

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan JANUARY
Worship Theme: Good and Evil

May your time together be meaningful and full of warm connection! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS: *MARGINAL WISDOM* By Leslie Takahashi

They teach us to read in black and white.
Truth is this—the rest false. You are whole—or broken.
Who you love is acceptable—or not.
Life tells its truth in many hues. We are taught to think in either/or.
To believe the teachings of Jesus—OR Buddha.
To believe in human potential—OR a power beyond a single will.
I am broken OR I am powerful.

Life embraces multiple truths, speaks of both, and of and.
We are taught to see in absolutes.
Good versus evil. Male versus female, Old versus young, Gay versus straight.

Let us see the fractions, the spectrum, the margins.
Let us open our hearts to the complexity of our worlds.
Let us make our lives sanctuaries, to nurture our many identities.

The day is coming when all will know that the rainbow world is more gorgeous than
monochrome, That a river of identities can ebb and flow over the static, stubborn rocks in its
course, That the margins hold the center.

CHECK-IN

READINGS:

In this life, we have to make many choices. Some are very important choices. Some are not.
Many of our choices are between good and evil. The choices we make, however, determine to a
large extent our happiness or our unhappiness, because we have to live with the consequences
of our choices. ~James E. Faust

Humans are born with a hard-wired morality: a sense of good and evil is bred in the bone. I
know this claim might sound outlandish, but it's supported now by research in several
laboratories. ~Paul Bloom

HELP US By Harry Meserve

From arrogance, pompousness, and thinking ourselves more important than we are,
may some saving sense of humor liberate us.

For allowing ourselves to ridicule the faith of others, may we be forgiven.
From making war and calling it justice, indifference and calling it tolerance,
pollution and calling it progress, may we be cured.
For telling ourselves and others that evil is inevitable while good is impossible,
may we stand corrected.

God of our mixed up, tragic, aspiring, doubting, and insurgent lives, help us to be as good in
our hearts [as] we have always wanted to be.

The power of choosing good and evil is within the reach of all. ~Origen

People like to say that the conflict is between good and evil. The real conflict is between truth
and lies. ~Don Miguel Ruiz

Never does hatred cease by hating in return;
only through love can hatred come to an end.
Victory breeds hatred; the conquered dwell in sorrow and resentment.
They who give up all thought of victory or defeat may be calm and live happily at peace.
Let us overcome violence by gentleness; let us overcome evil by good;
Let us overcome the miserly by liberality; let us overcome the liar by truth.
—Dhammapada

*Everyone spends their lives trying to balance their world between good and evil. ~Laurell K.
Hamilton*

I am in politics because of the conflict between good and evil, and I believe that in the end good
will triumph. ~Margaret Thatcher

Meditation By Norbert Fabian Capek (creator of the Flower Communion)
It is worthwhile to live and fight courageously for sacred ideals.
Oh blow ye evil winds into my body's fire; my soul you'll never unravel.
Even though disappointed a thousand times or fallen in the fight and everything would
worthless seem, I have lived amidst eternity.
Be grateful, my soul, My life was worth living.

He who was pressed from all sides but remained victorious in spirit is welcomed into the choir
of heroes. He who overcame the fetters giving wing to the mind is entering into the golden age
of the victorious.

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 spoke to you from the readings?
2. Do any of the readings connect to your understanding of your faith or being UU? Any challenges to your understanding?
3. Where is your understanding of where the sacred is in “good and evil”?
4. What would you like the children of this congregation, our faith tradition and our community to know and understand about good and evil in our lives?
5. How does using words like “good and evil” further or inhibit conversation about faith

and life?

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 & Extinguish the Chalice or Candle

*[And now], since the struggle deepens, since evil abides,
and good does not yet prosper,
Let us gather what strength we have,
what confidence and valor that our small victories may end in triumph,
and the world awaited be a world attained.*