

REFLECTION, CONVERSATION, AND EVALUATION

Over the next few days, you will be taking in a LOT of information that will set the groundwork and foundation for not only the coming year or two, but for the rest of your life. In order to assist in synthesizing the information presented during JVC Orientation, we present this retreat journal, a series of guided questions for you to consider individually, as you reflect upon the four core values of the Jesuit Volunteer Corps. It is important that you do some self-reflection, as well as connect and converse with your community members about the four values of JVC.



While each person brings unique perspective/experience/insights/learning/knowledge around each of the JVC values, finding ways to communicate and share your experience with one another serves to deepen and enrich your JV year.

This journal the reflection questions are for you, to capture some reflections as you move through these Orientation days, and to begin some conversation around the four JVC values with your community members.

REFLECTION ON SPIRITUALITY

We ask that you take a few minutes to reflect upon the presentation on Spirituality. To help guide your reflection, and to help facilitate the community conversations about the value of Spirituality, please consider the following:

Reflect: What about the presentation struck a chord with you, or is resonating with you? What is new or surprising to you that you wish to incorporate? What do you find challenging and wish to explore more?

Hopes: How do you hope to grow in your understanding and practice of Spirituality this year?

Sharing: What will you share with others in your community, and how will you express yourself briefly?

Community Discussion – Spirituality

1. Begin by spending a few minutes checking-in with one another.
2. Have someone read aloud the part of the JVC Covenant that addresses Spirituality.
3. Do a brief round of sharing based on your individual reflections on the Spirituality presentation and the reading of the Spirituality portion of the Covenant.
4. Read the following paragraph, and the suggestions below to engage in a lengthier discussion of Spirituality.

In United States culture, Spirituality most often focuses on the individual. Many consider their spiritual journey to be private and personal. Your JVC year(s) encourages you to move beyond a personal expression of spirituality. Jesuit Volunteers are expected to participate in communal prayer on a weekly basis, otherwise known as Spirituality Night. Communal prayer might not necessarily be whatever is 'comfortable' for everyone, yet should not become a 'least common denominator' kind of spiritual conversation where no one is challenged and everyone feels good. Communal prayer should be just that...Prayer.

Suggestions

- Use the prayer resources in your Orientation binder for your initial sessions, to see what it has to offer (and feel free to add your own flavor to those prayers).
- Find a place of worship. While you might not worship together, consider visiting your community mates' preferred places of worship.
- Take turns praying before meals. Consider composing a community meal blessing.
- Have a spirituality check-in periodically to see how everyone feels Spirituality Nights are going.

Points of Discussion

Use the space beneath as a space for your personal reflection. Each community member should share at least one response from the discussion topics below:

- Discuss your previous experiences with prayer, particularly communal prayer.
- Discuss what your expectations of communal prayer are as you come into JVC.
- Share ideas with one another as to what has worked for you in your personal prayer life.
- Discuss the possibility of having a place of prayer in your home, or a section of the house where one can go without being disturbed (this might have to wait until you see your home).
- Share with one another what was the most interesting from the presentations on Spirituality. What questions or points of discussion were raised in your mind?

Personal Reflection

REFLECTION ON SOCIAL JUSTICE

We ask that you take a few minutes to reflect upon the presentation on Social Justice. To help guide your reflection, and to help facilitate the community conversations about the value of Social Justice, please consider the following:

Reflect: What about the presentation struck a chord with you, or is resonating with you? What is new or surprising to you that you wish to incorporate? What do you find challenging and wish to explore more?

Hopes: How do you hope to grow in your understanding and practice of Social Justice this year?

Sharing: What will you share with others in your community, and how will you express yourself briefly?

Community Discussion - Social Justice

1. Begin by spending a few minutes checking in with one another.
2. Have someone read aloud the part of the JVC Covenant that addresses Social Justice.
3. Do a brief round of sharing based on your individual reflections on the Social Justice presentation and the reading of the Social Justice portion of the Covenant.
4. Read the following paragraph and the suggestions prior to a more lengthy discussion of Social Justice.

Social Justice often starts with your work at your placement. For many JVs, work and the Social Justice value form a major part of the draw to JVC and a year(s) of volunteering. Living the value of Social Justice, however, does not end when you leave work and go home. Some say that Social Justice actually starts at home and only then has validity at work. A real challenge for the year(s) is to use your life in community to examine attitudes and patterns which are just and unjust.

Suggestions

- Within the first few months, try to visit each of your community members' work sites during the day (discuss this with your supervisors).
- Actively choose the kind of food you buy and where to shop rather than searching for the cheapest prices.
- Avoid the temptation to use your status as a volunteer to get others to give you things or to elicit free goods.
- Volunteer together on a weekend project.
- Monthly Social Justice check-ins (this is a chance to discuss how each of you is doing individually with Social Justice. How you feel your community is doing with the justice tenant, and make decisions about further involvement).
- Share brief articles and other resources with one another related to social justice issues that interest you, or that you encounter in your placement.

Points of Discussion

Use the space beneath as a space for your personal reflection. Each community member should share at least one response from the discussion topics below:

- Determine your chore schedule. Does it rely on traditional gender roles? If it does, consider a change.
- Discuss why you might want to shop at your neighborhood store, even if it is more expensive and has a more limited selection.
- Discuss if there are any social justice issues that are particularly important to members of your community. Does the whole community want to increase their involvement with efforts and movements relevant to these issues?
- With regards to social justice, why might a Jesuit Volunteer try to avoid using their status as 'volunteer' to elicit free goods and services?
- What might a social justice check-in at meetings include?
- Share what was most interesting from the talk on social justice. What questions or points of discussion were raised in your mind?

