

DISCERNMENT GUIDE



JVC
NORTHWEST

A TOOL FOR APPLICANTS
DISCERNING SERVICE WITH
JVC NORTHWEST



ROAD MAP TO THIS GUIDE



What is Discernment?



A Way of Proceeding



Our Grounding and Foundation



Our Values



Additional Considerations

WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

Step 1: Preparation

Discernment is not about decisions- it is fundamentally about listening and paying attention (both what we are feeling inside of us, and what we notice about the world around us). Ultimately, we must choose, but first we must pay attention. When discernment does reach decision-making, it is about choosing between competing goods. There are no perfectly right answers, though some may turn out to be better than others. The goal is to choose intentionally and out of a space of inner freedom, not randomly or out of a space of negativity, pressure, or inauthenticity. If we didn't experience internal struggle, then we wouldn't experience the need for discernment.

Conflicting spirits or movements as well as positive and negative patterns are always present. We experience them very tangibly, though we might not always notice them in the moment. That's where paying attention is needed.



Gather information about what might be good for you AND what might be good for the world around you. That means talking with others, both those who will be impacted by your actions and those who might be more objective and detached.

What brings you consolation (which does not mean absence of difficulty)? What is best for you AND the world? Choose. Pay attention for confirmation.



[QUICK OVERVIEW FROM THE JESUIT POST](#)

WHAT IS DISCERNMENT?

Step 2: Information Gathering

Information gathering is an important part of any discernment. The discernment process asks us to access information held within yourself. We have included some information you may need from JVC Northwest in making your decision in this packet. Many times in discernment, there is not a clear “good” and “bad” choice – if that were the case, discernment would be easy. Ignatian Spirituality describes this as the “two standards” – an invitation to make the most loving choice that brings you closer to who you most clearly are and which decision offers consolation and not desolation. Some frame consolation as the choice or path that brings comfort, harmony, alignment, and is moving towards a divine presence. This does not mean every consolation is not without pain. Often times even the most right/most loving/most divine choice comes with some sadness, grief, or saying goodbye to another possibility. This is sometimes referred to as painful consolation. Desolation, on the other hand can be characterized by doubt, dissonance, discomfort, a feeling of obligation vs. a feeling of joyous calling, or being led away from divine presence.



Keep these two standards in mind as you engage in the information gathering stage. Pay attention to not solely what you think, but what you feel when you imagine realities playing out. Practice “living as if” the decision were already made for a few hours, an afternoon, or a day- how does that imagined reality sit in your body? Then repeat the practice with the opposite of that decision for a few hours, an afternoon, or a day- does that imagined reality feel different? In what way?

LEARN MORE: [IGNATIANRESOURCES.COM/DISCERNMENT](https://www.ignatianresources.com/discernment)

WAY OF PROCEEDING



DEDICATE TIME

Set aside some uninterrupted time to reflect on each value.

Take some time to center yourself and focus.



REFLECT AND LISTEN

Read the materials, paying attention to the feelings and thoughts that rise up in you as you reflect.

Consider how you already live these values or desire to live these values and why.



CONTEMPLATE

Share these thoughts and feelings in your journal, with a trusted conversation partner, or in prayer.

OUR GROUNDING AND FOUNDATION



MISSION & VISION

Jesuit Volunteer Corps Northwest responds to local community needs in the Northwest by recruiting, placing, and supporting volunteers who provide value-centered service grounded in the Jesuit Catholic tradition.

Honoring the Divine at work in all things, we envision the Northwest as a sustainable region where all live in dignity, are treated justly and equitably, and actively contribute to their own empowerment and positive change in their communities.

PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

JVC Northwest recruits, places, and supports individuals interested in engaging with a service that does justice. Led by the communities and individuals with whom they serve, volunteers utilize and build on their skills to address pressing social and ecological needs across Northwest locales. The JVC Northwest volunteer experience is grounded in the Ignatian tradition of praxis; while volunteers serve alongside and accompany communities, they also rigorously reflect on and analyze social structures and cultures that contribute to inequity in order to co-create a more just and equitable world. Intentional community, spiritual nourishment, and authentic relationships enrich the JVC Northwest volunteer experience. Our volunteers transform into lifelong agents of change within their spheres of influence where they continue to work for a just and equitable future.

EQUITY STATEMENT

JVC Northwest is committed to equity, inclusion, and justice. We strive to be an equitable space for diverse identities including, but not limited to, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, ability/disability, religious beliefs, nationality, age, and economic status.

RACIAL EQUITY

As a Jesuit, Catholic organization, our call is to uphold the dignity of all people, especially Black, Indigenous, and People of Color who have experienced and continue to experience exclusion and inequitable treatment. This means naming and dismantling the systems of domination that oppress people, empowering those already working to resist oppression, and building the beloved community where all belong.

LGBTQIA2S+ EQUITY

JVC Northwest affirms and supports our LGBTQIA2S+ (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and/or questioning, intersex, asexual, two-spirit) community. As a Catholic organization, we recognize and seek to heal past and on-going harms experienced by our LGBTQIA2S+ community.



LEARN MORE HERE:

[JVCNORTHWEST.ORG/EQUITY](https://jvcnorthwest.org/equity)

Including:

- Our History
- 2018 & 2020 Equity Reports
- Equity in your JV experience
- Equity & Ecological justice

OUR HISTORY

Jesuit Volunteer Corps (JVC) Northwest began in 1956, under the auspices of the Oregon Province of the Society of Jesus. A few committed volunteers helped build and teach in the new Copper Valley School in Glennallen, Alaska, a boarding school for Native Alaskan and European-descent Alaskan students. The first volunteers were recruited and supported by the Jesuits of the Oregon Province and the Sisters of St. Anne. In the 1960s JVC Northwest expanded to other communities in and outside of Alaska. Jesuit Volunteers (JVs) began living in and serving with Native American communities throughout the Northwest, as well as in rural and urban social service and health placements across the country and around the world. JVC Northwest has been a catalyst for many other faith-based volunteer organizations, and served as a model for the establishment of the Peace Corps, VISTA, and AmeriCorps. In JVC Northwest's 65 year history, over 8,000 persons have served in our program.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HISTORY

Over the past several years, groups of staff and board members at JVC Northwest have reflected upon and wrestled with our story in order to write an acknowledgement of history with the intention of inviting all of our past, present, and future volunteers and community stakeholders into a process of continual reflection about our experiences, roles, and histories with the organization. Doing this is part of our own journey to expose our biases past and present, including the way we originally and currently view our service with JVC Northwest and our reflection through a 21st century lens. We do this so that together, we can understand the ways we have been a part of systems of oppression and work to dismantle those systems. In that way, we hope to better accompany the local communities in which we place our volunteers.

The Jesuit Volunteer movement traces its history to 1956 in rural schools serving primarily Native Alaskan villages. Facing a shortage of teachers, the Society of Jesus and the Sisters of St. Ann recruited college students to serve in the Copper Valley School as volunteers. Volunteers were soon placed in other boarding schools as well. In the decades that followed, this system of recruiting volunteers spread to other sites in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest and came to include a wide variety of service types beyond education. Today, JVC Northwest responds to local community needs in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington by recruiting, placing, and supporting volunteers who provide value-centered service grounded in the Jesuit Catholic tradition.

For over 60 years, we have served in Northwest communities impacted by social, environmental, and racial inequality. As an organization, we have worked to respond to local needs. At the same time, through listening to the voices of Indigenous communities and our own evolving sense of how to best pursue justice, we know that at times we have perpetuated the very inequality we wish to defeat. Consequently, we are committed to looking back to the past, evaluating our present, and planning our future with the hope of responding to local community needs through volunteers who understand our history and who embody our Jesuit Catholic mission and our philosophy of service.

