

JustFAITH

Catholic Version

General Overview 2008-09

This document is intended as a quick overview for those planning or considering JustFaith and provides a very concise description of the JustFaith program.

If you would like more information on how to promote, plan and prepare for JustFaith, email the JustFaith Ministries office (info@justfaith.org) or call (502) 429-0865 and request the Catholic version of the “JustFaith Getting Started 2008-09” electronic document, provided at no charge.

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JustFaith Ministries

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JustFaith Ministries works in partnership with:



Catholic Campaign for Human Development



Catholic Charities USA



Catholic Relief Services

Introduction

Thank you for your interest in the JustFaith® program. Our Catholic faith and biblical tradition extend an extraordinary invitation to each of us and our faith communities to become agents of God's compassion and healing in a wounded world. The Good News of Jesus Christ is both a comfort and a promise for the poor and, at the same time, a call to those of us who are not poor to be linked with God's vision of justice and reconciliation. The Church's history shines with examples of courage and commitment of those who addressed themselves to the needs of our most desperate sisters and brothers.

JustFaith, a thirty-week adult educational and formational program, offers an opportunity for parishioners to experience a spiritual journey into compassion. Most of us long to be a generous and compassionate people, however, occasions to explore this in a deliberate and engaging way have largely not been available. JustFaith provides a lively and challenging format to read, view, discuss, pray, experience and be formed by the justice tradition that changes lives, inspires faithful witness, and transforms the world through love and service. Across the country, JustFaith has proven to be a potent and successful strategy for expanding and energizing parishioner commitment to address human suffering. Indeed, many participating parishes choose to repeat the JustFaith process year after year.

The JustFaith program has been offered in over 900 parishes in over 100 dioceses throughout the United States. JustFaith is partnered with the three largest anti-poverty Catholic organizations in the U.S. — Catholic Campaign for Human Development, Catholic Charities USA and Catholic Relief Services.

Overview

JustFaith is an extensive, conversion-based process that provides a context in which participants can grow in their commitment to care for the vulnerable and to become advocates for justice. This program serves to strengthen the growing commitment of parishes to be agents of social transformation, mercy and compassion.

JustFaith consists of weekly sessions and takes advantage of the best forms of adult learning including books, videos, guest speakers, discussion, prayer, two weekend retreats and four immersion experiences. The intent is to provide a tapestry of learning opportunities that emphasize and enliven the remarkable justice tradition of the Church. Participants are not only exposed to a substantive and demanding course of study but are also afforded the privilege of becoming community with other participants and sharing a journey of faith and compassion that is both life-giving and challenging.

Engaging in the Church's social mission is, without argument, one of the most challenging aspects of our Gospel tradition. JustFaith is a process that recognizes the difficulty of the call to live compassionately and provides a wide range of compelling resources to communicate this tradition. The call of our faith to bring justice to a broken world deserves a preparation that honors the complexity of this task.



Starting the Program

Planning Group

To begin JustFaith at your parish, gather a group of four or five people to serve as a planning team. This team does not need to commit to facilitation of the actual program, but will help prepare and recruit for the program. This group will use the "Getting Started 2008-09" document to guide their efforts.

Group Size

The optimum size for a JustFaith group is between ten to fifteen people; however, some groups are smaller and some are slightly larger.

Recruitment

Recruitment often involves the use of personal invitations, small group information sessions, bulletin announcements, and promotion in the parish newsletter. Sample bulletin announcements, full-page inserts and specific guidelines on recruitment are offered in the "Getting Started 2008-09" document.

Timing

When possible, it is ideal to start promoting JustFaith in the spring, presuming that the program is to begin in the fall. One approach is do planning in April, recruitment in May and June, and ordering of materials in July.

Program Components

Weekly Meetings

JustFaith consists of thirty weekly sessions. Transformation and conversion of hearts and minds don't happen in just a few weeks' time; therefore, the commitment to thirty weeks has proven to be effective by hundreds of participating parishes. It is highly recommended that JustFaith groups meet every week, except for holidays. The length of each session is 2 ½ hours.

Retreats

Opening and closing retreats are part of the planned syllabus. Retreats are very important and require everyone's participation. Retreats can take place at the parish, a diocesan facility, or in a participant's home with participants going home at the end of each evening. The two retreats are typically scheduled from Friday evening to Sunday noon.

Immersion Experiences

Four immersion experiences are included in the JustFaith syllabus. Each of these typically involves a Saturday commitment. The main purpose of these experiences is to have face-to-face contact with people living on the margins of society and to provide an "out of classroom" experience. These immersion experiences also include social analysis and spiritual reflection.



Co-Facilitation

JustFaith does not require professional staff to facilitate the process and presumes that, in most cases, facilitation will be done by two or more parishioners. While JustFaith is an intensive and rigorous program, the materials are designed so they can readily be used by the average parishioner. No special skills are needed to co-facilitate a JustFaith group, just an interest in social ministry and some experience working with groups. Facilitation is most successfully done by a team of two or three people.

Registration

Registering for JustFaith is simple. Registration forms can be downloaded at www.justfaith.org or by contacting the JustFaith Ministries office. The fee for registration in 2008-09 is \$300 per parish, regardless of the number of people or the number of groups involved within the parish. If a single group is composed of members from different parishes, there is only one registration fee. Also, the fee is waived or reduced for low-income parishes that are encumbered by the cost of registration.

Other Program Costs

Cost of Books

The *approximate* cost of the 11-13 books used each year is \$145 per person. These books are ordered for the entire group by the co-facilitators. Book and video costs can be paid in installments because the materials are ordered intermittently throughout the program year. Some funds may be available to participants who have low incomes. Contact the JustFaith Ministries office for more information.

Cost of Videos

The program also employs approximately 12-14 videos. The cost of purchasing all of the videos the first year is approximately \$200-\$250. Since the majority of these videos will be used again in subsequent years, this cost is greatly reduced in the second and third years of doing JustFaith. These videos may also be used in other contexts within the parish: RCIA, Confirmation programs, adult education classes, youth ministry gatherings, etc.

Guest Speaker Fees/Stipends

The JustFaith syllabus does suggest an occasional guest speaker as local resources allow. Sometimes it is appropriate to provide a stipend for these speakers. Many parishes have funds earmarked for speaker stipends. In many cases, speakers from social service agencies and diocesan offices will gladly visit JustFaith groups without the expectation of compensation.

Closing Note

This program has been spiritually enriching and life changing for many parishioners. The opportunity to learn, discuss, reflect on and experience how to put faith into action on behalf of the poor and vulnerable has transformed many people. Participants frequently say that participation in the JustFaith program has been the most significant spiritual experience they have had as an adult. Thank you for your interest in this life-changing work of faith. We look forward to working with you.

If you would like more information, contact the JustFaith Ministries office.

