

Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Covenant Group Session Plan

**Gratitude**

Kathryn Warrior, UU Church of Washington County, Hillsboro, Oregon, Nov. 2011  
(Adapted from session developed by Calvin Dame)  
UU Community Church, Augusta, Maine)

**Chalice Lighting:** *We drink from wells we did not dig.  
We have been warmed by fires we did not build.  
We light this chalice in thanksgiving  
for those who passed their light to us.*  
*Robert Schaibly*

**Check-in:** How are you and what is something you're grateful for?

**Opening Reading:**

Who can make an accounting of gratitude?

For the universe we give thanks, an expanse of life to stretch us with wonder...

For the earth we give thanks, fragment of the stars that is our home...

For life we give thanks, the burning of stars ordered and tempered here allowing us life and breath...

For growth we give thanks, for the heritage of the spirit, for all the forces past our knowing, power past our control...

For the ages which follow us, for the eternity of days, in which life is ever renewed and fulfilled, we give thanks.

-- Adapted from Kenneth Patton, "Hymns for the Celebration of Life"

**Topic Introduction:**

There are things in life that just sort of hang there: like free floating guilt and angst. But, what about a sense of gratitude? Doesn't that well up at times and demand expression? A blessing, a song of praise, a shout, a loud HURRAH! I'm talking about a sense of gratitude that goes beyond just what another person does for you. I'm talking about the fiery sunset, the smell of the rose, the very existence of the artichoke and the giraffe. It should take our breath away. And our breath, oxygen - yes, thank you!

**Questions:**

- What does gratitude feel like?
- What gets in the way of experiencing gratitude?
- How do you cultivate a thankful heart?
- How do we stay aware of that in life which is sheer blessing?
- Gratitude is about keeping an open mind. It is about not having your mind so set on an apple, that you can't be grateful when given a luscious pear. How have you found ways to be grateful for the ways that life turned out, rather than the ways you expected it to be? Have you found ways to be grateful for difficult people or circumstances?

**Song: “We Give Thanks” 1010, Singing the Journey**

**Closing Words:** “It is heaven itself to take what is given, to see what is plain, what the sun lights up willingly. We offer gratitude and reverence to the things that sustain us...the earth, our community, the mysteries of the Universe, our good fortune in the miracle of life.” From “Daisies” by Mary Oliver

**Check-Out:** How was this session for you/likes/wishes?

**Ending Ritual**

Loving Kindness Meditation

May we be filled with loving kindness.

May we be well.

May we be peaceful and at ease.

May we be happy.