

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR February 2013
Small Group Ministry Program
Love, Compassion, and Empathy

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

May I be an instrument of peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon. Where there is doubt, faith. Where there is despair, hope. Where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy. May I not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved as to love.

-Adapted from prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

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

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

-Elbert Hubbard

Frequently people think compassion and love are merely sentimental. No! They are very demanding. If you are going to be compassionate, be prepared for action.

-Desmond Tutu

Compassion, then, involves the recognition and clear seeing of suffering...feelings of kindness for people who are suffering...involves recognizing our shared human condition, flawed and fragile as it is.

-Kristin Neff, Ph.D. in "Self-Compassion"

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

-Dalai Lama

Compassion is not religious business, it is human business, it is not luxury, it is essential for our own peace and mental stability, it is essential for human survival.

-Dalai Lama

Compassionate action involves working with ourselves as much as working with others.

-Pema Chodron

When someone really hears you without passing judgment on you, without trying to take responsibility for you, without trying to mold you, it feels damn good!...When I have been listened to and when I have been heard, I am able to re-perceive my world in a new way and to go on.

-Carl Rogers

Empathy is a respectful understanding of what others are experiencing...their observations, feelings, needs, and requests.

-Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

People don't care about how much you know until they know about how much you care.

-Author unknown

You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality seems finally better than your dreams.

-Adapted from Dr. Seuss

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.)

1. How have love, compassion, and empathy, or their lack, impacted your life?
2. What have you found or seen to be blocks to love, compassion, and empathy?
3. What has been your experience of what is called love in the context of romance, family, friends, society, pets, nature, things, an ultimate power or God?

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)

-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)

Grateful for the opportunity to share this time and space together, we prepare to go now our separate ways, hopefully renewed by the energy of each other's company, hopefully invigorated by the opportunity to communicate compassionately. As we have grown while were together, may we also grow while we are apart, may we be strengthened by the inspiration of the connection which we forged together today. And may we remain so strengthened, until we meet again.

-Vid Axel

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.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Lyn Fischrup; Bonnie Koenig; Dick Loescher, chair; Leora White), December 1, 2012.