

Facilitator Notes for Vulnerability

Before the Session

This session has a brief closing activity. Read over it so that you are prepared to lead it.

Business

Chalice Lighting (may be read responsively)

For every time we make a mistake and we decide to start again: We light this chalice.

For every time we are lonely and we let someone be our friend: We light this chalice.

For every time we are disappointed and we choose to hope: We light this chalice.

Maureen Killoran

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

Silence – holding each other in silent support – 3 minutes

Shared Readings

The best way to make people trustworthy is to trust them. *Ernest Hemingway*

We're never so vulnerable than when we trust someone—but paradoxically, if we cannot trust, neither can we find love or joy. *Walter Anderson*

Feeling vulnerable, imperfect, and afraid is human. It's when we lose our capacity to hold space for these struggles that we become dangerous. *Brené Brown*

When you are aware of what you are doing, placing your trust in someone or something takes a lot of courage. It's an act of bravery. It acknowledges that you are not alone in the world and that there is a connection between you and all things. *Angel Kyodo Williams*

Take courage friends. The way is often hard, the path is never clear, and the stakes are very high. Take courage. For deep down, there is another truth: You are not alone. *Wayne B. Arnason*

Trust men, and they will be true to you; treat them greatly, and they will show themselves great. *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Only the open gate can receive visitors.

Only the open hand can receive gifts.

Only the open mind can receive wisdom.

Only the open heart can receive love.

Joan Walsh Anglund, "The Circle of the Spirit"

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. *Mevlana Rumi*

To “listen” another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another. *Douglas Steere*

I argue there are two ways for the heart to break: apart into many shards, like a fragment grenade, or open into greater capacity so we can hold life’s inevitable tensions creatively, not destructively. Many of us learn how to hold personal tensions in that open, life-giving way. *Parker Palmer*

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. Be sure to have enough time for the brief Closing Activity.

Round 1 (each person about 2 minutes)

What does the covenant group commitment to “share as deeply as I can” mean to you?

Round 2 (each person about 5 minutes)

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

Round 3

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

Closing Activity (4 or 5 minutes)

Invite group members to join into a circle and each say one or two words about her or his level of comfort with being vulnerable within the covenant group. Be prepared to go first, and proceed around the circle.

Closing Words

Love is a choice—not simply, or necessarily, a rational choice, but rather a willingness to be present to others without pretense or guile. Love is a conversion to humanity—a willingness to participate with others in the healing of a broken world and broken lives. Love is the choice to experience life as a member of the human family, a partner in the dance of life.

Rev. Dr. Carter Heyward

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.