REFLECTION ON SIMPLE LIVING

We ask that you take a few minutes to reflect upon the presentation on Simple Living. To help guide your reflection, and to help facilitate community conversations about the value of Simple Living, please consider the following:

Reflect: What about the presentation struck a chord with you, or is resonating with you? What is new or surprising to you that you wish to incorporate? What do you find challenging and wish to explore more?

Hopes: How do you hope to grow in your understanding and practice of Simple Living this year?

Sharing: What will you share with others in your community, and how will you express yourself briefly?

Community Discussion – Simple Living

1. Begin by spending a few minutes checking-in with one another.
2. Have someone read aloud the part of the JVC Covenant that addresses Simple Living
3. Do a brief round of sharing based on your individual reflections on the Simple Living Presentation and the reading of the Simple Living portion of the Covenant.
4. Read the following paragraph and the suggestions prior to a more lengthy discussion of Simple Living.

Simple Living can be a struggle for many, especially considering the consumerist culture in which we live. Being forced to live on a limited stipend and within a budget might appear to make living a simple lifestyle seem easy, but the challenge arises when you want to make ‘exceptions’ when you have visitors, or you want to go home for a visit, or when friends and family want to send you money and gift certificates. Possibly the greatest challenge comes when you address the more profound aspect of Simple Living: how you prioritize your time, especially in regard to relationships (with God, yourself, and others). Simple Living is more than material goods or money. There is involved a simplicity of time, a reduction of the ‘drama’ of life, a recommitment to that which is most important, a refusal to be driven by a consumerist, workaholic society. Simple Living, in all its forms, is supposed to help you simplify your life, allowing you more time for community, prayer, and introspection. Simple Living should take the clutter out of our lives and allow us to...just be.

Suggestions

- Eat a simple meal once a week.
- Make a plan to recycle and compost, if possible.
- Do simple living check-ins at house meetings once a month. Everyone will have a chance to voice their opinion on how they are personally living simply and how the community is doing as a whole with practicing this value.
- Simple living is about more than money and things. Be sure to not over schedule. Take time to relax, pray and just be.
- Have TV or Internet free nights; use the TV only for movies, or give it a less prominent role in the house.
- Find entertainment options that don’t require electricity or money.

Points of Discussion

Use the space beneath as a space for your personal reflection. Each community member should share at least one response from the discussion topics below:

- Share one concrete way you would like the community to lead a simple lifestyle.
- Come to an agreement about one or two things that the community will do from the minute they get through the front door of the house to live simply. Know that these agreements can be re-evaluated throughout the year as the need arises.
- Discuss how simple living is more than conserving money or materials.
- Discuss how simple living and sustainability are related.
- Discuss what role TV or Internet should play in your community.
- Discuss different strategies for saving on utilities.
- Share what you found most interesting in the presentation on simple living. What questions or points of discussion were raised in your mind?

REFLECTION ON COMMUNITY

We ask that you take a few minutes to reflect upon the presentation on Community. To help guide your reflection, and to help facilitate the community conversations about the value of community, please consider the following:

Reflect: What about the presentation struck a chord with you, or is resonating with you? What is new or surprising to you that you wish to incorporate? What do you find challenging and wish to explore more?

Hopes: How do you hope to grow in your understanding and practice of Community this year?

Sharing: What will you share with others in your community, and how will you express yourself briefly?

Community Discussion – Community

1. Begin by spending a few minutes checking-in with one another.
2. Have someone read aloud the part of the JVC Covenant that addresses community.
3. Do a brief round of sharing based on our individual reflections on the community presentation and the reading of the community portion of the Covenant.
4. Read the following paragraph, and the suggestions prior to a more lengthy discussion of community.

Many volunteers find this value presents the biggest challenge for them throughout the year. Community is not about being friends, though that's great when it happens; nor it is about being good roommates, though those skills are important for community. Community is about interdependence and a willingness to be vulnerable to each other. The test of community comes when you go to a meeting, participate in spirituality night, or have dinner together, especially when you don't particularly want to be there. However, you participate because you've made a commitment to be present and an active member of your community. The test also comes when something difficult needs to be addressed and you find a way to say it and bring it to the community instead of staying quiet so as to 'keep the peace.' In community, peace is built and worked for, not 'kept.'

Suggestions

- Take turns planning community night. community nights should be something intentional and an opportunity to learn more about each other. Consider incorporating one or more of the four values.
- Share meals together as often as possible. Our expectation is that you'll eat together at least 5 nights a week. Consider establishing a rotation for who cooks dinner, with everyone taking a turn.
- Hold regular business meetings to address issues and see how everyone is doing. This is also a good time to do check-ins on each of the values (how are we doing with simple living, etc?).
- Begin each community gathering with check-ins.

Points of Discussion

You set a structure in community so as to build a pattern of commitment and interdependence. Through structure, community becomes a habit rather than an effort. Use the space beneath as a space for your personal reflection. Each community member should share at least one response from the discussion topics below:

- Share what you envision a community might look like.
- Share your experience (or lack thereof) with family/community meals.
- Discuss your family or other community experience with chores. This would be a good time to come to an agreement about some house responsibilities, and maybe come up with a chores list. You will want to revisit this list within your first week of living together.
- List some characteristics of a community. Discuss what some of these terms mean to you.
- Share with one another what was most interesting from the talk on community, what questions or points of discussion were raised in your mind.