

Facilitator Notes for Caring Community

Preparation for this final meeting

There are three considerations for the facilitator – an introduction to the time of silence, a special Shared Reading where members go around the circle reading a paragraph at a time, and a Closing Circle activity where members read brief descriptions they have written about each person.

- Read over the Silence introduction and the Shared Reading to acquaint yourself with them.
- Prepare the material for the Closing Circle. You will be given several interlocking puzzle pieces that fit together, one for each group member plus 1 for errors. Before the meeting, write each person's name on the front of a puzzle piece (the colored side). Then, on the back of the piece, write a characteristic or quality that you admire about that person.
- Note the **Script** at the end of the facilitator notes. It is passed around to read in the Closing Circle.

As participants arrive

- As group members come in, ask them to write a characteristic or quality they appreciate about each member on the back of that member's puzzle piece. (*Members also do Words of the Day*).
- When all pieces are filled out, put the pieces on the table next to the chalice and connect them together to make a whole.

The Gathering

Words of the Day

My experience of a caring community includes ...

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 Introduction

Read: For our time of silence, we will think with deep gratitude about each person in our covenant group. Each person has brought a special light to this group, a spark, a special gift.

Listen to these words by Albert Schweitzer.

At times, our own light goes out and is rekindled by a spark from another person.

Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude of those who have lighted the flame within us.

As we sit quietly in this circle, visualize each person around the circle. Be aware of your deep gratitude for their special gifts, their spark of light. (*Silence for 2 minutes*)

Come back to this place now.

Shared Reading

I Want to Be With People, by Dana E. Worsnop

Facilitator: We will read it going around the circle, with breaks at

Often people say that they love coming to a place with so many like-minded people.
I know just what they are getting at – and I know that they aren't getting it quite right.
.....

I don't want to be with a bunch of people who think just like me.
.....

I want to be in a beloved community where I don't have to think like everyone else to be loved, to be eligible for salvation.

I want to be with people who value compassion, justice, love and truth, though they have different thoughts and opinions about all sorts of things.
.....

I want to be with independent-minded people of good heart.

I want to be with people who have many names and no name at all for God.
.....

I want to be with people who see in me goodness and dignity, who also see my failings and foibles, and who still love me.

I want to be with people who feel their inter-connection with all existence and let it guide their footfalls upon the earth.
.....

I want to be with people who see life as a paradox and don't always rush to resolve it.

I want to be with people who are willing to walk the tight rope that is life and who will hold my hand as I walk mine.
.....

I want to be with people who let church call them into a different way of being in the world.

I want to be with people who support, encourage and even challenge each other to higher and more ethical living.
.....

I want to be with people who inspire one another to follow the call of the spirit.

I want to be with people who covenant to be honest, engaged and kind, who strive to keep their promises and hold me to the promises I make.
.....

I want to be with people who give of themselves, who share their hearts and minds and gifts.

I want to be with people who know that human community is often warm and generous, sometimes challenging and almost always a grand adventure.
.....

In short, I want to be with people like you.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

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

Round 2: Share feelings and thoughts on our current covenant group.

Closing Circle

Say: In our time together we have become a strong group, connecting with one another by trust, shared experiences, deep sharing and deep listening. Today we honor our group as it has been. We have grown together on many levels. We all fit together and create the whole. We have become a sacred whole.

Pull apart one individual puzzle piece. Read the scripted sentence (found at the bottom of this page) to the person named on the puzzle piece. (You are also reading the descriptions on the back). Then give that person their puzzle piece.

Ask the person next to you continue and give them the script. This person should get the puzzle piece and read the script, including the characteristics on the back of the puzzle piece. Continue around the circle to the left until all the pieces have been used. End by saying something like, "Blessed be" Or "Go in peace."

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.*)

Song/Chime

Script for reading a puzzle piece:

 Name , you have been a valuable member of this group. Here is what you have brought to the group. You are ... (*read qualities written on back of puzzle piece*) ...
Thank you for bringing your gifts to our group.