

Facilitator Notes for Aging

Before the Gathering

This session uses a Guided Meditation during the period of Silence. Practice reading it before the session so that you are comfortable with it.

Words of the Day

I am aware of aging when I ...

Chalice Lighting

We light this chalice to shine on our time together. In its light we celebrate the relationships and understanding we are creating in this place and time. May our sharing be deep. (*Light chalice*)

The Basket

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support

Read: To start our time of silence, we are going to join in a Meditation on Hands, adapted from Christine Robinson. I invite you into a space of quiet and peace, to ground yourself by noticing your contact with chair and floor, by sitting straight, by becoming aware of your breathing ...

Look at your hands.

They've been through a lot, those hands,

they have strengths, scars, beauty

I invite you to remember that it is your hands that do the work of love in the world.

These hands may hold another's hands.

These hands may type emails to politicians,

sign cards of consolation and congratulation.

These hands may patiently teach,

quilt works of beauty, or write words urging peace.

These hands may bathe children, feed elders, nurse the ill,

work the earth, organize communities.

These hands clasp in prayer, open in release,

grasp in solidarity, clench in righteous anger.

These hands are God's hands, your hands, our hands;

a great mystery of flesh and intention,

a great potential of embodied love.

... Let us continue in silence.

Shared Readings

The evening of life brings with it its lamp. *Joseph Joubert*

We grow neither better nor worse as we grow old, but more like ourselves. *May Becker*

Wholly unprepared, we embark upon the second half of life ... we take the step into the afternoon of life. *Carl Jung*

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

If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things, this is the best season of your life. *Wu-men*

Old age is like flying through a storm. Once you're aboard, there's nothing you can do. *Golda Meir*

Each part of life has its own pleasures. Each has its own abundant harvest, to be garnered in season. We may grow old in body, but we need never grow old in mind and spirit. *Cicero*

When hungry, eat your rice; when tired, close your eyes. Fools may laugh at me, but wise men know what I mean. *Lin-Chi*

The secret of a good old age is simply an honorable pact with solitude. *Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Round 1: Share your reflections on aging and the preparation materials.

Round 2: Share additional thoughts or reflect on what others have shared.

Closing Circle

Extinguishing the Chalice

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again. (*Extinguish the chalice.*)

Announcements

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, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the "I-message."