the flow; choosing unconventional paths; crossing social boundaries; entering into “unlikely” relationships; uncovering opportunities to build community; gaining insightful perspectives through personal encounters, reflection and dialogue.



J-Walkers do not follow the crowd.

True to its name, J-Walking is a counter-cultural and demanding small-group conversion process (comprised of 7-12 people).



J-Walking initiates young people into prophetic living.

J-Walkers commit to twelve two-hour sessions over the course of three to six months. There is also an opening and a closing retreat, a justice pilgrimage (spread over two days), and a public dialogue session.



J-Walkers look and listen, read and dialogue, pray and practice.

Reading assignments for J-Walkers are modest (two texts). The context and content for J-Walking focuses on spirituality, dialogue, and building relationships.



J-Walkers are boundary-crossers.

Each J-Walking group develops a relationship with a local social service agency. Every second session takes place at this agency, where J-Walkers spend the first hour visiting with people and the second hour in reflection and dialogue on-site or at a nearby location. The relationships built at the agency and the dialogue sessions that follow help J-Walkers become aware of and challenge the artificial (yet powerful!) boundaries that divide us from one another.



J-Walkers engage in prophetic dialogue with our world.

The process includes a public dialogue session in which J-Walkers offer creative presentations before an assembly of family members, peers and parishioners.



J-Walking is inter-generational and co-facilitated.

J-Walking forms a small community of 5-10 older teens with 2 adults over 21 years of age. Since we are all teachers and learners when it comes to walking justly, everyone—young or old—is a J-Walker. Sessions are co-facilitated by younger and older people working together.

“J-Walking will help you find peace and hope with yourself and your place in a global world.”

Leah Raidt, Presentation Academy



Walking a Heart Path into Justice

*“Come unto me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.
For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” Matthew 11: 28-30*

Imagine walking in the footsteps of Jesus today.
Where would we go? Who would we know? How would we grow?

J-Walkers are moving in a different direction.

This three- to six-month journey will lead young people along different paths, inspire uncommon life-choices, offer faith-based perspectives on the events of our time, re-order life-priorities, and relocate relationships.

Through prayer and ritual, spiritual reading and spiritual practices, journal-keeping and deepening spiritual and social awareness, J-Walkers are exposed to:

- *Prayerful dialogue* - the practice of listening with undivided attention
- *Prophetic living* - the call to live justly in a mis-ordered world
- *Relationships across boundaries* – dialogue and relationship-building that helps us become aware of and challenge the artificial (yet powerful!) boundaries that divide us from one another.
- *Witnesses of Justice* - the stories of those who have struggled to live with integrity



Components of the JusticeWalking process

With the support of family and sponsors, J-Walkers commit to:

- *Twelve two-hour weekly or biweekly sessions*
- *Holding every second meeting (six visits) at a local social service agency*
- *Two days of reflection (an overnight opening and a commissioning retreat)*
- *A justice pilgrimage, prayerfully visiting eight local sites (two days)*
- *Reading and reflecting together on two books*
- *Daily prayer and journal reflection*
- *Six spiritual practices, or experiments in lifestyle adjustment*
- *Conducting a public dialogue with invited guests*
- *Occasional meetings with a sponsor who offers prayerful support.*

“J-Walking goes far beyond twelve sessions. It is a way of life. It changes the way you live your life!”

Allison Ferry, Presentation Academy



Integrated Experiences Unique to J-Walking

“Young people are entrusted in a special way with the task of becoming communicators of hope and workers for peace.”
Pope John Paul II

Imagine the people we would come to know, and the realities that would become important to us, if Gospel justice was the focus of our living!

J-Walking creates small, mobile communities of younger and older disciples willing to walk the holy ground of unfamiliar places and relationships.



Meetings at the Margins

What social boundaries do the Gospels and our faith require us to cross?

Jesus made a regular practice of crossing social boundaries and exposing them for the sinful constructs that they are. J-Walkers are invited to follow Jesus by doing what he did, by walking where he walked, and by daring to examine and challenge the most prevalent social boundaries in our society. To this end, J-Walking groups develop a relationship with a local social service agency over the course of the J-Walking process, with every other J-Walking session being held at the agency. During the first hour of these sessions, J-Walkers focus on forming relationships, building understanding, and developing an awareness of the life experiences of those with whom they visit. In time, and with the help of dialogue and reflection, these relationships widen the circle of awareness of J-Walkers, and help them to recognize the social constructs that might affect their own lives. The second hour of these “*meetings at the margins*” includes shorter reflective sessions that take place at the agency or at a nearby location.



