

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Finding Balance, Living with Polarities Series
Tradition and Innovation-
Small Group Ministry Session Plan, Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, Oregon,
February 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 seek to be a compassionate community that is present and listens with care to our sharing of memories, concerns, dreams, and hopes. May we find ways for our stories to deepen our connection and enhance our understanding.

(By UUCE SGM steering committee curriculum subcommittee: Rev. Stephen A. Ames, Dick Loescher, Leora White)

Check-in (up to 20 to 30 minutes, 2 to 3 minutes per person)

Topic and sharing (up to 70 minutes for reading, questions and sharing with optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

Readings

Family traditions counter alienation and confusion. They help us define who we are; they provide something steady, reliable and safe in a confusing world.

(By Susan Lieberman)

Many of the people who attend religious services in our society are not interested in theology, want nothing too exotic and dislike the idea of change. They find the established rituals provide them with a link with tradition and give them a sense of security.

(By Karen Armstrong, "A History of God")

Do not follow where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.

(by Ralph Waldo Emerson)

Spirit of Life, come unto me.

Sing in my heart all the stirrings of compassion.

Blow in the wind, rise in the sea;

move in the hand, giving life the shape of justice.

Roots hold me close; wings set me free;

Spirit of Life, come to me, come to me.

(By Carolyn McDade)

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 traditions from your past (family, cultural, religious) are still important to you and provide meaning and stability in your life?

2. Talk about some innovations that have been important to you, and what has it been like to let go of prior traditions?

3. What are some current areas of polarity between tradition and innovation that are challenging for you?

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)

Administrative matters (service project, future meeting dates and topics, etc.) (Up to 5 to 10 minutes)

- Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.
- Consider discussing the service project.

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)

May we offer to one another, and to ourselves, the fruits of our lives, that others, in return, may be a source of inspiration to those whose lives they touch.

(Adapted from Howard Thurman)

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) 10/24/09