

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
Covenant Groups  
**Recapturing Childhood**  
Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Vero Beach, FL, May 2015

**Chalice Lighting**

May we know once again that we are not isolated beings,  
but connected, in mystery and miracle,  
to the universe, to this community and to each other.

**Check-in:** How is your spirit right now?

**Opening Reading**

As children, we are remarkably aware. We absorb and process information at a speed that we'll never again come close to achieving. New sights, new sounds, new smells, new people, new emotions, new experiences: we are learning about our world and its possibilities. Everything is new, everything is exciting, everything engenders curiosity. And because of the inherent newness of our surroundings, we are exquisitely alert; we are absorbed; we take it all in. Who knows when it might come in handy? But as we grow older, the blasé factor increases exponentially. Been there, done that, don't need to pay attention to this, and when in the world will I ever need to know or use that. Before we know it, we have shed that innate attentiveness, engagement, and curiosity for a host of passive, mindless habits. ("Literally Psyched," blog from *Scientific American.com*)

**Topic Exploration**

The life you want is probably the life you have — but with the best of your younger days added in. How do you revive the "you that you used to be"? By looking back at the things in your life that once gave you pleasure. To get started

- Think about a small object or article of clothing you've kept over the years. Write down three pleasurable activities that you associate with it.
- Think about at least three things you enjoyed doing when you were a child, three when you were a teen, and three from your days as a young adult. Add anything you've tried and liked as an adult but just haven't found time for in a while.
- Now comes the fun part: Do everything on the list — once. Do only one thing a week if you like, but don't stop until you've done every single thing. Why should small actions like the ones you've listed be such a big deal? Because they will wake up the senses that filled your life when you were in your most creative years. You'll learn — or remember — how powerful it is to do even the simplest thing you love, instead of just thinking, talking, or writing about it. (Barbara Sher, *It's Only Too Late if You Don't Start Now*)

**Questions / Sharing**

1. What are the activities or objects that gave you pleasure? Share your remembrances--and will you be able to follow through with everything on the list you created under Topic Exploration?

2. Childlike Creativity: Following are some of the characteristics of childlike creativity. (Imagine Out Loud blog) How do we maintain the creative spirit and awareness of the world as we grow up?

Curiousness  
Playfulness  
Imaginative

Open-mindedness  
Adaptability  
Questioning

Spontaneity  
Wonderment

3. The Family Effect: At the core of personality we have our emotional memory banks from early childhood, even from birth. Here is where all experiences of love, security, self-confidence, or loss, deprivation, neglect and mistreatment have left their mark.

- a. How did your family experiences shape your personality, and do you consciously or unconsciously keep recapturing your childhood conceptions and applying them to your adult life?
- b. What negative childhood situations or relationships still have an influence in your life?
- c. How is the resilience we now possess as adults the result of ways we learned to cope with stress and uncertainty during childhood?

4. Do you sometimes act like a child? Share your behaviors that you think are childlike, whether for good or not.

### **Closing Reading**

“Genius is no more than childhood recaptured at will, childhood equipped now with man's physical means to express itself, and with the analytical mind that enables it to bring order into the sum of experience, involuntarily amassed.” (Charles Baudelaire)

### **Extinguish the Chalice**

We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth,  
the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment.  
These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.

### **Housekeeping**