

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Renewal
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR, May 2015

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

Out of our busyness, we are called back into balance, back into ourselves and the silence of present being. But it is not just back into ourselves to which we are called; it is also to the awareness of the continuous presence of the environment around us and within us. We are called to remember our relationships and our dependencies. We are called to once again feel the oneness which sustains our being in balance with creation, and to do so with wonder and appreciation.

-Rev. Susan Manker-Seale, Unitarian Universalist Minister

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

If we step away for a time, we are not, as many may think and some will accuse, being irresponsible, but rather we are preparing ourselves to more ably perform our duties and discharge our obligations.

-Maya Angelou, American author, poet, dancer, actress, and singer

Balance is not better time management, but better boundary management. Balance means making choices and enjoying those choices.

-Betsy Jacobson, Business Consultant

A funny notion, feeling whole. In rare moments of deep play, we can lay aside our sense of self, shed time's continuum, ignore gain, and sit quietly in the absolute present, watching the world's ordinary miracles. No mind or heart hobbles. No analyzing or explaining. No questing for logic. No promises. No goals. No relationships. No worry.

-Dianne Ackerman, from *Deep play*

We say that flowers return every spring, but that is a lie. . . . The flower that wilted last year is gone. Petals once fallen are fallen forever. Flowers do not return in the spring, rather they are replaced. It is in this difference between returned and replaced that the price of renewal is paid. And as it is for spring flowers, so it is for us.

-Daniel Abraham, from *The Price of Spring*

The single overriding objective in wellness is creating constant personal renewal where we recognize and act on the truth that each day is a miraculous gift, and our job is to untie the ribbons. That's the Law of Esprit: living life with joy.

-Greg Anderson, American author

Everybody laughs the same in every language because laughter is a universal connection.

-Jakob Smirnoff, Soviet-born American comedian

It is always quietly thrilling to find yourself looking at a world you know well but have never seen from such an angle before.

-Bill Bryson, from *At Home: A Short History of Private Life*

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. What brings you joy, play, balance, centering, peace, relaxation, recreation, renewal?
2. What external and internal factors influence the amount of time you have or take for renewal?
3. If you had more time for renewal what would you do?

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.

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)

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.

-Rev. James Madison Barr, Unitarian Universalist Minister

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Lyn Fischrup; Bonnie Koenig; Al Landy; Dick Loescher, chair).

March 20, 2015