

Saying Goodbye

Chalice Lighting

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

People tend to be uncomfortable with endings, because every ending is a little death. That's why in many languages, the word for "goodbye" means "see you again." Whenever an experience comes to an end - a gathering of friends, a vacation, your children leaving home - you die a little death.
Eckhart Tolle

"What we call the beginning is often the end. And to make an end is to make a beginning. The end is where we start from." T.S. Eliot

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I've learned, the hard way, that some poems don't rhyme, and some stories don't have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it. Gilda Radner

To live in this world, you must be able to do three things: To love what is mortal. To hold it against your bones knowing your own life depends on it; and when the time comes to let it go, to let it go.
Mary Oliver

Whenever any kind of deep loss occurs in your life - such as loss of possessions, your home, a close relationship; or loss of your reputation, job, or physical abilities - something inside you dies. You may feel diminished in your sense of who you are. There may be a certain disorientation. "Without this...who am I?" Eckhart Tolle

Deep Sharing / Deep Listening

Discussion, if time

Group Business

Closing Ritual

Leader's Comments

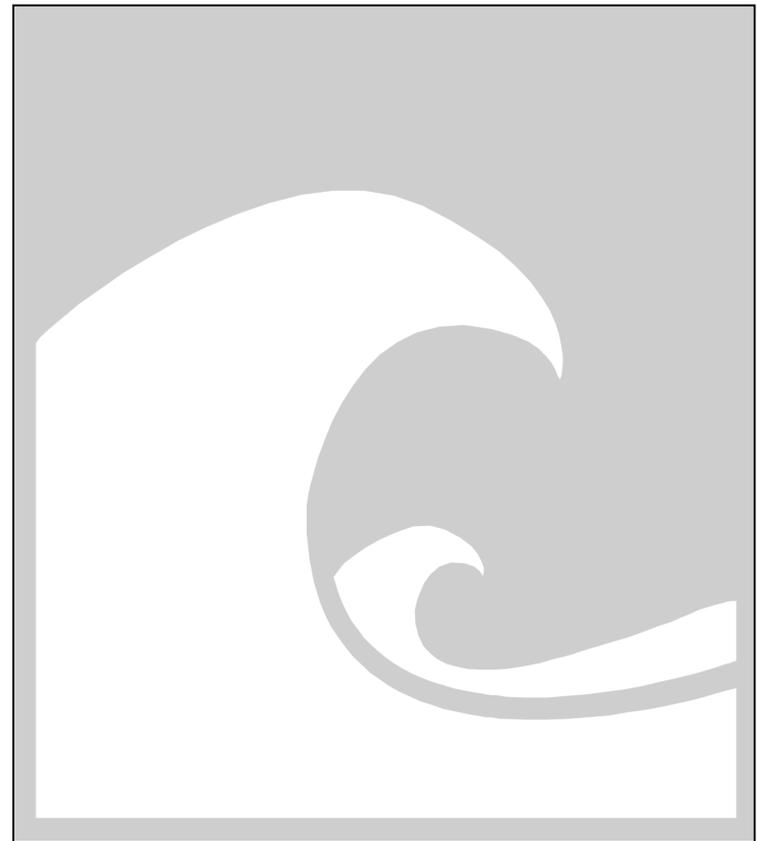
A moment of silent reflection

Sharing

Sing: "Go Now in Peace"

Covenant Group

Saying Goodbye



Homework: That's the Way to Say Goodbye

This session represents the last session for your group as it currently is, the topic of the session will be "Saying Goodbye". The Homework for this session involves reflecting on these questions and writing a few sentences in response to each.

1. Do you remember a 'goodbye' from your childhood? Who or what were you leaving?
2. Recall a good and a poor 'goodbye' from your adult years. What made the good one good? what made the poor one poor?
3. Can you tell a story about the relationship of sorrow and joy in your life?
4. What is something you appreciate about this group as it has been?

Leader's Notes: Questions

Bring some 3*5 cards or similar sized paper, some extra pens, and a basket or other container.

Open as Usual

Share the Readings

After the silence, ask people to write questions on their cards.

The questions should be answers to #1 from the homework: "What are the burning questions of your life right now."

These questions should be simple sentences, ie, "What am I supposed to be doing with my life?" no explaining. People can write several questions if they wish. They will be shared anonymously.

Give people time to think and write. Then collect the cards, shuffle them, and pass them out. As you pass them out you can remark that, while it's possible that someone would get their own card back, nobody will know that but them so they should keep a straight face.

Let people read over the card they got.

Say: The questions that are deep in our heart are sacred questions, and they often touch tender areas of our lives. So we will treat these questions with special care, leaving silence between them. After you have read what is on your card, please put it in the basket.

Go around the room and let individuals read. Then pass the basket around and let everyone take back their own card.

Do your sharing rounds.

Close with the poem on the next page.

O Love, I know a lot.
I can list the capitals of Europe,
thread my way through the periodic table,
and name the last names of all the artists who ever painted in Rome.
I know a lot,
but I have so few answers.
Fewer and fewer all the time.
And the questions themselves
 get more convoluted, more subtle and cunning,
 making me wonder if I even want to know the answers.

Sometimes,
 my footing isn't so sure.
Sometimes,
 my map crumples into powder at my feet.
Sometimes,
 the lights go out, the engine seizes, the song is cut off.
And on those days, I don't need Paris or Prague,
 and I don't need answers.
 I don't even need the questions.
What I need is a squeeze of my hand,
 a shoulder on which to lean,
 a voice that says, "We'll do it together,"
 a smile that does not say "chin up" and "be tough,"
 but which simply stands close, silent,
 arms draped around my stooping shoulders.
Give me no lectures on clumsiness when I stumble.
Give me no pep talks on vision when I cannot see.
Just be there, o precious Love,
 whenever I am not strong enough to admit I am not strong.
 Be there. Hold me. And then walk with me all the way home.-----

Unknown