Prophetic Dialogues

What is God asking of us, and who speaks on behalf of loving-justice?

J-Walking is built on dialogue and collaboration. J-Walkers are empowered to speak with a prophetic voice. At the end of the process, J-Walkers work together to create a public event to challenge and inspire others and facilitate a prayerful dialogue with a group of guests. Parents, sponsors, friends, teachers, parishioners, and JustFaith graduates are typically invited to this two-hour event. J-Walkers testify to their struggle to live the Gospel, share the realities they are investigating, facilitate a faith-sharing dialogue, and challenge participants with steps for practical action.



Reflecting the Signs of our Times

What are the crises of our times? How does the Gospel speak to these realities?

J-Walkers “*pray the news.*” Every session begins by opening a newspaper and reflecting on current events through the lens of our faith. J-Walkers also have “*J-Walker Journals*” to guide their prayer and spiritual reading between sessions.



“J-Walking opens your life to the community around you, it makes you more aware of everyone and everything in this world we share.” Tyler Hobbs, Trinity High School



Spiritual Practices

Based on our actions and attitudes, choices and relationships, would anyone know we are following Jesus?

Walking the Gospel path detours us from the mainstream. J-Walking offers six counter-cultural challenges to address the gap between what we profess and how we operate in the world. Between sessions, J-Walkers experiment with spiritual practices and reflect on new perspectives they have gained. These challenges can lead to creative tension at home, at school, and at work. Each practice has two aspects: relinquishing or “fasting from” an activity or attitude, and embracing an alternative.

For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it. Matthew 7:14

Embracing

Enjoying nature, outdoor activities

Reducing possessions, recycling

Observing Sabbath, being with people

Eating more simply, eating with others

Practicing forgiveness, kindness, cooperation

Spiritual reading, conversation, contemplation

Walking in the Web of Life

Living with Less

Doing Less, Being More

Eating Ethically

Reconciliation and Collaboration

Tuning-in to Silence and Solitude

Fasting

Artificial, noisy environments

Shopping, buying, clutter

Over-activity, hurry, busyness

Over-eating, junk food, snacks

Violent images, aggression, competition

Over-stimulation of media, TV and Web

These spiritual practices are intended to open minds, soften hearts and put J-Walkers on a path to Gospel justice that begins at home, in our ways of living and loving.



Shared Prayerful Leadership

J-Walking materials provide prayers, rituals, reflections and symbols for each gathering. Sessions are co-facilitated with young people so that each participant shares in the tasks of leading prayer and dialogue.



Justice Pilgrimage

J-Walkers take to the streets in their hometown area to reframe the practice of pilgrimage. Groups spend two days visiting a variety of sites where they reflect, pray, journal and share insights on the realities before them. This inner and outer journey helps J-Walkers in the recovery of soul and vision, inviting them to localize the implications of Gospel justice.



Themes of the J-Walking Journey

“While they were discussing, Jesus himself came near and went with them... And he said to them, ‘What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?’” Luke 24: 15-17

J-Walking offers a flexible format that can be organized into weekly or every-other-week sessions. The opening retreat is an overnight experience to cultivate the bond among J-Walkers.

(Micah 6:8) ...and what does the Lord require of you?



Opening Retreat: *“Doers and Dreamers”* (Overnight)

Step One –Investigation ...to ACT justly

Session One: *Holy Web of Life*
Session Two: *Sacred and Significant**
Session Three: *One Planet, One People*
Session Four: *Image and Likeness**



Justice Pilgrimage: *“Repairing Relationships”* (Two 5-Hour Days)

Step Two –Experimentation...to LOVE tenderly

Session One: *Right and Responsible Living*
Session Two: *Life Work**
Session Three: *Embracing Poverty*
Session Four: *Table Space**



JusticeWalking Dialogue: Public Session (2 Hours)

Step Three –Integration ...and to WALK humbly with your God

Session One: *Planetary Politics*
Session Two: *So Others Might Live**
Session Three: *Justifiable Peace*
Session Four: *For the Good of All**



Commissioning Retreat: *“Living Under the Influence of Justice”* (7 Hours)

Sessions marked with an asterisk () take place at the social service agency.*

“J-Walking opens your eyes to things you see on TV that you don’t think really happen. It helps you become more aware about what’s actually going on in your own community, not just miles away. J-Walking helped me find ways to change and begin to deal with the things that distress me on TV.” Sara Klingsmith, Presentation Academy



Resources and Requirements for the Journey

“When he was at table with them, he took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him...” Luke 24:30-31

Right Relationships

The relationships that develop as a result of the J-Walking process provide the context for transformation. The content for each session is communicated through prayer, dialogue, journal reflection and the spiritual practices. Ritual, symbol and journal-keeping are tools J-Walkers use to break open their relationship to the God of life.



Resource-full Reading

Reading and journal-keeping are central to J-Walking. Every J-Walker is expected to read and reflect on two books, read by the entire group.

No Room at the Table

Donald Dunson

Orbis Books, 2003

How Much is Enough?

Arthur Simon

Baker Books, 2003

They offer challenging perspectives on what it means to be “*moved by compassion*” and “*turned around*” to Gospel justice. Additional resources include the *J-Walker Journal*, a DVD, and a reference book on saints and prophets for our time. The companion CD *Songs for JusticeWalkers* (by Bryan Sirchio) was specifically compiled for J-Walking. The songs are woven into the session outlines.



Small is GREAT!

Forming “*small circles of care and prayer*” reflects the discipleship model we find in the Gospels. Smaller groups are more conducive to deeper sharing, and a handful of people is less invasive at the social service agency. The ideal number for a J-Walking group is between 5-10 young people and 2 adults. The minimum recommended number for a J-Walking group is 7 people.



Integrating older and younger J-Walkers

J-Walking communities integrate rather than isolate young people. As in any initiation experience, transformation occurs in communities where dialogue is encouraged, integrity is proven through practice, and young and old become companions. Since older teens are generally better equipped to appreciate the vision and the demands of Gospel justice, J-Walking is designed for high school juniors or seniors.



Families, Sponsors and JustFaith Graduates

The “*JusticeWalking Dialogue*” session provides an opportunity for the family, parish and school to share in the process. JustFaith groups and graduates are encouraged to participate in this dialogue session and act as sponsors or supporters for the process.

“J-Walking connects young people to what we should recognize in the world and what we all need to be aware of in order to deal with injustice as a reality in our world.”

Evan Rhea, Presentation Academy





Walking into a different paradigm

But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. Luke 5:38

The J-Walking mission focuses on “*transformation from the inside out,*” and is designed to move young people beyond traditional models of justice education. As in any invitation to life-conversion, J-Walking is elective. No one can be “*required*” to participate. J-Walking will certainly enhance existing diocesan, parish or high school initiatives, but it is NOT intended to replace a Confirmation program, a theology class, parish-based youth ministry, or a service/retreat program. J-Walking fits best as a focus group within existing church or diocesan youth ministry, or as an after-school group in a Catholic high school.



A Safe Environment

To ensure the safety of adults and young people, all adult J-Walkers must undergo background checks, and need to be familiar with diocesan policies concerning ministry with minors. J-Walking groups should be sponsored by a recognized church agency (parish, school, diocesan office) that can provide insurance coverage for events located outside the church or school campus.



Introductory Presentations

Presentations are offered to introduce the JusticeWalking paradigm to adults in parishes or dioceses. The four-hour presentation examines the role of prophetic ministry with young people, describes the conversion paradigm, and orients potential coordinators. Hosts are expected cover transportation and housing costs.



Registration Fee

A single fee of \$200 provides a parish or school access to the JusticeWalking materials for the 2010-11 program year. Groups that register receive comprehensive materials outlining the content for each gathering, facilitation tips, and retreat guidelines. JustFaith Ministries’ staff offers telephone and email consultation.

“J-Walking is a great way to learn about yourself and how your choices really affect other people. It challenges you to consider the consequences of your actions, directly and indirectly. You need to be willing and open to change in order to let J-Walking work on you.” Sean Sullivan, Trinity High School

More Information

To inquire about an introductory presentation, request the “*Getting Started*” document or register for the process, contact the JustFaith office at justicewalking@justfaith.org or 502-429-0865. You may also visit our website at www.justfaith.org.

