

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website

Session Plan

Spiritual Identity

Sanctuary Boston, MA, November 10, 2015

Gathering, Welcoming (2 minutes)

Chalice lighting & Opening words (1 minute)

Fact of the matter is, there is no hip world, there is no straight world. There's a world, you see, which has people in it who believe in a variety of different things. Everybody believes in something and everybody, by virtue of the fact that they believe in something, use that something to support their own existence.

— *Frank Zappa*

Covenant (1 minute)

- confidentiality
- respect our time together, beginning and ending on time
- keep discussion focused on topic
- invitation but not expectation to share
- speak from your own experience
- assume good intentions
- commitment to 5 weeks
- address conflict directly and in the group
- refrain from talking at people

Check-in (2–3 minutes each @ 20 minutes)

Reading (2 minutes)

One day the Teacher noticed someone in the back of the crowd, someone not pushing his way to her as most of the others did. She went to him. “What is it I can do for you?” she asked.

“I do not know,” he replied. “I feel in need of something, but I do not believe in God and have nothing you could call a ‘practice.’” “When do you feel most alive?” the Teacher asked. “When I am playing with my children,” the man said without hesitation. “Then play with your children,” said the Teacher. “And you will find what you seek.”

— *The Wandering Teacher*

<http://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/practice/workshop1/59181.shtml>

The idea that God is an oversized white male with a flowing beard, who sits in the sky and tallies the fall of every sparrow is ludicrous. But if by 'God,' one means the set of physical laws that govern the universe, then clearly there is such a God. This God is emotionally unsatisfying...it does not make much sense to pray to the law of gravity.

— *Carl Sagan*

By spiritual, I mean the ancient and abiding human quest for connectedness with something larger and much more trust-worthy than our egos—with our own, with one another, with the worlds of history and nature, with the invisible winds of the spirit, and with the mystery of being alive.

— *Parker Palmer*

I choose to believe it. ... I mean, there's no downside to that. If you say, 'Well, OK, I don't believe in God. There's no evidence of God,' then you're missing the stars in the sky and you're missing the sunrises and sunsets and you're missing the fact that bees pollinate all these crops and keep us alive and the way that everything seems to work together. Everything is sort of built in a way that to me suggests intelligent design. But, at the same time, there's a lot of things in life where you say to yourself, 'Well, if this is God's plan, it's very peculiar,' and you have to wonder about that guy's personality — the big guy's personality. And the thing is — I may have told you last time that I believe in God — what I'm saying now is I choose to believe in God, but I have serious doubts and I refuse to be pinned down to something that I said 10 or 12 years ago. I'm totally inconsistent.
— *Stephen King. Fresh Air with Terry Gross, May 2013*

First response (20 minutes)

Take a moment of silence and consider these questions.

What is your spiritual identity? How has your spiritual identity changed over time? What aspect(s) have stood the test of time?

What spiritual practices do you have?

What are you still seeking? How might you get it?

What is your scripture - the bible, biographies, world religion texts, poetry, who do you read to help you, to guide you?

Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.

Snack break (5 minutes)

Cross-conversation (30 minutes)

This time is for you to respond to what other shared previously.

Business / Feedback (5 minutes)

Closing (1 minute)

Every time a child says, "I don't believe in fairies" there is a little fairy somewhere that falls down dead.