

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Covenant Group Session

Love

Janeane Weprin, Countryside Church UU, Palatine, IL (Feb. 2008)

At the end of the previous session, or sometime before this session, give to group members the preparation page for this session (attached at the end of this document.)

Preliminaries

Prayer of St. Francis (altered)

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

Check-in.

Transition Meditation

Help the group move from check-in preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. (See love meditation below)

Love Meditation

Take a moment to make sure you are comfortable
Uncross your legs and arms
Place both feet flat on the floor
Close your eyes and
Take a deep breath in and let it go
Take another deep breath and let it go
Breathe-in slowly.
Breathe-out gently.
As you breathe, allow your body to just let go.
Allow your mind to be peaceful and relaxed.
Now I am going to give you some simple instructions
Breathe in and on the out breath,
Say silently - Peace to my thoughts
Breathe in and on the out breath,
Say silently - Peace to my heart

So it goes like this
Breathe in
Breathe out - Peace to my thoughts
Breathe in
Breathe out - Peace to my heart
Breathe in
Breathe out - Peace to my thoughts
Breathe in
Breathe out - Peace to my heart
Breathe in
Peace to my thoughts

Breathe in
Peace to my heart
Breathe in
Peace to my thoughts
Breathe in
Peace to my heart

Now let's simplify it
Breathe in peace
Breathe out love
Breathe in peace
Breathe out love
Breathe in peace
Breathe out love

Feel peace enter and fill you completely
Feel love flow through you and from you
Become peace
Become love
Become
Breathe in
Breathe out
Take a deep breath in and let it go.
Come gently back into this room
Bringing the love and peace with you
as you slowly open your eyes.

Meditation Reading:

The Meaning of Love

Rumi

Both light and shadow
are the dance of Love.

Love has no cause;
it is the astrolabe of God's secrets.
Lover and Loving are inseparable
and timeless.

Although I may try to describe Love
when I experience it I am speechless.
Although I may try to write about Love
I am rendered helpless;
my pen breaks and the paper slips away
at the ineffable place
where Lover, Loving and Loved are one.

Every moment is made glorious
by the light of Love.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

We are going to share about love. This is very open to whatever you want to share.
Here are some ideas...

- What is love?
- What does love mean to you?
- Do you have a love story you want to share?
- Can you describe a time that you felt completely loved, completely safe?
- How has love (or lack of love) affected your life? Has love changed you, healed you, betrayed you?
- Is there some article – photo, song, item, gift – that represents love for you that you would like to share?
- Consider romantic love, love for a child, love of family, love of nature, love for a pet, love of God.

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Walk softly

Walk softly.

Speak truthfully.

Love gently.

Breathe deeply.

Live wisely.

Go in peace.

Elaine Gallagher Gehrman

Preparation for CCUU Session: Love

Food for Thought

- What is love?
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Reading

Looking For Love in All The Wrong Places

Most of us look for love in only the most obvious places, and as a result, most of us come away disappointed. It's as if we are still grade school kids, counting valentines as a measure of what matters. The love that matters is not typically the subject of sonnets or love songs.

There can be love in being told we are wrong. There can be love in sharing a regret. There can be love in asking for help. There can be love in communicating hurt. There can be love in telling hard truths. Most of us find it painful to live at this level of love, but it can be there, even in these most unlikely places. It isn't the kind of love we've been promised in the fairy tales of princes and fairy godmothers, but it is the kind experienced by frogs and dwarfs. It's the sort of love that can bring us closer to finding the missing pieces of ourselves that we need to make us whole.

Some of the most loving things I've ever experienced, I haven't been ready for, wasn't looking for, and nearly didn't recognize. A few of them I didn't want. But all of them have changed me, transformed some part of me, filled in a place that I didn't even know was empty.

When the valentine has been tucked away in a drawer, the candy eaten, the flowers faded and gone, there will be other legacies of love that will last as long as we do, because they have brought us to know an element of life -- part feeling, part idea, part mystery -- that once known, is ours to keep.

Source: David S. Blanchard, A Temporary State of Grace: Meditations, Boston: Skinner House Books, 1997