

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Session Plan
My Parents

First Parish Church of Stow and Acton, MA May 2016

Openings Words and Chalice Lighting: At times our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person. Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us. - *Albert Schweitzer*

Check -In/ Sharing: This is a time to mention briefly any major issue or event on your mind that you would like to share.

Topic: My Parents: We were all taught how to be - or how not to be - by a parent, parents or one or more people in the role of parent. They guided us, loved us, chastised us, taught us - sometimes abused or neglected us - as we grew into adulthood. Our life task has been to grow into successful adulthood, able to make our own decisions, to function independently and, for some of us, to become parents ourselves. Sometimes our parent-child relationships went smoothly, but often were interrupted with differences and conflict. We may have compared our parents to our friends' parents - negatively - or positively. The relationship between a parent and a child is perhaps the most complex relationship we can have, and often reverberates throughout our lives.

“ Parenthood is about guiding the next generation and forgiving the last.” *Peter Krause*

“Affirming words from moms and dads are like light switches. Speak a word of affirmation at the right moment in a child's life and it's like lighting up a whole roomful of possibilities”. *Gary Smalley*

“All parents damage their children. It cannot be helped. Youth, like pristine glass, absorbs the prints of its handlers. Some parents smudge, others crack, a few shatter childhoods completely into jagged little pieces, beyond repair.” *Mitch Albom*

“The best inheritance a parent can give to his children is a few minutes of their time each day.” *M. Grundler*

Questions for Discussion:

1. How would you describe your parents and their parenting style?
 2. Could you share any early memories of interactions with your parents and how you felt?
 3. If you had siblings, in what ways did your parents treat you differently?
 4. How did your relationships with your parents change as you grew into adolescence? Into adulthood?
 5. Do you still subscribe to your parents' values - how are yours different?
 6. Have you found other people who could fill some of the role of parent for you?
- (Group will take a few minutes to consider topic and questions before sharing.)

Wrapping Up: What did you think of today's topic and discussion?

Closing Words: “I know why families were created with all their imperfections. They humanize you. They are made to make you forget yourself occasionally, so that the beautiful balance of life is not destroyed.” *Anais Nin*