

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small-Group Ministry Session Plan,
Stepping Stones
Raleigh, NC, Rev. Holly Anne Lux-Sullivan

Please note: E-mail your group a week or so in advance, if possible, to encourage them to pick five stepping stones or turning points in their lives. If they can't come up with five, tell them three will do. Emphasize that both positive and negative turning points should be included.

If you would like to play the songs included, please do; they can serve to set a meditative, contemplative tone. You can also encourage participants to place a rock into a bowl of water for each metaphorical stone they share, if you're in the mood to add a bit of ritual to the time.

Opening words and chalice-lighting

The turning point in the process of growing up is when you discover the core of strength within you that survives all hurt.

– Max Lerner, American journalist and educator

Check-in

What was the experience of choosing five stepping stones or turning points in your life like? Was it simple or difficult? Why?

Reading: Lyrics from the song “River God” by Nichole Nordeman

Rolling river god
Little stones are smooth
Only once the water passes through

So, I am a stone
Rough and grainy still
Trying to reconcile this river's chill

But when I close my eyes
And feel you rushing by
I know that time brings change
And change takes time
And when the sunset comes
My prayer would be this one
That you might pick me up
And notice that I am
Just a little smoother in your hand

Focus/topic

Though we often don't know it at the time, we can look back on moments in our lives and recognize them as turning points or as the stepping stones to where we are now or where we hope to be. This evening we're invited to briefly share five stepping stones in our lives. There are two aspects to this: listing the stones but, more importantly, sharing how we felt or feel about

them. To ensure we all get to share, we'll go around the circle, sharing one stone at a time. (*Be sure to say how long to take for each "stone" they share.*)

Questions for consideration:

- What are your five stepping stones, and how did you feel about them at the time, or how do you *now* feel about them?
- Thinking of the song lyrics, do you feel the turning points you've chosen made you a little smoother in the long run, if not the short?

Check-out/likes and wishes

Closing reading and extinguishing the chalice: Lyrics from the song "Good Riddance (Time of Your Life)" by Billie Joe Armstrong

Another turning point

A fork stuck in the road

Time grabs you by the wrist
directs you where to go.

So make the best of this test
and don't ask why.

It's not a question

But a lesson learned in time.

It's something unpredictable
but in the end it's right.

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