

# Facilitator Notes for Endings

## Before the Session

Make a large star for each person out of paper or card stock and bring the stars to the meeting. The star should be large enough for each person in the group to write a few words on, perhaps using front and back. Also bring enough pens or pencils for each person.

The star will be used in the Closing Activity near the end of the session. Read through this activity so that you are prepared to lead it.

## Business

### Chalice Lighting

Spirit of life and love,  
We have come together  
In search of understanding,  
In search of community.  
We have come in search of hope and healing.  
This has been a place  
Not only of searching, but of discovery . . .  
A place not only of learning, but of wisdom . . .  
A place not only of meeting, but of connection . . .  
We honor this circle of love, ever expanding, ever growing.  
*adapted, Sue Ayer*

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

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

### Shared Readings

We shall not cease from exploration  
And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive at where we started  
And know the place for the first time.  
*T. S. Eliot*

Endings are a catharsis. They give meaning to what comes before, and change us from the way we were.  
*Steven Winn*

Learning to live is learning to let go. *Sogyal Rinpoche*

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*

Parting is such sweet sorrow. *William Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet*

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*

The things that matter most in our lives are not fantastic or grand. They are the moments when we touch one another, when we are there in the most attentive or caring way. This simple and profound intimacy is the love that we all long for. *Jack Kornfield*

## **Deep Sharing and Deep Listening**

In the rounds of sharing, pay close attention to the allotted time so that all members have the opportunity to share. Note that the Closing Activity is expected to take about 10 minutes, so you may want to adjust times as necessary.

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

Share a phrase or sentence from the Bulletin—the Chalice Lighting and the Shared Readings. Go around the circle several times with each person simply reading the phrase or sentence. Duplications are fine.

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

Share stories, feelings, and experiences of endings in response to the preparation about endings in your life.

### **Round 3**

Take a moment for everyone to say one thing that they will remember from participating in the group.

## **Closing Activity** (about 10 minutes)

Pass out stars and pens around the circle. Ask everyone to put her or his name on a star.

Give instructions for how the group writes on each star:

Pass the star to the person on the left. Have each member write a word or two that characterizes the person named on that star. Then pass the star on to the next person. The star will eventually return to the original person, with six or seven descriptive words or phrases on it.

When all have finished and everyone has their own star, read this quote:

The only legacy we leave is the light that shines from our life.

*Christine Robison*

Then ask each person in the group to share his or her star, their legacy, by reading the words on their stars in this way: “This is my star; I am [*loving, deep, curious, caring, etc.*]” Go first to model the process.

## **Closing Words**

Here we finalize the venture we began together in the fall  
We have opened our hearts by  
Listening and sharing deeply from our hearts.  
We have been patient with each other  
And cheered one another.  
We have celebrated and endured our transitions.  
We have known joy in our exploring,  
Energy in our quest,  
Humor for our differences,  
And compassion in our sufferings,  
Always with a common caring that has held us  
In our journey together.  
*adapted, Karen Lewis*

## **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.