

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan
July: PLAY

May your time together challenge, refresh & deepen your spirits! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS (by Rev. Erika Hewitt, adapted)

We arrive from many different experiences and backgrounds;
we greet one another with kind words. *We speak the language of love.*

We form a web of compassionate listening when individuals among us, embodying vulnerability, name the fears that grip their hearts, the joys that buoy their spirits.

We speak the language of love.

At times, we disagree. Tension enters as we make room for different beliefs, different opinions, different perspectives. Through it all, it's our intention that... *we speak the language of love.*

In this gathering, we welcome a multiplicity of truths, and invite them to be named out loud. We prophesy, summoning the age when justice and peace will be evident all around us, and

we speak the language of love.

Let us be together, making room for one another as whole beings, tender hearts, hungry spirits, and curious minds. With our actions and with our words, let us *...speak the language of love.*

CHECK-IN

READINGS

“Play is the exultation of the possible.” ~Martin Buber

“Ritual grew up in sacred play; poetry was born in play and nourished on play; music and dancing were pure play.... We have to conclude, therefore, that civilization is, in its earliest phases, played. It does not come from play...it arises in and as play, and never leaves it.”

~Johan Huizinga, Dutch historian

“Play keeps us vital and alive. It gives us an enthusiasm for life that is irreplaceable.

Without it, life just doesn't taste good”

~Lucia Capocchione

“Sacred play is anything that takes you into that right hemisphere of your brain. It turns out that this move away from left to the right hemisphere, that sense of expansiveness and everything, can be accomplished through unusual rhythmic action, or any action that requires so much attention away from words that you cannot think in words.”

~Martha Beck

“We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing.”

~George Bernard Shaw

“We are never more fully alive, more completely ourselves, or more deeply engrossed in anything than when we are playing.” ~Charles Schaefer

“A general function of all play is to give meaning to people's lives and to help them cope with the real world...Religion, properly conceived, is a grand and potentially life-long game in which people use the basic structures of the game - the story outlines, beliefs, and rituals - along with their own creative additions and modifications, to make sense of their real world and real lives. The stories and beliefs may be understood as fictions, but they are sacred fictions because they represent ideas and principles that are crucial to living in the real world and they may be held through all of life...

To keep religion on the side of humanity instead of against it, we need continuously to refresh its playfulness. Sacred play promotes the best of our human nature, improves our wellbeing, and is fun. Religion lacking play is suicidal.”

~Peter Gray, from “Play is Foundation for Religion”

“Play allows us to develop alternatives to violence and despair; it helps us learn perseverance and gain optimism.” ~Stuart Brown MD

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.)

- ❖ Of these readings, which one(s) spoke to where you are feeling today?
- ❖ Where do you find a sense of sacred play and how often do you make time and space to create it?
- ❖ Martin Buber wrote: “play is the exultation of the possible”. What feels hopeful and possible in your life? How can you find ways to play with what’s possible?
- ❖ Practice Courageous Love in this space and share something playful with the group!

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 (by Rev. Michael Schuler, adapted)

*We have reached the end of our time together,
Letting our imaginations play with future possibilities.
We have enjoyed magic moments and edified each other.
Shall it be concluded, then?
Or will this adventure, now commenced, continue?—
Our separate paths converging, meeting, merging
In the unending quest for love more perfect,
The joyous struggle for meaning more sufficient and life more abundant.
In your hearts lies the answer.
May it Be So.*

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE