

Overview 2008 - 09

For potential co-facilitators
of Engaging Spirituality.



JustFaith Ministries

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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

Welcome to this summary overview of Engaging Spirituality, a project of JustFaith Ministries. Thank you for considering the challenge of co-facilitating Engaging Spirituality. Take time to reflect as you review these pages which offer an outline, in broad strokes, of the scope and focus of the process.

In the pages that follow you will find:

- A description of spirituality that compels us to engage the world from our depths.
- An outline of the themes and components of this process.
- Resources, requirements and steps for implementation.
- Space to make note of your own questions or reflections.

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 and invite the compassionate Spirit of Jesus into this moment 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 toward humility and simplicity.
- Moving from an attitude of willfulness to one of willingness.
- Moving away from attachments to outcomes and expectations.
- Moving gracefully in and out of silence and solitude.
- Moving out to embrace the world with a widening sense of connection, compassion and co-responsibility.

Indications of Spiritual Vitality

- Becoming,...
- communitarian
- connected
- contemplative
- compassionate

† *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.*



Setting The Scene for Engaging Spirituality

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, the source and wellspring of life.

We could also describe it as the deep motivating force for our lives. In this sense, our spirituality determines the quality of our life. Whether we are aware of it or not, we all operate out of some kind of spirituality. Jesus explained it as “where we put our 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, the labors, the losses, and the longings of our lives ripen us, we look ever deeper for connections. We hunger for intimacy – the closeness that is capable of changing us. We yearn to be whole, without the restrictive 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 of the presence of God” while we wash the dishes!

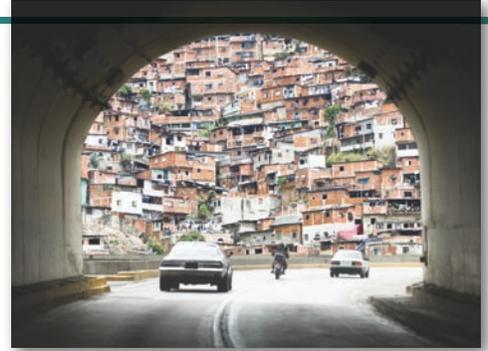
Engaging Spirituality offers daily practices for living deeply (a contemplative life) and loving broadly (a compassionate life). These practices include activities and attitudes that foster reverence such as:

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

Integrating practices like these into our daily lives can help us develop “holy patterns” that do justice to mystery and sacredness in all aspects of our lives. As we engage spirituality with other seekers, we become deeply aware of the wonders as well as the wounds in our daily communion with life.

We Hunger for Integrity

† *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 are a reflection of what lies within us.

Engaging Spirituality invites us to live our lives in creative tension with two powerful Spirit impulses: to withdraw from the bustle and complexities of life (Contemplative Tradition); and to immerse our lives in the Gospel tasks of serving others, caring for the vulnerable and working for justice in the social dimensions of life (Apostolic Tradition).

† *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 Disciples Today

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 we seek when we focus our life's energy on becoming disciples.

Engaging Spirituality looks to Jesus, the active-mystic, as our model of integrity or holiness.

The life-goal of engaging spirituality 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.

Where has following Jesus taken you?

Breathing In and Breathing Out

To follow Jesus means to live broadly and love deeply, balancing our lives between being active AND reflective. This will involve deepening our awareness of suffering and injustice, coming to terms with mystery, becoming “present to presence” – honing our sensitivity to the sacred presence of God in the present moment. When we invite the world into our depths, when we practice contemplative attention AND reach out with compassion, we deliberately put ourselves in 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, to transform and be transformed.

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 sacred presence 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 Crisis.

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

But things do not begin to change until people 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.

With the promise of Christ’s Spirit and the indwelling presence of God, we hold within and among us the spiritual resources necessary to
embrace the challenges, share the struggles,
welcome the changes that lie in store.



Engaging Spirituality is...

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 needy places.
Bold and risky discipleship.
Being present, aware, awake, seeking to live simply.
Choosing courageous involvement with life.
Open to reconciling, healing and growing.
Resolutely gentle and challenging.

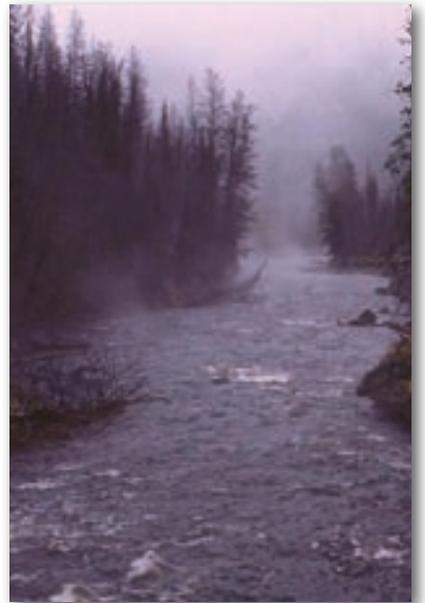
A Small-Group Process for Engaging Spirituality

Engaging Spirituality bears the hallmarks of a JustFaith process
Small-groups of 8-12 individuals.
Groups register in their parishes.
Co-facilitated by two TRAINED participants.
21 weekly (2½ hr) sessions.
Multi-dimensional process.
Retreats, spiritual practices, engagement at the margins,
journal-keeping, immersion experiences,
spiritual reading, spiritual accompaniment.
Intensive and resource-full.
8 texts, video presentations, weekly reflections on
contributions from 24 contemporary spiritual teachers.

Some Unique Components

2 Retreats.
2 Immersion Experiences.
Bi-weekly Outreach Engagement.
Participants commit to 10 visits to a ministry placement
Monthly Prayerful Listening Sessions.
6 Engaging Practices.
Listening Letting-Go
Centering Slowing
Fasting Blessing

† *...may you be strengthened in your inner being with the power of the Spirit... that Christ may dwell in your hearts... as you are being rooted and grounded in love...*
- Ephesians 3:16





21 Sessions ... 9 Themes ...
3 Orientations for Prayerful Engagement

COME

Out to the LIGHT:
The Positive Current

Engaging
Sacred Space ...
creating sacred spaces,
spacious living,
clearing away,
opting for emptiness,
making room for others ...

Engaging
Wonder ...
the world is our cloister,
embracing silence,
the art of noticing,
celebrating smallness,
tending to frailty ...

Engaging
Gratefulness ...
giving thanks and
giving back,
receiving grace,
welcoming the present,
undoing cynicism,
choosing to simplify ...

HOLY

Into the DARK:
The Negative Current

Engaging
Violence and Suffering ...
bearing witness
to injustice,
seeking solidarity,
choosing vulnerability,
learning lament ...

Engaging
Mystery ...
the path of
not knowing,
unmasking illusion,
holding incompleteness,
befriending paradox,
keeping vigil ...

Engaging
Darkness and Loss ...
encountering loss,
reverencing death,
seeking solitude,
bearing sorrow,
learning to wait,
willing to surrender,
ready to receive ...

SPIRIT

Down to EARTH:
The Grounding of Holiness

Engaging
Oneness ...
centering our lives,
sacred friendships,
founding community,
living simply,
the sacred present ...

Engaging
Healing and
Reconciling ...
finding forgiveness,
widening the circle,
living in God's
global neighborhood,
practicing non-harm ...

Engaging
Justice and Joy ...
presuming abundance,
proclaiming peace,
embracing Sabbath,
holding out hope,
becoming a presence
that transforms with
honest humility.

Right Relationships and Rich Resources

The relationships that develop among participants provide the context for the spiritual deepening and broadening social awareness that we seek by Engaging Spirituality.

The content for Engaging Spirituality is communicated through the practices of quiet prayer, prayerful listening, dialogue, BEARINGS letters, journal reflection and the sharing of outreach, ministry experiences. Trainings are located in strategic locations around the nation.

JustFAITH EngagingSPIRITUALITY



Implementing the Process Resources and Requirements for Engaging Spirituality

A Pair of Trained Co-Facilitators

Engaging Spirituality groups are led by two co-facilitators.

All potential facilitators must:

- Apply directly with JustFaith Ministries
- Complete the application and discernment process
- Attend a Regional Training.

Trainings are located in strategic locations around the nation.

For information on the dates and locations of Regional Trainings contact:

Joe Grant
joe@justfaith.org
502-429-0865

A Small Group: 8-10 Participants

Co-facilitators are responsible for recruiting participants for their small group. Recruitment involves personal invitations, bulletin and pulpit announcements, as well as promotional fliers. Promotional materials are included in a Facilitator Manual made available at the Regional Trainings.

Registration and Resources

The cost for a parish or group to register for Engaging Spirituality is \$300.

When co-facilitators register a group they receive comprehensive session materials and outlines for each component of the process.

JustFaith Ministries provides phone and email consultation to assist with issues that arise in the course of implementing the process.

Other costs associated with Engaging Spirituality include the purchase of a small number of books and videos, as well as the costs related to retreat supplies and set up.

Books and videos can be purchased through Sowers Books & Videos, a service created in collaboration with JustFaith Ministries to assure inventory, low prices, and a single source for ordering all materials.

Typically, individual participants cover book expenses, though some parishes have elected to partly or completely subsidize the cost for books.

Introduce, Discern and Interview

Co-facilitators host a 45-minute Introductory Session for potential participants.

This session offers prospective participants a taste of Engaging Spirituality and a forum to address their questions or concerns.

At the end of this session, co-facilitators distribute copies of a two-step Discernment Process to those interested in pursuing Engaging Spirituality.

For the first step of the discernment, applicants respond to a set of reflection questions. To complete the second step, they set up a 20-minute Participant Interview with the co-facilitators.

All participants must complete the discernment process.

An outline of the Discernment Process and guidelines for the Participant Interviews are included in the Facilitator Manual.