

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
**Discovering Your Gifts**  
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, January 2005

**Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:**

The privilege of a lifetime is being who you are. – Joseph Campbell

We cannot be ourselves unless we are true to our gifts. – Elizabeth O'Connor

**Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)**

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.) (Include the ritual sharing of meaningful objects to welcome newcomers to the group.)

**Focus Reading:**

**From Discovering the Gifts of the People... by Jean Morris Trumbauer**

Each of us is a gifts package. Inside this package are many treasures, many gift components. This particular combination of elements is so unique that not one of us has ever been replicated in human history. No two people ever have identical gifts. Our giftedness includes our personality type, interests, motivations, life experiences, hopes and dreams... We are one-of-a-kind creations with unique contributions to make in this world.

Discounting our gifts happens in many ways. One way we discount gifts is related to pride. Some of us may become “puffed up” about our successes and strengths and assume we are self-made persons. Sometimes even comparing our gifts to others and judging them less gifted than we are. Some of us ignore the source of our gifts by projecting giftedness onto a few special people: saints, artists, famous persons, ordained ministers, or even our own parents or children. We believe these people are really the gifted ones. Some of us are perfectionists. We are very hard on our selves, putting ourselves down when we don't live up to our own expectations or to those of others.

Humility is another possible double bind. Families sometimes exhort us to be modest and humble, admonishing us to discount compliments in the name of humility.

Someone once defined humility as being teachable – that is, being open to new information about ourselves, others and the world around us. We are called to remain open to new information about our gifts and those of others. St. Teresa of Avila wrote that “humility is walking in the truth of who we are.” We can apply this to our gifts, too. We are called to walk in the truth of our gifts.

**Focus Questions:**

For reflection try completing a few of these sentences. You may prefer to write down something privately before sharing together.

- A gift of which I've been aware since my childhood is...
- In the coming two years, I would especially like to learn...

- Three things I have done or experienced in my life that I especially value are...
- Some of my passions are...
- A couple of emerging issues I am concerned about are...
- How do I want to express myself in relationship to my paid work? To my volunteer commitments? With my family and friends? What kinds of opportunities might really challenge me to express myself and my values?
- Some of the “hints” in my life regarding my gifts or call are...

#### Checkout/Likes and Wishes:

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

#### Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice:

#### **Choose to Bless the World by Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker**

Your gifts – what ever you discover them to be – can be used to bless or curse the world. The mind’s power, the strength of the hands, the reaches of the heart, the gift of speaking, listening, imagining, seeing, waiting, any of these can serve. You must answer this question: What will you do with your gifts? Choose to bless the world.