

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
“Simple Truths”
Covenant Group Curriculum, River of Grass Unitarian Universalist
Congregation, Davie, FL

Instruction for Facilitator: Contact the members of your group beforehand and ask them to think about the simple truths that inform their lives in a practical, everyday way.

Opening Meditation/Music/Silence/Chalice Lighting (whichever one(s) you choose to do)

Opening Words:

“A New York plumber of foreign extraction with a limited command of English wrote the National Bureau of Standards and said he found that hydrochloric acid quickly opened drainage pipes when they got clogged and asked if it was a good thing to use.

A bureau scientist replied:

‘The efficacy of hydrochloric acid is indisputable, but the corrosive residue is incompatible with metallic permanence.’

The plumber wrote back thanking the bureau for telling him the method was all right. The scientist was a little disturbed and showed the correspondence to his boss, another scientist. The latter wrote the plumber:

‘We cannot assume responsibility for the production of toxic and noxious residue with hydrochloric acid and suggest you use an alternative procedure.’

The plumber wrote back that he agreed with the Bureau---hydrochloric acid works fine. A top scientist—the boss of the first two broke the impasse by tearing himself loose from technical terminology and writing this letter:

‘Don’t use hydrochloric acid. It eats the hell out of pipes.’”

- F.F. Colton, *Scientific Monthly*, 1949

Check-in/Sharing

Topic/Reading:

“Everyone says that my way of life is the way of a simpleton.
Being largely the way of a simpleton is what makes it worthwhile.
If it were not the way of a simpleton
It would long ago have been worthless,
These possessions of a simpleton being the three I choose and cherish:
To care,
To be fair,
To be humble.
When a man cares he is unafraid,
When a man in fair he leaves enough for others,
When he is humble he can grow;
Whereas if, like men of today, he be bold without caring,
Self-indulgent without sharing,
Self-important without shame,
He is dead.

The invincible shield of caring
Is a weapon from the sky
Against being dead.”

- Lao-Tzu *Tao Te Ching*

Questions for consideration:

- What are the simple truths that you live by?---The ones that really make a difference in how you live your life. (Facilitator, ask people to share them.)
- What are the sources of these simple truths?
- Is there a difference between knowledge and wisdom?

Likes and Wishes/Feedback

Closing Words:

‘There is really nothing you must be.
And there is nothing you must do.
There is really nothing you must have.
And there is nothing you must know.
There is really nothing you must become.
HOWEVER, it helps to understand that fire burns,
And when it rains, the earth gets wet.”

- From a Zen Buddhist Temple in Kyoto, Japan, rephrased by Robert Fulghum

Amen. May you live in blessing.