

**Marking Significant Group
Events and Milestones**

By Alan Backler, UU Church of Bloomington, IN

At the Unitarian Universalist Church of Bloomington, Chalice Circles meet from September to May—twice a month, every third week, or once a month. The Circles then disband and brand new groups form in the fall. Therefore, saying goodbye to fellow group members in the last Circle meeting is a major emotional event. In 2013, co-facilitators Doug Cauble and Bob Taylor developed the session plan below that many of our groups use.

Saying Goodbye

Chalice Lighting

We light this Chalice, the lamp of our heritage, For the Light of Truth, The Warmth of Community, The Fire of Commitment, And the Spark of the Sacred, That call to us to care for the Earth.

Check-in: What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, or issues you are facing.

Opening Readings

From *Nothing Twice* by Wislawa Szymborska

Nothing can ever happen twice
In consequence, the sorry fact is
that we arrive here improvised
and leave without the chance to practice.....

With smiles and kisses, we prefer
to seek accord beneath our star,
although we're different (we concur)
just as two drops of water are.

From by Elizabeth Spires

We looked out to the future. Our future
selves. You stood dead center
in the globe and raised your hand to stop
the scene, your palm enlarging
Then waving goodbye, we walked,

... backward and away,
farther and farther away—
the globe still gazing on us—
leaving ourselves behind
to live forever in that silver room,...

From *The Walls* by Mark Halliday

So if there is to be a place for you, for you
it must not be located in plaster and tile and space,
it will have to be in that other house,
the one whose door you felt opening just last night
when you dialed from memory and your friend
picked up
the phone.

Sharing/Deep Listening

1. How was deep listening for you in this group?
Share a moment when deep listening impacted you in a positive way.
2. What did our Chalice Circle mean to you?
Share a cherished memory from our time together.
3. Did you notice a change in the group or in yourself since we began in the fall?
4. Now that we are ending, what do you want to say to this group in the way of closure.
5. Discussion of above quotes

Closing Words

Nothing can ever happen twice
In consequence, the sorry fact is
that we arrive here improvised
and leave without the chance to practice.....
-Szymborska

Check-out/Extinguish Chalice

Stand and join hands. As we go around the circle, share briefly, in a word or short phrase, what you will take away with you from today's session.

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment