

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
CCUU Covenant Group Session
Ourselves and Our Stories

Countryside Church Unitarian Universalist, Palatine, IL

Pre-Meeting Preparation

Before the meeting, ask members to bring an object that's meaningful to them. It might be an object they treasure, find meaning in or would like to have people know about. It might be symbolic of some part of their life journey or spiritual journey or give others some special insight about them. These objects will be placed on a table during the gathering and participants will have an opportunity to explain why the object is significant to them. (Optional idea: Take a picture of the objects on the table at the end of the meeting and make a copy for each member.)

In addition, send to members in advance copies of the "Covenant Group Member Responsibilities" Document.

Prepare a revised member address list (if necessary) and prepare nametags in advance.

Chalice Lighting and Reading:

We gather this hour as people of faith
With joys and sorrows, gifts and needs,
We light this beacon of hope, sign of our quest
For truth and meaning,
In celebration of the life we share together.
---Hymnal #448, By Christine Robinson

Check-in.

Preliminaries

Introduce any new members and distribute new address lists (if necessary). Ask for any questions or comments on materials from the first meeting. Review the interim Covenant. Tell them they will be working the group covenant at the next meeting—tweaking, amending, adding to, deleting from, changing completely. End this section with a group reading of the interim covenant.

Transition

Help the group move from preliminaries to silence with directed deep breathing, soft words, music, or other meditative techniques. End meditation with this reading:

A Blackfoot Indian Prayer O' Great Spirit

Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes behold the red and purple sunset.
Make my hands respect the things you have made and my ears sharp to hear your voice.

Make me wise so that I may understand the things you have taught my people.

Let me learn the lessons you have hidden in every leaf and rock.

I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother, but to fight my greatest enemy-myself.

Make me always ready to come to you with clean hands and straight eyes.

-- So May We Be

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Object Ritual

In preparation for this session, you were asked to bring an object that's meaningful to you – some object you treasure, find meaning in or would like people to know about. It could be symbolic of some part of your life or spiritual journeys or give others some special insight about you.

I'd like to ask you now to place your object on the table with the chalice, and explain its meaning. This bringing of objects will take place in the deep sharing/ deep listening frame.

Optional Questions for Facilitators:

- Do you see any commonality in these objects?
- Did you relate something in your own life with someone else's story or object? Are you willing to share it?
- Why are objects important to people? Why do we need or want symbolism of this type? What does it do for us?

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

In one phrase or sentence please share your hope for this group.

Reading:

We are here to abet creation
and to witness to it,
to notice each other's beautiful face
and complex nature
so that creation need not play
to an empty house
-- Hymnal #420, by Annie Dillard

Stephanie Certain Matz, CCUU, adapted from other sources