We commit to the Ignatian tenets of contemplation-in-action, to repentance and reconciliation, to keep showing up to do the work of anti-racism, and to nurturing *cura personalis*. To that end, we acknowledge:

- Our historical roots in boarding schools which separate students from their families and cultures, and risk contributing to the degradation of Indigenous systems of education, cultural values, spiritual practices, and healthcare. Boarding schools in Indigenous communities were part of a federal government strategy to assimilate Native children into mainstream white America through forced socialization into white ways of being. While some families might have viewed this as their best or only option, we recognize that it is white colonial occupation and educational systems that originally forced and at times continues to force this "choice" on Indigenous peoples.
- The danger that our presence, historically and currently, perpetuates systemic racism, white supremacy, colonization, anti-blackness, a "white savior" mentality, patriarchy, and clericalism. This occurs when we do not fully understand the role of privilege, power, and identity that accompanies our presence in communities.
- Our relationship with the Catholic Church and with Jesuit priests who worked alongside our JVs in the Northwest and who sexually abused others.

JVC Northwest is committed to the ongoing examination of our history, the pursuit of our own education, and the restructuring of our practices and programs in order to restore justice and the trust necessary to work towards true equity. We strive for an operating model that is led and informed by people most impacted by injustice.



OUR GROUNDING AND FOUNDATION

MOVING FORWARD

In 2020, we hired a research team committed to equity and inclusion to help us understand our relationships with the communities in which we place volunteers, and to directly ask our partner agencies and communities what they need and want from us as an organization. The results of their study can be found [here](#). We anticipate that integration of their work and recommendations will help us continue on our journey toward true justice – racial, social, and ecological – and to building communities committed to anti-racism.

Our Catholic Jesuit mission is the undergirding principle and reason we engage in the work of justice and reconciliation today. We drink from the deep wells of this tradition to sustain us on the journey, including the example of the prophets, the life of Jesus, and the Church’s social teaching. We are nourished by our rich heritage of prayer and contemplation, and commit, in particular, to a regular practice of institutional Examen to nurture hearts more sensitive to the stirrings of the Spirit in our midst.

We continue this journey with humility, knowing that we will inevitably fall short of our ideals. We continue in faith, trusting in God’s Spirit to guide us. We continue in hope, believing with Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., that the “arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.” We are convinced that we must co-create a culture and society that values each person and all of their intersectional identities. We center relationships and work each day to build the better world for which we strive.





Living in intentional community challenges us to be compassionate, vulnerable in sharing our uniqueness, and humble in learning from one another. As we recognize our need to be in community, we open ourselves to life-giving relationships and appreciate the sacredness at the heart of our interactions and interdependence.

JVs live in intentional communities, sharing material resources, spirituality, recreational time, and the joys and struggles of daily life. Community life in JVC Northwest is much more than living together in the same house or sharing common space with others of like interests or like mind. While great friendships may emerge out of community, that is not the goal. The goal is authentic living. Life in this program calls the individuals in each community to make a commitment to personal and social transformation. This means that conflict and discomfort are welcomed as invitations to growth. JVC Northwest is fundamentally interested in how your encounters with others facilitate the unfolding of your deepest self. Living in community often means living with people who come from different backgrounds and hold different identities from your own. With this truth can come many opportunities for learning, growth, and joy, both personally and communally.

Community can support and challenge us to be open, compassionate, and willing to change. We expect all applicants to demonstrate the interpersonal skills necessary for creating and sustaining a vibrant community life. When these skills are faithfully practiced, the community experience is one where you learn to engage and love the profound imperfection of being human.

Conflict and Conflict Resolution are a normal and healthy part of relationships and community life; conflict enables relationships to grow and deepen. And everyone responds to conflict differently. Many of the ways we react to conflict do not actually help us come to a healthy resolution. JVC Northwest community life invites the JV to live honestly and openly, lovingly bringing conflicts out into the open in a safe and non-judgmental environment, so that conflict can be resolved and relationships can heal and deepen.

