

Bulletin for Parenting

Business

Chalice Lighting

We come together in an attitude of openness—not knowing quite what will happen, yet daring to receive a new idea, a new experience, sustenance for our minds and our hearts.

We come with an attitude of humility, knowing how much we need one another, how alone we can be in the world, how vulnerable if we face life solely by ourselves.

We come in the spirit of love, seeking human warmth and fellowship in the hands and faces of those around us.

adapted from Peter Lee Scott

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence – holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Shared Readings

Our relationship with our parents is the “original” relationship of our lives, the template for all other connections. *Dale Atkins, Nancy Hass, I’m OK, You’re My Parents*

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance.
Franklin P. Jones

Each day of our lives we make deposits into the memory banks of our children.
Charles R. Swindoll

I was a better mother before I had kids. *Lori Borgman*

Do not confine your children to your own learning, for they were born in another time.
the Talmud

“It takes a village” has never had more meaning as a concept than it does today. Beyond assembling the local support team it takes to raise a child well, we need to come together globally to create conditions that provide all children everywhere hope and opportunity.
Hillary Rodham Clinton

Remember that your children are not your own, they were lent to you by the Creator.
Native American Proverb

Your children need your presence more than your presents. *Jesse Jackson*

Deep Sharing/Listening

Round 1

Briefly describe some similarities and differences between you and your parents—either your birth parents or those who raised you or had an influence on you.

Round 2

Share more deeply stories and experiences of parenting or of being parented as a result of your exploration of the preparation materials.

Round 3

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

Closing Words

Out of our busyness, we are called back into balance, back into ourselves and the silence of present being. But it is not just back into ourselves to which we are called; it is also to the awareness of the continuous presence of the environment around us and within us. We are called to remember our relationships and our dependencies. We are called to once again feel the oneness which sustains our being in balance with creation, and to do so with wonder and appreciation.

Susan Manker-Seale

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.

Preparation for Parenting

This session about parenting is intended for all of us, since we all have had parents—whether birth parents or others who raised us or influenced us—even if we ourselves may have not become parents. If you do not have children, you can consider the topic of parenting as it relates to children in your life, such as nieces and nephews or children associated with your career or volunteer work. Both parents and non-parents can use this session to consider your view of parenting in our society or to re-examine your thoughts on your own experience of being parented.

Parenting is one of the most important jobs we can have in our lives. It is also one of the most difficult. We are responsible for the health, happiness, and growth of another person. It is full of joy, love, sadness, anger, forgiveness and so many other emotions. The experience brings out the best in us, as well as the not so best that we may not have even realized was there. It is a balancing act between protecting, guiding, and letting go.

We learn most of our parenting skills from our own parents. How distinct are we from our parents—the parents we know as our birth parents or perhaps the birth parents we never knew but the parents who raised us? To what extent do we inherit—by nature or nurture—the traits of those who raised us or influenced us when we were young? Are we uniquely ourselves? Are we our parents with a twist? Are we their exact image?

Whether or not you have children yourself, you are a parent to the next generation. If we can only stop thinking of children as individual property and think of them as the next generation, then we can realize we all have a role to play. *Charlotte Davis Kasl, Finding Joy*

There are times as a parent when you realize that your job is not to be the parent you always imagined you'd be, the parent you had always wished you had. Your job is to be the parent your child needs, given the particulars of his or her own life and nature. *Ayelet Waldman*

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
But seek not to make them like you.
Khalil Gibran

When the strongest words for what I have to offer come out of me sounding like words I remember from my mother's mouth, then I either have to reassess the meaning of everything I have to say now, or re-examine the worth of her old words. *Audre Lorde*

As I look back on where we've been and where we are, what I sense and feel is that through all the turmoil and upheaval of the past five-plus decades, my parents did the best they could to protect and help me, to make my little world safe and secure. And as I listen and learn from others, I hear that they, too, for the most part, remember parents who did the best they could to protect and help them, wherever they were at the time. And that's maybe the single most important thing we all have in common: parents who did the best they could for us.

Bart J. Mindszenty, Michael Gordon, Parenting Your Parents

Questions to Ponder

1. What about you reflects who your parents are or were—birth parents or people who raised you or had an influence on you? What about you contrasts with who they are or were? This question will be used at the sharing.
2. Create an image or flow chart that represents you and any particular influences from your parents. If you have children, include an image of how you have influenced them, or how you hope to influence them.
3. What kind of influence do you want to be on children in your life?
4. As parents or as a member of a family, we have moments in our family life we are not proud of. Think of one of these moments you have had in your life. What did you learn from this experience? Were you able to forgive yourself? Why or why not?
5. In what ways is our society good for children? In what ways is it not very good?

Facilitator Notes for Parenting

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

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

Shared Readings

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Deep Sharing/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)

Briefly describe some similarities and differences between you and your parents—either your birth parents or those who raised you or had an influence on you.

Round 2 (each person about 5 minutes)

Share more deeply stories and experiences of parenting or of being parented as a result of your exploration of the preparation materials.

Round 3

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

Closing Words

Out of our busyness, we are called back into balance, back into ourselves and the silence of present being. But it is not just back into ourselves to which we are called; it is also to the awareness of the continuous presence of the environment around us and within us. We are called to remember our relationships and our dependencies. We are called to once again feel the oneness which sustains our being in balance with creation, and to do so with wonder and appreciation.

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