



Jesuit Volunteer International Program Covenant

Aspiring to create a more just and hopeful world, the Jesuit Volunteer Corps engages passionate young people in vital service within poor communities, fostering the growth of leaders committed to faith in action.

We invite you to serve as a Jesuit Volunteer. By accepting this assignment, you agree to live and work as a JV for the next two years. Commitment to this covenant signifies that not only has JVC accepted you, but that you accept and fully desire JVC.

As participants in a faith-based cross-cultural program, JVs are expected to leave behind the dominant cultural preferences for personal status, autonomy, comfort, and acquisition, while increasingly committing to the Gospel's preferential option for the poor. You are called to support and challenge one another to grow in the areas of Spirituality, Simple Living, Community, and Social Justice.

I have discerned and prayerfully commit to the following:

Spirituality: Spirituality is both the awareness of and our reaction to God's presence in the world. JVC is rooted in the Catholic, Jesuit tradition and invites volunteers to explore and deepen their relationship with God and their spiritual lives, both individually and communally. The Ignatian emphasis on being "contemplatives in action" guides us on the journey.

- I will regularly spend time in personal reflection and prayer in order to grow in my relationship with God and others. I will discern how God is calling me to service and will strive to respond to that call during and even beyond my time as a JV.
- I will participate in all weekly spirituality nights and other times of community prayer or reflection by contributing my own gifts and cherishing the gifts of others.
- I will participate fully in the scheduled JVC retreats, including the ReOrientation/DisOrientation (Re-O/Dis-O) retreat.
- I will attend Sunday Mass, appreciating that it may be a different experience than that with which I am familiar. I understand that it is an expectation of the local church community who has invited the presence of JVs and also an opportunity to more fully immerse with the culture and people we live and serve among.

Simple Living: Honoring simplicity allows us to free ourselves from that which keeps us separated from others and commit to a life focused on people, not possessions. Commitment to a simple, sustainable lifestyle contributes to the flourishing of all humanity and all of God's creation.

- I will strive with my community members to live simply in all aspects of my life, exploring ways to challenge each other to simplify even further.
- I will put God and relationships above material possessions and practice Ignatian indifference, appreciating that in a position of privilege, my responsibility is to be a positive presence in coexistence with my brothers and sisters in the world.
- I will live within our JVC budget for all routine living expenses, demonstrating responsible financial stewardship. I understand that for special needs, I may have to provide my own financial resources (e.g. contact lens materials, special prescription medication).

- I will stay within my host country/region for the next two years as an important symbolic and real way of entering into this place and accompanying people.
- I will approach vacation time with the norms of a simple lifestyle, seeking guidance from the In-Country Coordinator (ICC), my worksite supervisor, and JVC staff. I will not let visits from family and friends interfere with this norm; after all, it is I (not them) who choose to enter into this covenant.
- I will prayerfully discern and discuss with my JV community and ICC any leisure travel. When traveling I will recognize that I am exercising my privilege and will maintain simplicity, thinking carefully before participating in tourist opportunities that remain out of reach for the majority of local people.
- I freely enter this cross-cultural experience with a desire to appreciate a culture other than my own. I will use this principle to guide my discernment about the time I spend in communication with family and friends; the time I spend connecting to U.S. culture via the internet and mass media; and when I consider whether to enjoy luxuries frequently extended to expatriates but not accessible to most local people.
- I will consider the toll alcohol takes on the people I serve and its cultural significance when making decisions about alcohol. Aware of the personal, social, and economic costs of illegal drug use around the world, I will not use illegal substances.

Community: Communal life allows for mutual support and encouragement of each other in our work and in living out the four values. It challenges us to be open, compassionate, and willing to grow. We learn that our lives are interconnected and that we have responsibility toward all members as they do to us.

- I will be open and honest with my community members, willing to share my joys and struggles, and listen with care to the experiences they share.
- I will participate fully in community activities, including but not limited to weekly Community Nights, meetings, shared meals (at least four times per week), and reflection.
- I will share fully in communal living with my companion JVs and accept responsibility for maintaining a clean, safe and hospitable environment in the home where we live.
- I will evaluate and dialogue about my behaviors and decisions in light of their effects on my community, the locale where I serve, and the JVC program.
- I will communicate proactively with my community mates, ICC, and JVC staff if I begin to discern an exclusive relationship, being aware of how exclusive relationships affect the community as a whole. I will strive to be intentional, inclusive and sensitive to the common good if I find myself discerning this type of relationship.
- Recognizing I am part of a larger JVC community, I will regularly communicate my needs, concerns, and joys with the JVC program staff and ICC.

Social Justice: In order to work for justice we must become aware of our role in society. As Pope Francis and Catholic Social Teaching affirm, the proclamation of faith and work for justice are inseparable and equally integral to the Christian mission.

- I will exercise social analysis and critical reflection on my experiences to better understand the structures that foster and perpetuate powerlessness and poverty.
- I will examine my own personal history to see how I have benefited or suffered from unjust structures. I will analyze how my behaviors could unintentionally work against my desire to do justice.
- I will embrace the commitment of JVC to engage in anti-racism work which seeks to recognize and stop perpetuating racial injustices. I will actively seek to know the truth of situations, rather than relying on assumptions, prejudices, rumor, and incomplete information.
- I realize that as a guest in my host country, it is not my role to publicly denounce local leadership. While my work as a JV will not be social/political advocacy, I will strive for friendships and solidarity with the people of the local community, particularly those who are marginalized or oppressed by society. I do this not for their benefit, but for mine, recognizing Christ's presence among us all.

Program/Placement:

- I will, upon my arrival, intentionally build the mutual relationship that can be expected between the JVs and the local support community, particularly the ICC. I understand that:
 - a. our goal is to support the Jesuit presence and/or the diocesan efforts and to work in the spirit of cooperation and friendship;
 - b. hospitality and help from the local support community should be recognized as a kindness which we reciprocate as a JV community;
 - c. in cases of serious and urgent need JVs can expect the support of the ICC and JVC;
 - d. financial compensation and JV living expenses are provided by funds from the worksite and JVC.

- I commit to live consistently within the behavioral norms described in the Handbook, specifically chapter 5, section D concerning “Responsibilities of the Volunteer” in my personal life and by supporting and challenging other JVs in my community to live in accordance with these expectations.
- I will arrive at Summer Orientation at the designated time and place.
- I will participate fully in In-Country Orientation, retreats and site visits.
- I will engage in building and maintaining support relationships with JVC staff, the ICC, and other local support persons, recognizing my part in creating a formative program experience.
- I will remain fully committed to my community (JV and local) and my job until the end of my two-year commitment.
- With a desire to be fully immersed in this experience and appreciating the commitments with my various communities and responsibilities, I will refrain from having friends or family visit during my entire first year as a volunteer. Additionally, I will stay for the entire two years without going home, unless a situation of personal health or trauma arises, in which case I will consult with JVC staff and the ICC to discern appropriate measures.

I have carefully read the above Covenant, have received and accept the JVC International Handbook, and in a spirit of solidarity with other Jesuit Volunteers, I enter freely into this two-year commitment.

Signature _____

Printed Name _____

Date _____