

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
SMALL GROUP SESSION
RETREAT AND RENEWAL
By the Rev. Glenn H. Turner

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING:

“When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and my children’s lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drakes rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.

“I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.”

- Wendell Berry, *Singing the Living Tradition* #483

CHECK IN: (40 - 50 minutes)

FOCUS: Retreat and Renewal

“When I go trout fishing, I carry everything I need for the day in my multipocketed vest and fanny pack. I begin at a place where a river crosses a road and hike upstream on an angler’s path, fishing as I go. Soon I am alone, with only the stream and the rest of nature as my companions. Fishing, I become one with my surroundings. I move carefully and quietly. At times, I pause to feast on wild raspberries or blueberries, enjoy the mating ritual of dragonflies, or drink in the fragrance of spruce trees and moss. Often, I just relax on a smooth rock in the sun, awash with the sights, scents, and

sounds of the place. I feel in complete harmony with myself and all creation.

- Peg Thompson “Finding Your Own Spiritual Path”

Discussion:

We are all in need of renewal. Some of us go on retreats, meditate, do yoga. Some go walking, or fishing, or canoeing. When you need to be spiritually refreshed, renewed, re-born, what do you do?

Share an experience of retreat or renewal that enhanced the zest or meaning in your life?

LIKES AND WISHES

How did this session go for you? Is there anything you’d like to call particular attention to?

CLOSING WORDS:

Let us find time to settle, to sit quietly, or walk gently, letting distractions go, refusing busy thoughts and uninvited images, to listen for the deeper Self that lives below the clamor of voices crying for our attention. Let us find time and places to enter the nourishing quiet that lies in the center of us all.

adapted from Marv Hiles