

Neighbors, Building Bridges and Building Fences

Lesson plan session March 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

Evoking the presence of the Great Compassion, let us fill our hearts with our own compassion — towards ourselves and towards all living beings. Let us pray that all living beings realize that they are all brothers and sisters, all nourished from the same source of life.

-Thich Nhat Hahn

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

Few of us could bear to have ourselves for neighbors.

-Mignon McLaughlin

A bad neighbor is as great a calamity as a good one is a great advantage.

-Hesiod

The love of our neighbor in all its fullness simply means being able to say, "What are you going through?"

-Simone Weil

Build bridges instead of walls and you will have a friend.

-Author unknown

The fence that makes good neighbors needs a gate to make good friends.

-Author unknown

A good neighbor is a fellow who smiles at you over the back fence, but doesn't climb over it.

-Arthur Baer

Fear is the highest fence.

-Dudley Nichols

Some people build fences to keep people out ... and other people build fences to keep people in.

-Author unknown.

The purpose of having boundaries is to protect and take care of ourselves. We need to be able to tell other people when they are acting in ways that do not meet our needs and values. Appropriate boundaries create integrity. Setting healthy boundaries means sometimes saying no.

-Various sources

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. Please share about both enjoyable and challenging interactions you and your neighbors have had. What kind of bridge building (reaching out, connections, understanding) and fence building (setting boundaries, limits, protection) occurred? What did you learn from those experiences?
2. What types of enjoyable and challenging interactions do you anticipate our church and our neighbors might experience in our new location at 13th Avenue and Chambers Street? What bridges (reaching out, connections, understanding) might we and our neighbors want to build, and what fences (setting boundaries, limits, protection) might we and our neighbors choose or need?
3. What might we and our neighbors learn about ourselves and each other?

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.
- Review the UUCE SGM Covenant of Right Relationship as a check on how the group is doing with the agreements made in the first meeting.
- Offer feedback about the facilitation and the SGM program so far.
- 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 our sharing and our learning be a blessing to each other and to our current and future neighbors.

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