

# Facilitator Notes for Books and Reading

## Before the Session

Bring enough pencils or pens for everyone so that people can write down names of books.

## As members arrive ...

Encourage members to take a pen or pencil because they might want to write down the name of an interesting book. They can use the backs of their Bulletins as scratch paper.

## Business

### Chalice Lighting

The flame of our chalice  
Is a symbol of the warmth and brightness of our connections.  
The flame lights our way back together again  
From our separate lives, and it lights our way forward  
Into promise and renewal.  
*Janet Parsons (adapted)*

### Sharing of Joys and Concerns (each person about 2 minutes)

**Silence** – holding ourselves and others in silent support – 3 minutes

### Shared Readings

Libro, cuando te cierro / abro la vida. / Book, when I close you / I open life.  
*Pablo Neruda, "Ode to the Book"*

I suggest that the only books that influence us are those for which we are ready, and which have gone a little farther down our particular path than we have yet got ourselves.  
*E.M. Forster, Two Cheers for Democracy*

Once you learn to read, you will be forever free. *Frederick Douglass*

When I got a library card, that was when my life began. *Rita Mae Brown*

We read to know we are not alone. *William Nicholson, Shadowlands*

When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature. If I were a young person today, trying to gain a sense of myself in the world, I would do that again by reading, just as I did when I was young. *Maya Angelou*

The book exists for us perchance which will explain our miracles and reveal new ones. The at present unutterable things we may find somewhere uttered. *Henry Thoreau [Walden], walden.org*

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

In the rounds of sharing, encourage people to write down the authors or titles of any books that interest them. If this activity becomes too disruptive, emails could be exchanged later. Pay close attention to the allotted time so that all members have the opportunity to share.

### **Round 1** (each person about 2 minutes)

Tell the group about a book you read recently or are thinking about reading.

### **Round 2** (each person about 5 minutes)

Share more deeply stories and experiences with books and reading as a result of your exploration of the preparation materials.

### **Round 3**

As time allows, share additional thoughts on reading and/or books, or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Words**

These are not books, lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves. From each of them goes out its own voice . . . so by taking down one of these volumes and opening it, one can call into range the voice of a man far distant in time and space, and hear him speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.

*Gilbert Highet, The Immortal Profession*

## **Song or Chime**

### **The Covenant**

I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the facilitator know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the facilitator the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, or giving advice
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn.