

LIFE STAGES 1: RECALLING CHILDHOOD

By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

Story Water by Rumi

A story is like water
that you heat for your bath.

It takes messages between the fire
and your skin. It lets them meet,
and it cleans you!

Very few can sit down
in the middle of the fire itself
like a salamander or Abraham.
We need intermediaries.

A feeling of fullness comes,
but usually it takes some bread
to bring it.

Beauty surrounds us,
but usually we need to be walking
in a garden to know it.

The body itself is a screen
to shield and partially reveal
the light that's blazing
inside your presence.

Water, stories, the body,
all the things we do, are mediums
that hide and show what's hidden.

Study them,
and enjoy this being washed
with a secret we sometimes know,

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

What you share may be about your physical or spiritual health, cares or concerns for loved ones, issues you are facing.

Each person in the group speaks uninterrupted, if time remaining, general response and conversation is welcome. Confidentiality.

FOCUS: Recalling Childhood

“If a family were a container, it would be a nest, an enduring nest, loosely woven, expansive, and open. If the family were a fruit, it would be an orange, a circle of sections, held together but separable - each segment distinct. If the family were a boat, it would be a canoe that makes no progress unless everyone paddles. If the family were a sport, it would be baseball: a long, slow nonviolent game that is never over until the last out. If the family were a building, it would be

an old but solid structure that contains human history, and appeals to those who see the carved moldings under all the plaster, the wide plank floors under the linoleum, the possibilities.”

- Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Tonight we share another piece of our lives with each other. Rather than do the whole story at once, let's begin with our earliest years - up to being a teenager. This can be about our families, love given or denied; about the obedient child or the rebel; about our siblings, the crazy uncle or kind aunt; about the shape of our homes - the yard, the trees, the coal cellar, the music box, or attic; about our dreams, games, or the books we read; about who died, our pets, our friends; or about the little person we loved and lost, or the little person we find still playing in our lives today.

(Let's take about 5 minutes to jot down some of the highlights we'll want to remember and then share the memories.)

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you'd like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS:

Whenever we are, our lives,
like the ground beneath our feet,
are steeped in layers of rock
and sand and clay:
ancestors in cemeteries,
our father's voice calling us in at night,
our mother's stern reproof.
The brick school, long razed to the ground,
crayons and little orange squares of letters,
falling in place in words and rhymes,
little friends quarreling, playing,
rolling in the grass, down hilly lawns,
gazing up in darkness at the stars.

All laid down like history, now,
as though fixed and settled:
done and over,
the Past -

Until we listen to the trembling of the ground,
magma still hot and coursing
through each layer:
reheating, mixing, bubbling,
surfacing
the rich deposits that feed our lives
and nothing is over,
everything reworked,
nothing laid down and forgotten,
everything reused like humus
in the garden.

And in the winter,
nights like this,

we recount these inventories:
so many tomatoes, beans, zucchini -
beginning when we were young,
a mother and a father,
a seed,
the story.
Play it again.
We will listen
The present will conjure up the past,
and the past reciprocate.

Glenn H. Turner