

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Small Group Ministry  
**“Our Relationship with Money”**  
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR

**Chalice or candle lighting or sound a chime** (2 minutes including silence and opening words)

**Moment of silence**

**Opening words**

We gather together to share our lives, to be together seeking to live more fully. We gather together to meet one another, to grow, and to show our respect. Here let us make room for ourselves and one another by listening with appreciation and speaking directly. Adapted from “Gatherings” by Tony Bushman and Bill Hamilton-Holway.

**Check-in** (up to 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 3 minutes per person)

**Topic and sharing** (up to 70 minutes for reading, questions, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, and optional discussion at the end, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

**Reading**

“Money has only the power that we assign to it, and we have assigned it immense power. We have given it almost final authority....Rarely in our life is money a place of genuine freedom, joy, or clarity, yet we routinely allow it to dictate the terms of our lives and often to be the single most important factor in the decisions we make about work, love, family, and friendship....For most of us, this relationship with money is a deeply conflicted one, and our behavior with and around money is often at odds with our most deeply held values, commitments, and ideals.” Adapted from the book “The Soul of Money”, 2003, by Lynne Twist.

“Money gets its value at the moment of trade. Money is simply a token, an essentially valueless marker for something that theoretically, at one time, had value to someone....Money is a “store of value” and a “means of exchange” only within the confines of cultural agreement....**Money is something we choose to trade our life energy for.** Our life energy is our allotment of time here on earth, the hours of precious life available to us. When we go to our jobs we are trading our life energy for money....You could even say that money equals our life energy. So, while money has no intrinsic reality, our life energy does -- at least to us. It's tangible, and it's finite. Life energy is all we have. It is precious because it is limited and irretrievable and because our choices about how we use it express the meaning and purpose of our time here on earth.” Adapted from the book “Your Money or Your Life”, 2008, by Vicki Robin and Joe Dominguez with Monique Tilford.

**Reflection exercise** (about 5 minutes)

Brainstorm and write on a piece of paper as a group all of the words that you associate with the word “money”.

**Questions**

1. What experiences influenced your knowledge, thoughts, and feelings about money as you were growing up, and how have those experiences shaped your life?
2. What experiences have you had of perceiving that you have not enough, enough, and more than enough money and how has that impacted you? How do you decide what is enough?
3. In the book “Your Money or Your Life” a suggestion is made to consider the planet as a whole, as well as one’s individual interests in making spending decisions. The suggested questions to ask are as

follows. “Am I likely to get **fulfillment** from this money spent in proportion to the resources that it represents? Is this purchase in alignment with the **values** that we all hold in common--the desire to survive and to thrive? What would spending in this category look like **if I were working as much for the well-being of the whole world as** for my individual survival?” How do these questions influence your current spending decisions?

4. Some people view acquiring, having, and spending money as a strategy to meet other needs, rather than a need in and of itself. How might this view affect your thinking about money?

5. What, if anything, would you like to change about your relationship with money?

**Sharing** (up to 6 to 8 minutes each, depending on the time available, with time at the end for comment and discussion if the group wishes)

**Administrative matters (service project, future meeting dates and topics, etc.)** (up to 5 to 10 min.)

**Likes and wishes/check-out** (up to 5 minutes total)

**Closing words** (2 minutes for words and closing)

“Hold onto what we have created, and keep a picture in your mind’s eye. Hold onto the connections we are developing, even if they seem invisible. Hold onto the promise that we will meet again, in a valued space and time.” Adapted from “Small Group Ministry for Youth”, by Helen Zidowecki

**Extinguish the chalice or candle or sound a chime (and optional closing ritual)**

(Preparation for the facilitator: bring the SGM facilitator training manual, paper and writing implements, the lesson plan, and your date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee curriculum subcommittee (Rev. Steve Landale, Dick Loescher, Leora White) 1-9-09