

Finding Balance, Living with Polarities Series

Saying Goodbye and Saying Hello

Small Group Ministry Program, Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon (May 2010)

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

We gather together in this space to honor and understand our lives. We bring our pasts and would share them, our dreams and would express them. We use words, silence, and gesture. Words cannot define our lives, but they enable us to reach out to each other, to tell and to listen, that we may be renewed, connected, unburdened.

(Adapted from Lao Tzu)

CHECK-IN (Up to 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 3 minutes per person)

COMPLETION OF THE EVALUATION FORM FOR THE FACILITATOR AND THE PARTICIPANTS (Up to 20 minutes)

The evaluation form may have been given or sent to group members ahead of time, or may be distributed at this session. Give the completed evaluation forms to the facilitator, who will take or send them to the church office to be given to the SGM steering committee.

TOPIC AND SHARING (Up to 65 minutes for reading, questions and sharing with optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

READINGS

They say when you get a lover

You begin to lose a friend.

That the end of the beginning is the beginning of the end.

They say the moment that you're born is when you start to die.

And the first time that we said hello began our last goodbye.

(From the song "The First Hello, The Last Goodbye" by Roger Whittaker)

Parting is all we know of heaven and all we need to know of hell.

(By Emily Dickinson)

Some people come quickly into our lives and quickly go. Some stay for a while, leave footprints on our hearts, and we are never, ever the same.

(By Flavia Weedn)

How lucky I am to have known someone who was so hard to say goodbye to.

(Author unknown)

The world is round and the place which may seem like the end may also be the beginning.

(Author unknown)

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There is a time for departure, even when there's no certain place to go.
(By Tennessee Williams)

Saying goodbye, to some people, feels like the end of the world for them, but to others, it feels good.
(Author unknown)

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions.)

1. What did you hope to gain from and give to this group, and to what extent have those hopes been realized? What has being in this group opened up for you?
2. In what way has your participation in this group affected your relationship with UUCE?
3. Tell about saying goodbye to someone or something in your life that was meaningful to you.
4. Please share anything else that you would like others in the group to know at this last scheduled meeting of this particular SGM group.

SHARING (Up to 6 to 8 minutes each, depending on the time available, with time at the end for comment and discussion if the group wishes. Consider the option of having a time of silence, perhaps up to 30 seconds or so, after each person has shared to allow for reflection, and to allow people to make notes about comments or questions they may want to bring up during the open discussion after all have shared.)

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)

As we end our scheduled time together we give thanks for this place and this group. We have shared some of our personal journeys, our highs and our lows, our joys and our sorrows, our transitions and our continuity. As we say goodbye may we remember what we have shared and learned here, and may we be open to new hellos, new people, new sharing, and new learning as we go forward to whatever lies ahead.

(By UUCE SGM steering committee curriculum subcommittee [Rev. Stephen A. Ames, Dick Loescher, Leora White] 4/9/10)

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 date book.)

(Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee curriculum subcommittee [Rev. Stephen A. Ames, Dick Loescher, Leora White] 4/9/10)