

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Appreciation
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon, April 2011

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

Come into this circle of community. Come into this sacred space.

Be not tentative. Bring your whole self!

Bring the joy that makes your heart sing.

Bring your kindness and your compassion.

Bring also your sorrow, your pain.

Bring your brokenness and your disappointments.

In the spirit of love and mystery may we recognize the unique spark that resides within each of us.

May we know the joy of wholeness.

May we know the joy of being together.

(Adapted from Andrew Pakula)

CHECK-IN (up to 20 to 30 minutes total with up to 2 to 3 minutes per person)

TOPIC AND SHARING (up to 70 minutes for readings, questions, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, optional open discussion at the end if the group agrees, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

READINGS

We tend to forget that happiness doesn't come as a result of getting something we don't have, but rather of recognizing and appreciating what we do have.

-Frederick Keonig

You can not do a kindness too soon, for you never know how soon it will be too late.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Whether one believes in a religion or not, and whether one believes in rebirth or not, there isn't anyone who doesn't appreciate kindness and compassion.

-Dalai Lama

Conventional compliments often take the form of judgments, however positive, and are sometimes offered to manipulate the behavior of others. NVC [nonviolent communication] encourages the expression of appreciation solely for celebration. We state (1) the action that has contributed to our well-being, (2) the particular need of ours that has been fulfilled, and (3) the feeling of pleasure engendered as a result.

-Marshall B. Rosenberg

It is one of those beautiful compensations of this life that no one can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Feeling appreciated is one of the most important needs that people have. When you share with someone your appreciation and gratitude, they will not forget you. Appreciation will return to you many times.

-Steve Brunkhorst

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.)

1. Share about an appreciation you received that was meaningful to you.
2. What is an appreciation you would have liked to have received and did not?
3. What is an appreciation you wish you would have expressed and did not? Why not? Could you still express it?
4. For what are you particularly grateful, and how did you develop that appreciation?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (up to 5-10 minutes)

-Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.

-Consider discussing the service project.

-Other

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and WISHES (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)/CHECK-OUT (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

As we leave this gathering, may we carry one another in our hearts. May the fellowship we have shared expand our compassion, increase our understanding, and strengthen our resolve to face what life brings our way.

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring the SGM Facilitator Training Manual, paper and writing implements, the lesson plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Laura Adams; Dick Loescher, chair; Sandy Moses; Leora White) and Rev. Alicia Forsey 2/27/11