

Maintaining Self in Community

Lesson plan session February 2012

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 gather to speak and to listen, to understand and be understood, to nurture and be nurtured, and to find balance in caring for ourselves and caring for others.

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

When they are alone they want to be with others, and when they are with others they want to be alone. After all, human beings are like that.

-Gertrude Stein

It is vain to talk of the interest of the community, without understanding what is the interest of the individual.

-Jeremy Bentham

We all need periods of solitude, although temperamentally we probably differ in the amount of solitude we need. ... It gives us time to explore and know ourselves ... a necessary counterpoint to intimacy ... a chance to regain perspective. ... There is a world of difference between solitude and loneliness Solitude restores body and mind. Loneliness depletes them. Solitude is the state of being alone without being lonely. ... Solitude suggests peacefulness ... enjoying the quiet and whatever it brings ... an opportunity to renew ourselves.

-Adapted from Hara Estroff Marano

Live a balanced life—learn some and think some and draw and paint and sing and dance and play and work every day some.

-Robert Fulghum

The only place where I feel the joy of imminent domain is in my woodlot. My spirits rise whenever I enter it. I can spend the entire day there with hatchet or pruning-shears making paths, without a remorse of wasting time. I fancy the birds know me, and even the trees make little speeches...

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

We don't accomplish anything in this world alone. ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

-Sandra Day O'Connor

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Breathing, I come home to myself. Remembering, I find my place in the fullness of my circle.
-Author unknown

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. When you need to be refreshed, renewed, centered, or nurtured, what do you do and why?
2. Some cultures and people place more emphasis on community and community needs, and other cultures and people place more emphasis on the individual and individual needs. What experiences have you had in this regard?
3. To what extent do you and others in your communities accept and support the value of taking time to nurture and replenish oneself? Why?

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)

May there be a kindness in your gaze when you look within...May you allow the wild beauty of the invisible world to gather you, mind you and embrace you in belonging.

-John O'Donohue

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 (Laura Adams; Dick Loescher, chair; Sandy Moses; Leora White) and Rev. Alicia Forsey 1/23/12