

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Knowing Love
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, February 2015

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 listen to each other.

We set aside our own opinions for a time as we try to understand another's.

We listen to seek in the other the truths reflected there that have no words.

True listening involves a setting aside of the self, a total acceptance of the other.

Sensing this acceptance, the speaker will feel less and less vulnerable and more and more inclined to open up the inner recesses of his or her mind to the listener.

As this happens, speaker and listener begin to appreciate each other more and more.

~Unknown

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, 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

Love can heal. Love can renew. Love can make us safe. Love can inspire us with its power.

-Deepak Chopra

Love is friendship that has caught fire. It is quiet understanding, mutual confidence, sharing and forgiving. It is loyalty through good and bad times. It settles for less than perfection and makes allowances for human weakness.

-Ann Landers

-A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you.

-Elbert Hubbard

Love always brings difficulties, that is true, but the good side of it is that it gives energy.

-Vincent van Gogh

Yes, we are created in and for community, to be there, in love, for one another. But community cuts both ways: when we reach the limits of our own capacity to love, community means trusting that someone else will be available to the person in need.

-Parker J. Palmer, from *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation*

Love is not something that happens to you, it is a choice. When we make the effort to choose love in every circumstance we open our heart to receive the magic and bliss that is love.

-Orna Walters

We accept the love we think we deserve.

-Stephen Chbosky

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. Share some of your experiences of giving and receiving love (romantic, familial, other people's wellbeing, spiritual, of a goal or an animal or an object or an activity) and how that influenced your life.
2. What challenges associated with love have you encountered?

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

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

Go now in peace. Deeply regard each other. Truly listen to each other. Speak what each of you must speak. Be ready in any moment to disarm your own heart, and always live as if a realm of love had begun. So be it. Blessed be. Amen.

-Barbara Hamilton-Holway

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 lesson plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Lyn Fischrup; Bonnie Koenig; Al Landy; Dick Loescher, chair).

February 6, 2015