

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY Plan for Facilitators
Geography of Our Lives
Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA. March 2005

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting:

Wherever you are is home
And the earth is paradise
Wherever you set your feet is holy land...
You don't live off it like a parasite.
You live in it, and it in you,
Or you don't survive.
And that is the only worship there is.

- Wilfred Pelletier and Ted Poole

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:

It is by knowing where you stand that you grow able to judge where you are. Place absorbs our earliest notice and attention, it bestows on us our original awareness... It perseveres in bringing us back to the earth when we fly too high. It never really stops informing us, for it is forever astir, alive, changing, reflecting, like the mind of man itself. One place comprehended can make us understand other places better. Sense of place gives equilibrium; extended, it is a sense of direction too... it is the sense of place going with us still that is the ball of golden thread to carry us there and back and in every sense of the word to bring us home....

There may come to be new places in our lives that are second spiritual homes – closer to us in some ways, perhaps, than our original homes. But the home tie is the blood tie. And had it meant nothing to us, any other place there after would have meant less, and we would carry no compass inside ourselves to find home ever, anywhere at all. We would not even guess what we had missed.

Eudora Welty

Like us who are older, boys and girls want to take stock of things, try to make sense of them, and so doing, hunger to find a place where such moral introspection can occur with grace and dignity. The geography boys and girls ultimately want to explore and comprehend is that of life itself – its enormous range, its astonishing complexity, the many stories, of sorts, it has to tell us...

Robert Coles

Focus Questions:

What was the geography of the place you were born?

Were there particular places that were special to you as a child?

What meaningful events have been related to place in your life?

What kind of geography or landscape speaks most to you now? Why?

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:

(If it is at all possible consider having your group go outside for the closing.)

Where the Sidewalk Ends

There is a place where the sidewalk ends
And before the street begins,
And there the grass grows soft and white,
And there the sun burns crimson bright,
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight
To cool in the peppermint wind.

Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black
And the dark street winds and bends.
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And watch where the chalk-white arrows go
To the place where the sidewalk ends.

Yes we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,
And we'll go where the chalk-white arrows go,
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know
The place where the sidewalk ends.

Shel Silverstein