

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network
Session Plan
Beach Lessons
First Parish Church, Duxbury, MA, Mary Langer, July 2011

Chalice/Candle Lighting

Opening Words

“Rollers on the beach, wind in the pines, the slow flapping against sand dunes, drown out the hectic rhythms of city and suburb, time tables and schedules. One falls under their spell, relaxes, stretches out prone. One becomes, in fact, like the element on which one lies, flattened by the sea, bare, open, empty as the beach, erased by today’s tides of all yesterday’s scribblings.

And then, some morning in the second week, the mind wakes, comes to life again. Not in a city sense – no – but beach-wise. It begins to drift, to play, to turn over in gentle careless rolls like those lazy waves at the beach. One never knows what chance treasures these easy unconscious rollers may toss up, on the smooth white sand of the conscious mind, what perfectly rounded stone, what rare shell from the ocean floor.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea*, 1955

Check-in / Sharing

Discussion

- How does being at the beach affect you?
- Do you have a particular special memory of being at the beach?
- Have you ever had an experience, as Anne Morrow Lindbergh describes, of finding a “perfectly rounded stone” or “rare shell from the ocean floor”, either literally or figuratively? Share that experience.
- What can we learn from our experience at the beach to enhance or improve our day-to-day lives?

Check-out / Likes and Wishes

Closing Words

“When we start at the center of ourselves, we discover something worthwhile extending towards the periphery of the circle (of mankind). We find again some of the joy in the now, some of the peace in the here, some of the love in me and thee which go to make up the kingdom of heaven on earth.

The waves echo behind me. Patience – Faith – Openness, is what the sea has to teach. But there are other beaches to explore. There are more shells to find. This is only the beginning.”

Anne Morrow Lindbergh, *Gift from the Sea*, 1955