Please choose whatever materials you feel drawn to explore.



We are rarely able to interact only with folks like ourselves, who think as we do. No matter how much some of us deny this reality and long for the safety and familiarity of sameness, inclusive ways of knowing and living offer us the only true way to emancipate ourselves from the divisions that limit our minds and imaginations.
-bell hooks

CONTEMPLATING COMMUNITY

REFLECT

- How do you understand intentional community? Why are you choosing to live in intentional community for a year? How do you think living in community will challenge you?
- What do you think will be exciting or fun about living in community?
- What identities do you hold that are important to you, and what gifts and challenges do you imagine coming from living in a community with people who may not share your lived experience?
- How do you communicate your needs to others you live with?
- How can living in an intentional community enhance the success of the greater community (neighborhood, town, etc.)?
- Reflect on a situation in which you were hurt or angered by someone. How did you react? How was the situation resolved? Think of a time when you came to understand you were in the wrong and needed to take responsibility. How did you feel? How was the situation resolved?

Resources for Reflection:

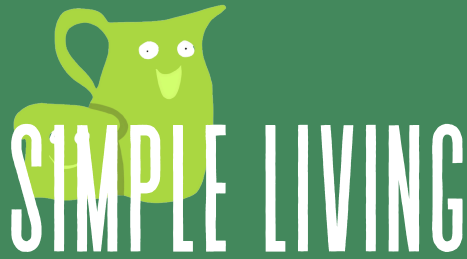
- [Tragic Gap](#)
 - Parker Palmer
- [The Power of Vulnerability](#)
 - Brene Brown
- [Perhaps the World Ends Here](#)
 - Joy Harjo
- [Consolation Doesn't Always Feel Good: Gratitude in Difficult Moments](#)
 - Sean Barry, SJ
- [On Revolution: A Conversation Between Grace Lee Boggs and Angela Davis](#)

Spiritual Writings:

- Matthew 18: 15-35
- John 13: 1-20

In my experience, Community is taking a risk with your vulnerability and the deepest parts of yourself and being open to sharing your life. Putting faith in the risks of sharing all the struggles, joys, growth, and empowerments with the people you have opened your life to takes great courage. I am certain that Community is challenging, but life is changing and worth every moment.

Christina Stewart (Seattle, WA '12-13)



SIMPLE LIVING

Simple living enables us to value relationships and reflection over an excess of activity and material possessions. It opens us to a more joyful way of life, clarifies our view of the world and of ourselves, and helps us better attend to our community, the earth, and those oppressed and living on the margins.

Simple living is the emptying of self for the sake of personal transformation, valuing relationships over objects, living in sustainable relationship with the earth, and in solidarity with marginalized members of our society. JVC Northwest expects all applicants to demonstrate the ways in which their use of time, money, and resources embraces the value of simplicity.

In this technological age of smart phones, Internet and computer overuse, we invite JVs to think critically about how these things distract us. During this era of overconsumption of media, gas, food, energy, and other resources, we invite JVs to focus more on relationships, and less on acquiring and taking care of stuff. JVC Northwest asks JVs to limit their use of technology throughout their JV year. We ask that you push yourself to discern what is truly necessary during your year.

Reflect on your use of time, money, material objects, technology, and/or travel. How will you do you imagine getting your entertainment needs met without casual shopping trips, reliance on streaming movies, and eating out frequently?

Please note that we ask JVs to limit travel during their year of service, to bring attention to the limited resources we use sometimes carelessly and to deepen relationships with those in our communities.

Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.



Be still, and the world is bound to
turn herself inside and out to
entertain you. Everywhere you look,
joyful noise is clanging to drown out
quiet desperation.

-Barbara Kingsolver,
High Tide in Tuscon

CONTEMPLATING SIMPLE LIVING

REFLECT

- How does your present lifestyle reflect, or not reflect, the value of simple living?
- What would factor into your decision to bring certain technologies to your JVC Northwest year?
 - If you brought it, how might it hinder your experience?
- How do you want to develop a sense of place during your JV year?
- How might traveling impact your sense of place, your ecological impact/environmental footprint, and relationships with those in your community and those you serve?
- Consider how you have related to money in the past– did you grow up with limited resources?
- How might your life experiences shape your understanding of simple living?
- How would you plan to take your simple living from your time as a JV forward with you — back home and beyond?

Resources for Reflection:

- [My Work is Loving the World](#)
 - Mary Oliver
- [A Garden of Simplicity Is Growing in the World](#)
 - Duane Elgin
- [Peaceful Simplicity: How to Live a Life of Contentment](#)
 - Zen Habits
- [The Movement to Live More Simply is Older than You Think](#)
 - Roman Krznaric
- [Simple Living Leads to Spiritual Growth](#)
 - Catholic Volunteer Network

Spiritual Writings:

- Mark 6: 6-11
- Luke 12: 13-34

For me, simple living binds all of the other values together. Once you challenge yourself to find ways to live more simply and with intention, the other three values of Spirituality, Community, and Social Justice become much more accessible.

Charlie Vogelheim
(Tacoma, WA '10-11, Hillsboro, OR '11-12)



SOCIAL JUSTICE

We work for justice by becoming more aware of how our attitudes and behaviors impact others, and by serving with people living on the margins who suffer the effects of social and ecological injustice. Together, we strive for solidarity, we work to examine and change unjust attitudes and structures we encounter, and serve to promote justice and a reverent, sustainable relationship with the earth.

Jesuit Volunteers in the Northwest strive for peace and justice through service with those living on the margins of our society, by addressing the root causes of social and ecological injustice, and by becoming aware of how our attitudes and behaviors affect others. We understand our calling to transform attitudes and structures to eradicate poverty, create justice, and support a sustainable relationship with the earth. Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.

"Justice is a manifestation of goodness and truth, which we perhaps understand, but it also intercourses with beauty, removing all blemish, irregularity and unevenness. It's about harmony and pattern. Justice, for example, is beautiful because it always recognizes persons above things. Capital punishment is unjust because it is disordered, ugly and degrading to killer and killed. It just isn't fair to human society on any level. It sets up a dissonance. It's the same with racism, sexism and ageism; they all mar truth and deface beauty.

We fail our own humanity when we allow fear to shy us away from the chaos and collisions that surround our journey through life. Rather, let's see it all as a challenge to dare, to risk, to jump in and participate, mind and heart, soul and strength, in the awesome flowering forth of absolute truth, goodness and beauty. Dance the dance of justice, sing its song, sculpt its lines, do her portrait in brilliant color. Justice is God's call to walk the royal road to integrity. Beauty, harmony, integrity and justice are all one." - Jack Morris, SJ, co-founder of JVC Northwest



God is Love. Love casts out fear.
Even the most ardent
revolutionist, seeking to change
the world, to overturn the tables
of the money changers, is trying
to make a world where it is
easier for people to love, to stand
in that relationship to each
other...There can never be
enough of it.

-Dorothy Day

CONTEMPLATING SOCIAL JUSTICE

REFLECT

- Reflect on an experience you have had as a person of certain privileges.
 - Out of these experiences, consider an interaction you have had in which you recognized your own preconceived ideas about another person's race, age, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, or socioeconomic status.
- What did you learn about yourself through that interaction?
- What did you learn about the other person?
- How did this experience change you and your relationship with this person?
- What areas of justice are you most passionate about? Where do you feel your energy drawing you towards this movement?
- How am I unpacking and examining biases I hold consciously or subconsciously?
 - When I find myself acting from one of these biases (or someone calls me in) how do I respond?

Resources for Reflection:

- [An Ignatian Witness to Truth in a Climate of Injustice](#)
 - Rev. Bryan Massingale, SJ
- [Letter from a Birmingham Jail](#)
 - Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr
- [Dear White America](#)
 - Danez Smith
- [The Best of Code Switch](#)
- [Learn more about the land you are on](#)

Spiritual Writings:

- Micah 6:8
- Luke 6: 20-47
- Romans 8:18-22
- James 2: 14-26
- Matthew 6:28-29

I'd say that for me, a takeaway would be to constantly question and think critically about the systems and structures in place, from an organizational to a national level, considering who they are set up to benefit and who they leave out. Listening directly to the voices of the communities we're serving is critical to making sure their needs and wants are being met.

Helena Vaughn
(Portland, OR '18-19)



ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

We work for justice by becoming more aware of how our attitudes and behaviors impact others, and by serving with people living on the margins who suffer the effects of social and ecological injustice. Together, we strive for solidarity, we work to examine and change unjust attitudes and structures we encounter, and serve to promote justice and a reverent, sustainable relationship with the earth.

Eight years ago, JVC Northwest officially adopted ecological justice as one of our core values alongside social justice. Ecological justice is both social and environmental justice. We understand ecological justice to mean the interconnection and interdependence of all beings and the responsibility of humans to co-exist in harmony for the well-being of our earth community. The health of human communities is inseparably linked to the health of our natural systems. Historic and ongoing degradation of environmental systems operate parallel to the marginalization of and suppression of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color throughout the Northwest. Our vision for ecological justice is a sustainable Northwest where all live justly and equitably in harmony with all creation.

Please note that we ask JVs to critically examine their relationship with the Earth. We ask all members of our community to honor and steward our shared resources for future generations. Sometimes this means in tangible ways like limited traveling outside of locale during your service year, utilizing public transit, biking, walking, and ride sharing as means of transit over bringing a person vehicle, and examining the resources (natural and human labor) used to create the food we eat and goods we consume. Reflect on your connection to the land you occupy and resources you consume. How are you engaging in the fight to stem the tide of climate change?

Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.



We stand at a critical moment in Earth's history, a time when humanity must choose its future. As the world becomes increasingly interdependent and fragile, the future at once holds great peril and great promise . . . It is imperative that we, the peoples of Earth, declare our responsibility to one another, to the greater community of life, and to future generations.

-Earth Charter

CONTEMPLATING ECOLOGICAL JUSTICE

REFLECT

- Reflect on an experience you have had where you witnessed how the ecological crisis is a burden that some people bear more than others.
- Who are those people and what about where they live or who they are determines how they are affected by the ecological crisis our planet is suffering?
 - Out of this reflection, reflect on an experience you have had in which you recognized your own role in contributing to the pollution of our environment and over-use of our planet's limited resources.
- What have you learned about yourself and your relationship with the environment?
- What experiences in life have taught you about the importance of a healthy natural ecology?
- How have these reflections changed you and your relationship with the world around you?

Resources for Reflection:

- [What is Environmental Racism?](#) - World Economic Forum
- [Mishkos Kenomagwen: The Teachings of Grass](#)
 - Robin Wall Kimmerer
- [Reconciling God, Creation, and Humanity](#)
 - An Ecological Examen

Spiritual Writings:

- Micah 6:8
- Luke 6: 20-47
- Romans 8:18-22
- James 2: 14-26
- Matthew 6:28-29

My service this year has taught me that we can solve multiple problems at the same time. Indeed, we cannot afford not to treat our ecological crisis as a racial crisis, an economic crisis, a spiritual crisis and a societal cohesion crisis. If we don't understand this crisis as intersectional, then we will only create new problems in trying to solve it.

Aaron Salzman
(Portland, OR '20-21)



SPIRITUALITY & REFLECTION

As a community rooted in Jesuit principles, we explore what it means to live committed to on-going reflection. We discern our gifts and deepest passions to inform our actions so we may fully engage our call to serve in the world.

Spirituality moves through the depths and heights of each human person. It is how we name and encounter the Divine Presence – that which is beyond us. How we imagine God is a very personal truth. How we respond to that image reflects our experience, our hopes and fears, and the tradition in which we participate. We may have different names for this energy- some that we share within a structured faith tradition, some which are personal ways of experiencing the Divine.

JVC Northwest is rooted in the Jesuit, Catholic tradition. As such, many of our values and practices are rooted in Ignatian definitions of some universally held truths. You are already utilizing one of these Ignatian Practices by engaging with this Discernment Guide. According to James Martin, SJ, Ignatian spirituality means finding God in all things, becoming a contemplative in action, looking at the world in an incarnational way, and seeking freedom and detachment.

Spiritual expression and reflection are important elements of the JVC Northwest experience. We welcome applicants from all traditions and denominations, as well as those fully engaged in the questions of their faith. Reflective practices – personal and communal are an important part of the JV experience.

Please choose whichever materials you feel drawn to explore.



Nothing is more practical than finding God, that is, than falling in love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you will do with your evenings, how you will spend your weekends, what you read, who you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.

-Pedro Arrupe, SJ

CONTEMPLATING SPIRITUALITY & REFLECTION

REFLECT

- What do I understand spirituality to be?
- Reflect on two or three key moments on your spiritual path thus far.
- What are my Spiritual and Reflective practices?
- What connection do you see between your faith/beliefs and your desire to work for justice?
- Recognizing that JVs are on diverse spiritual paths, reflect on how you respond to others whose spiritual or faith life is different from your own.
 - Can you listen to others open up about their mental models of the divine without judging them or telling them how they are incomplete or wrong?
 - Can you be open to the wisdom of spiritual paths other than your own? Can you take part in spirituality nights led by JVs coming from traditions different from yours?
- How would you seek to grow and explore your ideas of spirituality this year?

Resources for Reflection:

- [Spiritual Direction: Wisdom for the Long Walk of Faith](#)
 - Henri Nouwen
- [A Long, Loving Look at the Real](#)
 - Vinita Hampton Wright
- [The Olive: The Life of St. Ignatius of Loyola](#)

Spiritual Writings:

- Mark 12: 28-34 – The Greatest Commandment
- John 9: 1-41 – The Man Born Blind

I have taken up journaling as a reflective practice. Being able to take time at the end of the day and write down what I feel and what I learned throughout the day has been very helpful for me.

Gladys Tejada (Gresham, OR '21-22)

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Racial Equity at JVC Northwest

JVC Northwest is committed to equity, inclusion, and justice. We strive to be an equitable space for diverse identities including, but not limited to, race, sexual orientation and gender identity, ability/disability, religious beliefs, nationality, age, and economic status. Racial equity is a primary focus for JVC Northwest as it relates to the anti-racist, inclusive, and equitable transformation we strive to reach in our worlds. This includes examining our own biases and understanding of the construct of race.

Racial Affinity Groups

JVs who identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) are invited to join at BIPOC Affinity space starting at Orientation. We offer two in-person, program-wide retreats for those who identify as BIPOC, biracial, multi-racial, white-passing, or exploring their racial identity in the Fall and Spring, meet ups during our two regional retreats and informal cohort building throughout the year.

At JVC Northwest, all white volunteers participate in our only mandatory identity group: the White Accountability group. This is an all-white space that explores the inception and impact of whiteness in the United States. Throughout the year white JVs will unpack their own identity, engage in conversation and reflection with others, and explore actions to take to be more anti-racist. The group gathers in person and virtually throughout the year in addition to personal work of unpacking whiteness in between these cohort gathering spaces. Whether this is new to you or you've been part of all-white or multi-racial groups folks on racial equity, there is space for reflection and growth during your year as a JV.

The Invitation

Dismantling the systemic racism in U.S. culture and constructing equity in relationships, institutions, policy, and practice requires comprehensive strategies. Racial affinity groups are one strategy. JVC Northwest models the behavior we want to multiply in the world: decentering Whiteness, normalizing conversation about race, mitigating harm, and collaborating on just and creative communal thriving. As we do this, we maximize the impact and sustainability of the values that JV/AmeriCorps members practice during this year of service and carry them into the world. We invite JV/AmeriCorps members to embrace the Affinity Group experience to increase the capacity to live out the JVC Northwest core values.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

JVC Northwest Drug and Alcohol Policy

JVC Northwest understands alcohol and illicit drugs to be a serious social justice issue across all communities with whom we have built relationships in the Northwest. We view our policy on drugs and alcohol as consistent with the intentions in our Covenant: "to live in healthy community, simply and sustainably, as a spiritual person committed to justice."

At JVC Northwest, all volunteers are asked to participate in a "Dry Month of Discernment" during their first month of service. During this time, you and your community will abstain from alcohol and consider your relationship to it.

Reflect On:

- How has alcohol use (your own or that of others in your family or peer group) affected your life?
- In what ways do you think alcohol relates to the values of social and ecological justice, spirituality, community and simple living?
- A small number of our locales require a "dry year," meaning that you would abstain from consuming alcohol in the locale where you serve. What is your level of interest in being part of a dry community?
- If a community member of yours was in recovery from drug and/or alcohol abuse, would you be willing to live in solidarity with them by abstaining from all use of alcohol?
- What do you consider responsible or intentional use of alcohol?
- What are your expectations of alcohol consumption in your JV community?
- What are you open to exploring in terms of your relationship with alcohol?



WHAT TO EXPECT IN OUR INTERVIEWS

When discerning service with JVC Northwest, you'll participate in three separate conversations:

Initial Interview

The initial interview with JVC Northwest is conducted by a Former Jesuit Volunteer (FJV) via phone and is about 60 minutes. Your Interviewer will ask questions about your previous experiences and also how you want to grow during a service term with JVC Northwest. You should be prepared to discuss your hopes and interests as well as some examples (see box below). The interview is also a great time to ask questions you have about the JV experience.

Be ready to provide examples of:

- How do you communicate your needs and wants to others? How do you set and hold boundaries?
- Social and Ecological Justice focuses you are passionate about and those that you are just uncovering for yourself.
- A moment when you witnessed someone demonstrate prejudice- and how did you respond- how would you respond in the future?
- A particular moment of learning or unlearning a bias that you held. What happened and how have you reflected on that growth and understanding?
- How you've built relationships with others whose religious or spiritual beliefs differ from your own.
- How would you lead your community mates through an evening of reflection?

Service Interest Form (SIF) Conversation

After the Interview, if accepted to JVC Northwest, you'll speak with a member of the JVC Northwest staff to talk about your particular skills, abilities, and interests in a service position. This conversation will focus on your service site- both where you'll serve geographically as well as potential positions you are qualified for from the positions available. You'll complete a Service Interest Form before this conversation to guide the conversation.

Agency Interview

Finally, once matched, you will interview with the service site. This is equivalent to a professional job interview, typically with the Site Supervisors and sometimes the current JV or others at the organization. You should come prepared to discuss your previous work and volunteer experiences, specific examples, as well as the skills you'll bring to the position and how you would accomplish the tasks outlined in the position description. Applicants often don't have all of the skills needed for a position (and that's ok!)- so be prepared to speak about how you'd like to grow your skills over the service term. Bring questions about the organization and role you'd be serving in. You and your Interviewer(s) will both be evaluating your fit for the position based on the skills and abilities you could bring to the organization.



WHAT'S NEXT?

Thank you for discerning service with JVC Northwest!

We are looking forward to learning more about you, your skills, gifts, and areas of interest through the next steps of the discernment process.

Learn more about our community, volunteer opportunities, and organization at jvcnorthwest.org and on our various social platforms.

