

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan
JOY

May your time together be giggly, joyful and full of warm connection! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

With thankful hearts we have come together:

to celebrate the bounty of the day,

to bask in the warmth of this community,

to share with friends the tides of our lives,

to entertain, perennially, our hopes for a better future.

We join together to resist injustice and inequality, wherever they may be found.

Our hearts are touched by the human need we feel around us,

whether far away or within reach of our hand.

We come here, to be together, because this is how we believe our lives are best lived:

in questioning and in conversation, in compassion and in service,

in gratitude and in joy, in companionship, and in love.

It is good to be together.

(Adapted from Rev. Alison Wohler)

CHECK-IN

READINGS

Joy is a flower that blooms when you do. ~Author Unknown

When you are joyous, look deep into your heart and you shall find it is only that which has given you sorrow that is giving you joy. When you are sorrowful look again in your heart, and you shall see that in truth you are weeping for that which has been your delight. ~Khalil Gibran

Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasure takes joy, even as though it were his own. ~Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Joy never feasts so high as when the first course is of misery. ~John Suckling

I spent a lot of years trying to outrun or outsmart vulnerability by making things certain and definite, black and white, good and bad. My inability to lean into the discomfort of vulnerability limited the fullness of those important experiences that are wrought with uncertainty: Love, belonging, trust, joy, and creativity to name a few. ~Brene Brown

Find a place where there's joy, and the joy will burn out the pain. ~Joseph Campbell

I cannot even imagine where I would be today were it not for that handful of friends who have given me a heart full of joy. Let's face it, friends make life a lot more fun. ~Charles R. Swindoll

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

QUESTIONS and REQUESTS (Please respond to any of the questions and readings you feel moved by. It is not necessary to respond to all of them.)

1. What feelings and images come to mind when you think of the word "joy?"
2. What brought you joy when you were a child?
3. Can you remember a time when you were filled with great joy? Tell us the story of that experience.
4. Who has served as a model of joyful living in your life, a model and inspiration to you? Have there been people in your life who stifled or spoiled your joy?
5. Share the story of a time when an act of service gave you great joy.
6. What have you observed about the relationship between joy and sorrow?
7. What regular habits and practices might create more joyfulness in your heart, home and community?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

MOMENT OF SILENT GRATITUDE

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and WISHES (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)

CHECK-OUT (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share)

CLOSING WORDS

*I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
I awoke and saw that life was service.
I acted and behold, service was joy.
~Rabindranath Tagore*

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE