

# Facilitator Notes for Death

## Business

### Chalice Lighting

Come in with all your vulnerabilities and strengths, fears and anxieties, loves and hopes. For here you need not hide, nor pretend, nor be anything other than who you are and are called to be. Come into this place where we can touch and be touched, heal and be healed, forgive and be forgiven.

Come into this place, where the ordinary is sanctified, the human is celebrated, the compassionate is expected.

Come into this place. Together we make it a holy place.

*Rebecca A. Edmiston-Lange*

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

**Silence** – holding ourselves and each other in silent support – 3 minutes

### Shared Readings

The journey into death helps us live in the mystery of life. *Gary Eberle*

We have to stop procrastinating, pretending that we have forever to do what we want to do and be what we long to be. If we think that we want to become better and more loving human beings, we had better start moving in that direction right now. A remembrance of death brings us face to face with the fact that life is like a waterfall rushing over a cliff; it can't be postponed. Your life is here and now, in this very moment. *Lama Surya Das*

I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:  
what is it going to be like, this cottage of darkness?

*Mary Oliver*

Death twitches my ear. "Live," he says. "I am coming." *Virgil*

The dying process begins the minute we are born, but it accelerates during dinner parties. *Carol Matthau*

Life is not a journey to the grave with the intention of arriving safely in a pretty and well preserved body, but rather to skid in broadside, worn out and proclaiming, "Wow! What a ride!"  
*Hunter S. Thompson, although often appearing slightly adapted*

Religion is our human response to the dual reality of being alive and having to die.

*John Buehrens*

I am not ready to die,  
But I am learning to trust death  
As I have trusted life.  
*May Sarton*

## **Deep Sharing/Deep Listening**

In the rounds of sharing, pay close attention to the allotted time so that all members have the opportunity to share.

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

How does your religious belief or worldview influence your view of death?

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

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

**Round 3**

As time allows, share additional thoughts on death or reflect on what others have shared.

## **Closing Words**

What we need to fear is not death, but squandering the lives we have been miraculously given. So let me die laughing, savoring one of life's crazy moments. Let me die holding the hand of one I love, and recalling that I tried to love and was loved in return. Let me die remembering that life has been good, and that I did what I could. But today, just remind me that I am dying, so that I can live, savor, and love with all my heart.

*Reverend Mark Morrison-Reed*

## **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 leader know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the leader 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.

