



Community Support Nights Foundations

The goal of this **first** session is for the Support People and the volunteers to learn about each others' motivations for becoming involved with JVC. This session serves as an ice breaker as well as a "get to know you" session.

Community depends on members having a deep respect for one another that can be more adequately termed reverence. This reverence, since its foundation is deeper than mere liking or agreement, can carry community members through tension and disagreement.

We can begin cultivating this reverence by putting ourselves aside as we listen to and enter into another person's story without any of our expectations or presumptions or presuppositions. We also develop this reverence by sharing our own stories and inviting people into that experience with us.

1) Opening Prayer

We cannot love God unless we love one another, and to love each other we must know each other. We know God in the breaking of the bread, and we know each other in the breaking of bread, and we are not alone any more. Heaven is a banquet and life is a banquet, too, even with a crust, where there is companionship.

- *The Long Loneliness* by Dorothy Day

2) Introduction to the Process

This exercise is an opportunity for the community and the Support People to get to know each other and begin consciously to hold one another in reverence. Each member of the community should take a few minutes to think through what he or she wants to say before anyone begins so that all attention can be focused on the speaker.

A helpful way to facilitate this is for everyone to write down the answers to the following questions first so they can better concentrate on the speaker.

3) Check In

How are you feeling today? What kind of mood are you bringing to this meeting? What do you feel good about or challenged by?

Rule of Check in: "I am fine," or other shallow or short answers are not acceptable.

4) Exercise

Go around the room so that each person answers the following questions:

- a) What types of things were part of your discernment when you were thinking about doing JVC or becoming a Support Person?
- b) Was there one person or event in your life that prompted you to apply?
- c) What is your strongest motivation for being here?
- d) Of the four values, which one is the easiest for you to understand? Which one you think you will be challenged by and why?

5) Support People

- Encourage the volunteers to take some time to ask each other questions about anything you have heard.
- Point out some of the differences and similarities in the group. This is your chance to realize we all come here from different places, experiences, and perspectives. There is not one of them that is "more right" than the others.
- Discuss expectations for future community nights:
 - See community night outline in the support person and JV handbook
 - Walk through the structure and outline, asking for questions or concerns
 - Set up a day and time for weekly community nights
 - Question and answer period

6) Check Out

7) Closing Prayer

God who is love,
Help us to care for one another, to embody the love that You are.
Help us to know our dependence on one another for prayers,
understanding, example, forgiveness.
May we know we are cared for in our times of difficulty,
And celebrate our communion with You and one another.