

What We Love

Covenant Group Session: Countryside Church UU, Palatine, IL, adapted from
Augusta, ME (May 2008)

At the end of the previous session, or sometime before this session, give to group members the preparation page for this session (attached at the end of this document.)

Preliminaries

Chalice Lighting and Reading

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.

-- 1 Corinthians 13

Check-in.

Meditation Reading

Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places—*David S. Blanchard*

Most of us look for love in only the most obvious of places, and as a result, most of us come away disappointed. It's as if we are still grade school kids, counting valentines as a measure of what matters. The love that matters is not typically the subject of sonnets or love songs.

There can be love in being told we are wrong. There can be love in sharing a regret. There can be love in asking for help. There can be love in communicating hurt. There can be love in telling hard truths. Most of us find it painful to live at this level of love, but it can be there, even in these most unlikely places. It isn't the kind of love we've been promised in fairy tales of princes and fairy godmothers, but it is the kind experienced by frogs and dwarfs. It's the sort of love that can bring us close closer to finding the missing pieces of ourselves that we need to make us whole.

Some of the most loving things I've experienced, I haven't been ready for; wasn't looking for, and nearly didn't recognize. A few of them I didn't want. But all of them have changed me, transformed some part of me, filled in a place that I didn't even know was empty.

When the valentine has been tucked away in a drawer, the candy eaten, the flowers faded and gone, there will be other legacies of love that will last as long as we do, because they have

brought us to know an element of life—part feeling, part idea, part mystery—that once known, is ours to keep.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Please share your thoughts on the preparation for this session.

Preparation Questions

1. Tell a story about when you experienced a love you weren't ready for, wasn't looking for, or didn't recognize. Did it change you?
2. What do you love?
3. Tell a story of when you first encountered one of your loves.
4. How does it feel: doing or being with the thing you love?
5. How do you feel when you are apart from it or unable to do it?

Facilitator questions

6. Are you at peace with the things that you love to do or be?
7. What would you have to do to "let" yourself love what you love?
8. How could we help each other achieve that?

Discussion Close

During the last five or ten minutes of the session, ask group members to just call out things they love. "I love spring." "I love hamburgers," etc. It's not round robin; group members can respond in any order, not at all, or as many times they like. It's sort of a lightening round. It ends the discussion on an energetic and upbeat note.

Check-out

Closing Reading/Extinguishing the Chalice

Faith, hope, and love abide, these three, and the greatest of these is love.

--1 Corinthians 13

Now leave this place, knowing you are good and knowing you are loved.

Amen.

Preparation for CCUU Session: What We Love

The word “love” has so many meanings and is experienced in so many different ways, it’s often difficult to talk about. Often, we say “love is a feeling” and leave it at that. But we realize that saying “I love ice cream” describes a very different emotion than “I love life,” or, of course, “I love you.” So in describing love, we’re really talking about many types of feelings.

Acts of love are equally hard to define. We know them when we encounter them. We know them when we do them, because of what we feel in the doing. But again, the feeling of love can be expressed in acts that spring from compassion, generosity, protection, encouragement, romance—the list goes on and on. So, too, acts of love can be found in many places—when the groom kisses the bride, when an intervention is called to help an alcoholic family member face her problem, and in many situations in between.

Our purpose in this session is not to define love. Rather, it is to explore a concept that has few boundaries. We’ll explore it through our own life experiences and learning from each other how many different ways love has touched our lives.

Food for Thought

1. Tell a story about when you experienced a love you weren’t ready for, wasn’t looking for, or didn’t recognize. Did it change you?
2. What do you love?
3. Tell a story of when you first encountered one of your loves.
4. How does it feel: doing or being with the thing you love?
5. How do you feel when you are apart from it or unable to do it?

Meditation Readings

Looking for Love in All the Wrong Places—*David S. Blanchard*

Most of us look for love in only the most obvious of places, and as a result, most of us come away disappointed. It’s as if we are still grade school kids, counting valentines as a measure of what matters. The love that matters is not typically the subject of sonnets or love songs.

There can be love in being told we are wrong. There can be love in sharing a regret. There can be love in asking for help. There can be love in communicating hurt. There can be love in telling hard truths. Most of us find it painful to live at this level of love, but it can be there, even in these most unlikely places. It isn't the kind of love we've been promised in fairy tales of princes and fairy godmothers, but it is the kind experienced by frogs and dwarfs. It's the sort of love that can bring us close closer to finding the missing pieces of ourselves that we need to make us whole.

Some of the most loving things I've experienced, I haven't been ready for; wasn't looking for, and nearly didn't recognize. A few of them I didn't want. But all of them have changed me, transformed some part of me, filled in a place that I didn't even know was empty.

When the valentine has been tucked away in a drawer, the candy eaten, the flowers faded and gone, there will be other legacies of love that will last as long as we do, because they have brought us to know an element of life—part feeling, part idea, part mystery—that once known, is ours to keep.

1 Corinthians 13, Christian Scriptures

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful, it does not rejoice in wrong doing, but rejoices in the truth.

Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.