

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Justice
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR February 2016

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

OPENING WORDS

We have gathered here in search of answers to hard questions. We have come in search of understanding, in search of community. We have come in search of hope and healing. Let this be a place not only of searching, but of discovery. Let this be a place not only of learning, but of wisdom. Let this be a place not only of meeting, but of connection. And let this be a place where healing fosters giving, and hope fosters service.

-Adapted from Rev. Sue Ayer, Unitarian Universalist minister

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 and requests, 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

There is no universal definition of the term. In its most basic form, “justice” is the systematized administration of punishment and reward. -From Wikipedia

Why has government been instituted at all? Because the passions of man will not conform to the dictates of reason and justice without constraint.

-Alexander Hamilton, first Secretary of the United States Treasury

It is the spirit and not the form of law that keeps justice alive.

-Earl Warren, American politician, former Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States

There is a court of law, young man, not a court of justice.

-Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., former Associate Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States

There is a higher court than courts of justice and that is the court of conscience. It supercedes all other courts.

-Mahatma Gandhi, Indian nationalist and spiritual leader

Honest people, mistakenly believing in the justice of their cause, are led to support injustice.

-Elihu Root, American lawyer and statesman

I have always found that mercy bears richer fruits than strict justice.

-Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the United States

-Until the great mass of the people shall be filled with the sense of responsibility for each other's welfare, social justice can never be attained.

-Helen Keller, American author, political activist, and lecturer

I'm for truth, no matter who tells it. I'm for justice, no matter who it's for or against.

-Malcolm X, African American Muslim minister and human rights activist

Unlike a lot of people, I don't feel powerless. I know I can do something. But anyone can do something. It's not about being special. It's about deciding to do it – to dive into work for peace and justice and care for everybody on the planet

-Patch Adams, American physician, author, social activist, and comedian

We shall never achieve harmony with land, any more than we shall achieve absolute justice or liberty for people. In these higher aspirations, the important thing is not to achieve but to strive.

-Aldo Leopold, American author, scientist, ecologist

Because we tend to be biased in favor of our own viewpoint, it is important to keep the standard of fairness at the forefront of our thinking. This is especially important when the situation may call on us to see things we don't want to see, or give something up that we want to hold onto.

-Linda Elder, *The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking: Concepts and Tools*

QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS (Please respond to any of the questions, requests, and readings you feel moved by. It is not necessary to respond to all of them.)

1. What are you most passionate about regarding justice, and why?
2. Share your story of how injustice was harmful or helpful to you.
3. How have you worked for justice?

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). Alternatively, this agenda item can be done after the check-in, if the group decides to do that.

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

-Consider discussing the service project.

-Review the SGM Covenant of Right Relationship, and ask for feedback about the SGM program and facilitation.

-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 person who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

I am only one but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something. And because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

-Edward Everett Hale, American Unitarian minister, author, historian

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 session plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee 2015-2016 (Bonnie Koenig; Dick Loescher, chair; Connie Newman). February 8, 2016