



...But Where do we Start?

No one can tell you what to do. Your situation is unique. The important thing is to *start somewhere*.

- Find some others who share your concerns.
- Don't worry about numbers. Three or four committed people working together can make an enormous impact.
- Remember that in working with J & P issues *how* you work (the process) is as important as what you *do* (action). The way in which the members of the group work together should reflect the values which we are working towards.
- Reflection and action are *both* necessary aspects of the work of the group if this is to be successful.
- There are always many opportunities for action, but don't feel guilty if you can't respond to every issue that you are asked to campaign on. Ongoing commitment to some specific concern is of immense value, not only to those on behalf of whom you are campaigning, but also the effectiveness of the group. You'll find that what you are doing always has links with many other issues.
- Try to involve the parish as a whole in what you are doing rather than becoming an exclusive group. Even though they may not normally be active in what you are doing, it is important that they should 'own' your activities.
- Keep yourself in touch by ensuring that you are receiving J&P mailings.
- Be prepared to work with others.
- Always be prepared to support other groups even though they might not be working on your particular issue.
- Keep in contact - you are not alone – and always be on the look out for new contacts and allies.
- Some parishes have found it useful to invite a member of the Commission to speak on J&P at the weekend Masses and then to follow this with a meeting of all interested parishioners facilitated by a Commission member.
- Don't despair if all your efforts seem to be having little impact. The walls of Jericho are not going to collapse immediately because your group has sounded its trumpet!
Stickability is a fundamental virtue in this field, as in many others. Be happy if you have made a small dent in the wall - it may have weakened the structures of injustice more than you realise.

Focusing Issues

A possible exercise to enable a group to explore the issues which interest its members.

- 1 List as many justice-and-peace issues as you can.
- 2 Write down each issue on each side of a small card - playing-card sized. Write the issue in green on one side and red on the other.
- 3 Spread the cards over the table (preferably round or square) with the red writing uppermost.
- 4 Everyone is to turn over onto the green side any issue card which interests them. Once they have been turned over they must not be turned back.
- 5 Remove any cards which are still shown in red and have not been turned over. Don't feel guilty about them.
- 6 Spread the remaining cards around the edge of the table.
- 7 Allow people three moves each to advance cards to the middle of the table. They may use all their moves on one card or on as many as three separate cards.
- 8 This should result in a cluster of issue cards in the centre of the table which have engaged the most interest amongst the group.
- 9 Allow each person to talk about how they feel about the arrangement of the cards.
- 10 Have any new areas of focus emerged?
- 11 Have those involved learned anything of value during the activity?

Other Starters for Groups

Ask people to share what makes them angry, or their first remembered experience of injustice - when they first thought "It's not fair".

Ask people to bring newspaper articles which have angered/moved/inspired them.

Making Things Happen

A useful checklist for getting things done whether it be a nation-wide lobby on parliament, a liturgy for Homelessness Sunday or a coffee morning for CAFOD.

Background:

Who are we? What is our situation? What resources have we?

Aim:

Where do we want to go? What do we want to do?
What don't we want to do? Who will we work with?
What difficulties might we face?

What Has to Be Done: List the things that need to be done.

Work out a timeline for doing them.

Allocate

Decide who is going to do what and when.
Keep a record for future reference.
It is important that the tasks are shared out.

Do It

Meet together to check that work is on schedule and to deal with unforeseen difficulties.

Evaluate

How did it go?
What were the positive things that happened?
What can you learn from what happened?

Celebrate

Do not miss this out! It is very important!

What Next?

Evaluating & Celebrating Your Achievements

- Take photographs of displays, special meetings etc. and keep them as a record or display them in church.
- Set a meeting aside to look back on what you've accomplished.
- Remember what went well and what didn't!
- What have you learnt which will help in your future activities?
- Go for a drink or have a party to celebrate your commitment.

If You Feel the Group is Struggling -

- the group is in a rut
- attendance at meetings is poor
- there's friction in the group
- you don't seem to be accomplishing anything

~ **Contact the Administrator or a member of the Commission. They exist to serve you!**

Don't hesitate to make contact, whether it's for information, ideas, resources (material or human) or merely to share your latest success or failure.