

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
**Sapere Aude Session Plan for December 22, 2010**  
**“Love”**

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Burlington, Vermont. Prepared by Michele Grimm

### **Welcome and Chalice Lighting**

Welcome and season's greetings! Glad you are here with us as we begin the winter with good discussion and fellowship. We hope you find this discussion rewarding.

### **Brief Check-ins: Limited if more than 6 are present.**

### **Opening Readings**

There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves torment. But he who fears has not been made perfect in love. - I John 4:18

What else is love but understanding and rejoicing in the fact that another person lives, acts, and experiences otherwise than we do? - Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)

To love deeply in one direction makes us more loving in all others. - Anne-Sophie Swetchine

There's an evolutionary imperative why we give a crap about our family and friends. And there's an evolutionary imperative why we don't give a crap about anybody else. If we loved all people indiscriminately, we couldn't function. - David Foster, House M.D., 2005

There is no remedy for love but to love more. - Henry David Thoreau, Journal, July 25, 1839

### **A Silent Moment....**

### **Main Subject: Understanding Love**

In the pamphlet "Faith of a Unitarian Universalist Humanist", The Reverend Sarah Oelberg lists one of the basic tenets of Humanism: "Showing love to all humans is a worthy goal."

### **Greek Definitions for Love**

- **Agápe** [ἀγάπη] (*agápē*) means "love" (brotherly love) in modern day Greek. In Ancient Greek, it often refers to a general affection or deeper sense of "true love" rather than the attraction suggested by "*eros*". *Agape* is described throughout the New Testament as sacrificial love. *Agape* is used in ancient texts to denote feelings for one's children or a spouse, sacrificial love, or even feelings for a good meal. It can be described as the feeling of being content or holding one in high regard.
- **Éros** [ἔρως] (*érōs*) is passionate love, with sensual desire and longing. However, *eros* does not have to be sexual in nature. *Eros* can be interpreted as a love for someone whom you love more than the *philia*, love of friendship. It can also apply to dating relationships and marriage. Plato refined his own definition: Although *eros* is initially felt for a person, with

contemplation it becomes an appreciation of the beauty within that person, or even becomes appreciation of beauty itself.

- **Philia** [φιλία] (*philia*) means friendship in modern Greek. It is a dispassionate virtuous love, a concept developed by Aristotle. It includes loyalty to friends, family, and community, and requires virtue, equality and familiarity. In ancient texts, *philos* denoted a general type of love, used for love between family, between friends, a desire or enjoyment of an activity, as well as between lovers.
- **Storge** [στοργή] (*storgē*) means "affection" in ancient and modern Greek. It is natural affection, like that felt by parents for offspring. In ancient works, almost exclusively describes relationships within the family. It is also known to express mere acceptance or putting up with situations, as in "loving" the tyrant.

### **Questions:**

1. Which kind of love is the most important?
2. How are the following related to love (choose 1 or more): compassion, forgiveness, respect, familiarity?
3. Is it possible to love all humans? What about "loving our enemies?"
4. Why do we love others? Does it matter?
5. Do other species of animals experience love?

### **Individual communing:**

6 minutes per individual, 3 minutes of group response for each.

**Open Discussion** (facilitated by \_\_\_\_\_)

**Business:**

**Next meeting location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Meeting Plan author:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Closing**

Love is the triumph of imagination over intelligence. - H. L. Mencken (1880 - 1956)

All you need is Love. - The Beatles