



## SESSION A

### Introduction & Getting to Know the Neighborhood

#### **RATIONALE/GOAL:**

The goal of the first session is for the support people to learn more about the volunteers and understand their motivations for becoming involved with JVC. Also, in order for the community to become more familiar with the neighborhood, this session allows volunteers and support people to share perceptions of the area and how each person sees his or her role as an individual and a community in it.

#### **PROCESS:**

After check-ins and the opening prayer, each person should reflect on the questions provided. Some members of the group may have already discussed these topics one-on-one, but, at this time, each member of the community has a chance to share their experiences with the *entire* group. Each member of the group should take a few minutes to think about how they will share their personal narrative. By thinking first of what to share, each person can be attentive to what others are saying. Be conscious of listening without adding anything that is distracting, judgmental, or that shifts the focus from the speaker to someone else.

#### **CHECK INS:**

Start the meeting with each person stating how they are feeling at that particular time or commenting on their high and low points of that day or week.

#### **OPENING PRAYER:**

*May peace enter the hearts of all who join with us as we share the joy and struggles of this day.*

*For the supportive companionship of those gathered here, we ask your blessing, Lord.*

*For the special gift of discipleship we share, we ask your blessing, Lord.*

*For the collective desire to serve others that brings us together we ask your blessing, Lord.*

*For those whose lives we have touched and will touch today, we ask your blessing, Lord.*

*Bless us in our sharing this night. We ask all this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*

#### **I. Introductory exercise: (15 minutes)**

1. Allow time for everyone to reflect on these questions, then invite each person to share one or two points:
  - a. Why did you decide to do JVC (or be a support person)? What is your strongest motivation for being here?
  - b. Of the four values, which one is the easiest for you to understand? Which one do you think you will struggle with the most and why?
  - c. What are you hoping to gain from this experience?

#### **II. Getting to Know the Neighborhood; Choose plan A or B (45 minutes)**

Each person should take a couple of minutes to describe their perceptions of their neighborhood for the group. What have you noticed? What are the sights, smells, sounds? Continue the

discussion with either option A or B below:

A. Neighborhood Map

Using the big paper and markers, draw a map of your neighborhood as a group, with each person representing his or her perceptions on the map. Spend some time afterwards for each person to talk about what he or she added, and any other reflections from the experience. Discuss differences and similarities in your renderings.

B. Perceptions and Descriptions

Take ten minutes of quiet as a group to think and write about these questions:

1. How do I describe my neighborhood to myself?
  - ◆ to my parents?
  - ◆ to college friends?
  - ◆ to coworkers?
  - ◆ to others in the city?
  - ◆ to other volunteers?
2. How do the nuances of these descriptions vary, if at all?
3. What motivates what I share with varying audiences?
4. What perception *do* I pass on and do I *want* to pass on to others?

Take the rest of the time for open discussion.

**III. Yourself in the neighborhood (20 minutes)**

Take some time to discuss how you see yourself in the neighborhood as individuals and as a community.

- A. Do we feel connected?
- B. Do we want to get more involved? Why or why not?
- C. Brainstorm future discussion topics (e.g. Why do we live here? What do we have to give to and take from our neighborhood? What does involvement require? What barriers keep us from involvement?)
- D. Brainstorm future activities (attending neighborhood or church meetings, meeting neighbors, etc.)
- E. If you decide as a group to do more, decide on a plan and assign a coordinator and date for the next discussion or activity.

**IV. Expectations for the Support Process**

Discuss expectations for future Support Sessions, set ground rules, and set up a day and time for bi-monthly meetings.

**CLOSING:**

The Support People close with a prayer