

Where We Live: 1. To Move or Not to Move

This is the first of a series about where we live, especially as life situations change.
Focus of this session: The need to change, even if a move is not involved.
Needed: Paper and writing implements for each person for Residence Timeline in Activity 1.

Opening Words: Where We Have Lived (Suggestion: Share the readings.)

I was always moving. I was born prematurely and in the hospital while my family was moving to another city. We moved every two to five years when I was growing up. I never got attached to a location.

I'm living in the house I was born in. Yup. Born right here and here to stay! I wouldn't know how to move! And why should I? We'll make the changes I need here, when that time comes.

We moved in with my grandparents. Had to. It was too expensive to live in our own home, even when my parents had jobs. Nice having everyone around, but I never had a space of my own.

The house just didn't fit anymore. Too much space to rattle around in. Too many memories. And no one to help with what needed to be done. It was a burden.

Moved to be closer to family, at least part of the family. Families are scattered all over these days. I really would like to be able to live with each of my children and their families for a few months at a time, to really get to know the grandkids. But that would be too many changes for everyone.

Change. Who knows what lies ahead? Who makes the decisions – directly or indirectly? Who knows if the choices I make now are the best ones?

Check in/Sharing: How are things with you today?

Topic/Activity

The meaning that we attribute to residence or place where we live influences the moves we make and how we make moves.

1. Residence Timeline. Draw a line the length of a paper. On one side of the line note the decades of your life. On the other side of the line, note where you resided in the various time lines. For each time you moved, note important things, such as with whom did you move? What was the reason for the move? What were your feelings or recollections about the move? Share your reflections on your moves.

OR

Share a move or change of living situation that has been critical in your life or for someone close to you. What impact did that have on you at the time or throughout your life?

2. What factors would influence a decision to stay where you are or to move? How would your choice affect your sense of self and your life activities?

3. Timing is a factor in making decisions. The response to the statement, “I’m not ready yet” might be “What are you waiting for?” How does timing play into your considerations?
4. What outcomes are you hoping for?
5. How dependent are you on others and in what way? How dependent are others on you? How does this influence your choices?

Check out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words

Grant me the serenity to live into change as an adventure.

May I be realistic in my dreams, expectations, and plans.

May I keep connected with others close to me as I make connections in new ways.

While change brings letting go, may I retain my sense of self, of my accomplishments, of my aspirations.

May you walk with me through the change.

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Where We Live: 2. Living Into the Decision

This is the second of a series about where we live, especially as life situations change. Focus of this session: what needs to be done in order to move toward the decision that has been made regarding present or future residence.

Opening Words (Suggestions: Share the readings.)

I have planned for years to clean out things. I have so many treasures gathered by just living. They are reminders of connections; of my interests; of people, places and things in my life. To let them go would be to shed part of myself.

My interests are changing. My collections of stamps or dolls or spoons or trains no longer hold the same interest for me. The family and friends that joined me in these collections are no longer here or as interested. And the world has changed. What do I do with these things now? Who would want them?

With limited space, my choices have to be clear. So now I follow the principle that I need to let go of old things in order to make space for new things. It's like donating a box of books to a yard sale and coming home with no more books than I donated. The balance of gathering and shedding.

Our family is moving in with us. Our present space and arrangement of things will change. It's not just having less space of our own, it is changing our patterns – and maybe having to explain our patterns to others.

I am of two minds. I want to keep all of the things that I have. Really, I do not feel like tackling the cleaning process. It is overwhelming – years of stuff. Maybe I will just leave it and let my family worry about it. But then, they have their own stuff. It would be a gift to them for me to do some of my own cleaning. And any amount will help.

Who decides what happens to my things? There are special things that I want to go to specific people. There may be some things that my family or friends particularly want. I wonder how I can distribute meaningful items so that my memory goes with them.

Check in/Sharing: How are things with you today?

Topic/Activity

Changes are needed. Now is the time for preparation. Change brings opportunity as well as challenges -- and always choices.

1. The need to make changes has been acknowledged and decisions about the changes have been made. What changes are you facing? What preparations are needed for these changes?
2. What life experience can be helpful in making these changes?
3. Changes involve making decisions about what to keep and what to get rid of. Share how these choices affect how you see your life to this point, and going forward. How would you describe your responsibility for taking care of personal items?

4. What are you keeping as connections with your past? What are you letting go?

5. What vision of the future guides you through this process?

Check out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words “Prudent Steward”

May I be a prudent steward of my possessions.

May I let go of things in a way that honors the part that they have played in my life.

May I make space for new things that are meaningful without gathering too much.

May I communicate so that my loved ones know my wishes.

May the way I steward my possessions be a gift from my heart and soul.

May the way I handle my possessions be consistent with my vision for my life.

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Where We Live: 3. What Now?

This is the third of a series about where we live, especially as life situations change.
Focus of this session: focuses on life after the change.

Opening Words (Suggestion: Share readings.)

For better or for worse, the change has been made! I am now in a new ‘chapter’ of my life! This is a time of adjustment, of new patterns, of new connections and relationships – ready or not!

I have jarring, unsettling moments of wondering whether the change was right. There will be times when I will wish I had done something else. That goes with the uneasiness of change. I will move forward from here; there is nothing to be gained from ruing or dwelling in the past.

People have remarked about how I look since I made the change. I hadn’t thought about how a change could affect my persona or even my outlook on life.

It may be OK to look back on this change as part of life. For the part that was good, may I give thanks. For the part that was hard, may I have patience and compassion.

All the plans were in place. I was preparing for the change. But then, the change itself changed. So I have to re-vision, plan again, and continue the unsettling state awhile longer. Please stay connected with me as the process continues.

I’m settling in, knowing that now is but a continuing step in the walk of life.

Check in/Sharing: How is it with you today?

Topic/Activity (If you have not made a change, envision how you would like things to be.)

1. What are some of the things that you like about the new situation?
2. Change in living arrangements frequently results in choices about what to let go and what to keep. How does what you brought with you fit into your new situation?
3. What new traditions can you create? What structures, patterns or rituals are part of your life now?
4. Share the impact of your change as it relates to your outlook on life, your relationship with your family, and your ability to live life to the fullest.

Check out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing words “Change Alone is Unchanging”

Whosoever wishes to know about the world must learn about it in its particular details.

Knowledge is not intelligence.

In searching for the truth be ready for the unexpected. Change alone is unchanging.

The same road goes both up and down. The beginning of a circle is also its end.

Not I but the world says it: all is one. And yet everything comes in season.

Heraklietos of Ephesos, #655 *Singing the Living Tradition*

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