

# Gathering for Growth as an Adult

*This Gathering has suggestions for introducing sections. Some sections use a timer / clock.*

## Words of the Day

*As people arrive, ask them to write the Words of the Day and put them in the basket.*

In the last 5 years of my life, I have grown by ...

## Opening

**Chalice Lighting** *“We’ll begin with the chalice lighting.” Ask for a volunteer.*

Please help our time together this evening make us aware of our life’s journey as a trip from stage to stage of our existence: from childhood to maturity, youth to old age. Help us see that our “victory” in life is not a stop along the way but in having made the journey, step by step, a sacred pilgrimage.  
*Rabbi Alvin Fine, adapted*

**The Basket** *“Now we’ll read the Words of the Day. I’ll start, and pass it along to the right (left).”*

## Being Together

**Sharing of Joys and Concerns** *“We’ll share joys and concerns. I’ll begin. Will you go next?”*

**Silence, holding each other in silent support** *“Now a few minutes of silence.” (2 or 3 minutes)*

## Shared Readings

*“I’ll start the first Shared Reading. Will you go next?”*

I am not afraid of storms, for I am learning how to sail my ship. *Louisa May Alcott*

We come fresh to the different stages of life, and in each of them we are quite inexperienced, no matter how old we are. *François de la Rochefoucauld*

If we listen for the confusion at the edges of understanding, we can find the most fertile ground for transformation. *Jennifer Garvey Berger*

When we quit thinking primarily about ourselves and our own self-preservation, we undergo a truly heroic transformation of consciousness. *Joseph Campbell*

I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better. *Maya Angelou*

One cannot live the afternoon of life according to the program of life’s morning, for what was great in the morning will be of little importance in the evening, and what in the morning was true will at evening have become a lie. *Carl Jung, The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche*

Characters cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved. *Helen Keller*

More and more research is suggesting that, far from being simply encoded in the genes, much of personality is a flexible and dynamic thing that changes over the life span and is shaped by experience.  
*Carol Dweck*

The afternoon knows what the morning never suspected. *Swedish proverb*

Risk it; go for it. Life always gives you another chance, another go at it. It's very important to take enormous risks. *Mary Quant*

## Deep Listening and Sharing

**Round 1. Deep Listening and Sharing.** *“Now we share reflections on Growth and the preparation.” Begin, or if you're not ready, ask who can go first.*

**Round 2. Responses and Comments.** *After all have shared or passed, check the time. Say “We have about \_\_ minutes for a 2nd round.” Begin your response or ask who can start.*

## Closing

**Closing Circle** *“We'll go around the circle and say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session. I'll go first, and would you be willing to go next?”*

**Chalice** *“Now we extinguish the chalice.” Read in unison or ask for a volunteer.*

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.

**Song/Chime** *Ask for a volunteer.*

## 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 responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, and considering problems if they occur
- 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.”