

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, January 2013
Small Group Ministry Program
Personal Spiritual/Religious/Philosophic Journey

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

Each of us brings a separate truth here; we bring the truth of our own life, our own story.

We do not come as empty vessels. . . But rather we come as full people—people who have our own story and our own truth.

We seek to add to our truths and add to our stories.

This room is rich with truth, rich with experience.

All manner of people are here: needy. . . joyful. . . frightened. . . anxious. . . bored. . . we all bring our truth with us. May we all recognize the truth and the story in everyone's life.

And may we hear and honor the truths that we all bring as we gather together.

Together we have truths. Together we have a story. Together we are a community.

-Penny Hackett-Evans

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

By spiritual, I mean the ancient and abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and much more trust-worthy than our egos—with our own, with one another, with the worlds of history and nature, with the invisible winds of the spirit, and with the mystery of being alive.

-Parker Palmer

A spiritual practice is any regular, intentional activity that serves to significantly deepen the quality and content of your relationship with the miracle of life.

-Scott Alexander, from "Everyday Spiritual Practices"

The kind of spirituality I value is one in which you get great joy out of contributing to life, not just sitting and meditating, although meditation is certainly valuable. But from meditation, from the resulting consciousness, I would like to see people in action creating the world they want to live in.

-Marshall Rosenberg

The spiritual path – is simply the journey of living our lives. Everyone is on a spiritual path; most people just don't know it.

-Marianne Williamson

The great lesson...is that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends, and family, in one's back yard.

-Abraham Maslow

“Religion”. It’s given people hope in a world torn apart by religion.

-Jon Stewart

This is my simple religion. There is no need for temples; no need for complicated philosophy. Our own brain, our own heart is our temple; the philosophy is kindness.

-Dalai Lama

God is a metaphor for that which transcends all levels of intellectual thought. It's as simple as that.

-Joseph Campbell

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. What were important spiritual, religious, or philosophic experiences, practices, and beliefs in your early years, and how have they changed as you have grown older?
2. What spiritual, religious, or philosophic answers are you still seeking?
3. What needs, values, and hopes are met by your spiritual, religious, or philosophic practices and beliefs?

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)

And now we take our leave. Before we gather here again, may each of us bring happiness to another’s life; may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us; may we each be enlivened by constant curiosity; and may we remain together in spirit ‘til the hour we meet again.

-Barbara Cheatham

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 (Lyn Fischrup; Bonnie Koenig; Dick Loescher, chair; Leora White), December 1, 2012