

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program

Play

Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, May 2016

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

May we embrace the child in each of us. The child who knows how to play. The child who is fascinated by keys and dandelions, by clouds and balls that bounce. The child who dreams and imagines and creates wonders out of nothing. The child who is always in the moment yet touches and embraces where dragons fly and horses run free. The child who doesn't yet know the difference between the possible and impossible.

--Adapted from Stephanie Certain Matz, Small Group Ministry organizer in Unitarian Universalist and United Church of Christ churches

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 and requests, 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

The time to relax is when you have no time for it.

-Sydney J. Harris, British-born American journalist

Our cultural heritage is ambivalent about leisure. On one hand, we inherited from Judaism the idea of a day of rest for spiritual refreshment and joy, a day to be aware of our ability to be free from every day work. On the other hand, we have inherited from early Christianity the idea that leisure time invites laziness, and from Protestantism, the idea that our lives should be focused on hard work and discipline. Leisure can be defined as the time you have to spend as you please when you are free of work and other kinds of obligations. It can be contemplative or active, but it is meant to result in relaxation and rejuvenation. Doing something solely because you enjoy it can help you re-create and re-vitalize your body, and your spirit. It can help you feel that your life is your own, even if only temporarily. It can allow you to take a deep breath and remember who you are and what you love.

-Rev. Margie Allen and Rev. Dr. Linda Anderson, Unitarian Universalist ministers

This is the real secret of life -- to be completely engaged with what you are doing in the here and now. And instead of calling it work, realize it is play.

-Alan W. Watts, British born American philosopher and writer

Humanity has advanced, when it has advanced, not because it has been sober, responsible, and cautious, but because it has been playful, rebellious, and immature.

-Tom Robbins, American writer

Men do not quit playing because they grow old; they grow old because they quit playing.

-Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr., American physician and author

The one thing that you have that nobody else has is you. Your voice, your mind, your story, your

vision. So write and draw and build and play and dance and live as only you can.

-Neil Gaiman, British author

Play is not only recreation, but in a finer sense of the word, it is a matter of creation and re-creation.

-Robert Fulghum, Unitarian Universalist minister and author

The opposite of play is not work. It's depression.

-Brian Sutton-Smith, New Zealand-born play theorist and author

Play is training for the unexpected.

-Marc Bekoff, Professor of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology

QUESTIONS AND REQUESTS (Please respond to any of the questions, requests, and readings you feel moved by. It is not necessary to respond to all of them.)

1. Share your favorite ways to play as a child.
2. How do you play and experience delight and rejuvenation now?
3. What would be the most fun, play, and joy that you could imagine?
4. What interferes with your being able to play?

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). Alternatively, this agenda item can be done after the check-in, if the group decides to do that.

-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 person who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for words, and closing)

May I remember to keep my face to the sun,

To play, laugh, and experience joy whenever possible,

To celebrate the world and my fellow human beings,

To say *YES!* to life each day.

-Based on "I Do Not Pray" by James Madison Barr, Unitarian Universalist minister

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 session plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee 2015-2016 (Bonnie Koenig; Dick Loescher, chair; Connie Newman).

March 17, 2016