

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan
October 2018: GRACE

It is good to be together – companionship is the heartbeat of our community. May your time of (re)connection be blessed! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE & CANDLE LIGHTING
MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS By Katie Gelfand, UU DRE, adapted

*We light our chalice as a symbol of gratitude
as we celebrate the abundance of our lives together.
In this space we harvest bushels of strength for one another,
and offer our crop with the hands of compassion and generosity.
In the authentic and gentle manner of our connections,
we cultivate a simple sweetness to brighten our spirits.
May we be grateful for the ways we nourish and uplift each other,
For it is the sharing of this hallowed time together that sustains us.*

CHECK-IN

READINGS & Questions for Reflection (Feel free to respond to some or all, as the spirit moves):

“Grace is something more than simply making a moment of peace for ourselves in our busy lives. We can prepare the way for grace, we can extend the invitation or even make the plea for grace to show up... But we can’t conjure up grace like it’s some kind of magic trick. One of its key elements is surprise. We have no idea where it comes from or when we’ll receive it. In fact, grace often appears when we least expect – or deserve – it.” ~Rev. Peter Friedrichs, UU Minister

- ❖ How has Grace appeared in your life?
- ❖ Do you receive or extend Grace more often?

“You are accepted. You are accepted, accepted by that which is greater than you, and the name of which you do not know. Do not ask for the name now; perhaps you will find it later. Do not try to do anything now; perhaps later you will do much. Do not seek for anything; do not perform anything; do not intend anything simply accept the fact that you are accepted.” ~Paul Tillich

- ❖ Mystery softens the edges of Grace as a spiritual practice, as does humble acceptance. What makes Grace challenging?

“Grace is that moment of reconnection, of turning back to God and discovering you are accepted and loved. Grace is the unanticipated felt knowledge that all shall be well.”
~Rev. Douglas Taylor, UU Minister

- ❖ Grace is a moment and a process both, how does hope connect with Grace?
Serenity?

“W.H. Auden was right when he wrote: ‘I know nothing, except what everyone knows – if there when Grace dances, I should dance.’ I know that Auden meant grace in the theological sense, meant it as the force that infuses our lives and keeps letting us off the hook. It is unearned love – the love that goes before, that greets us on the way. It’s the help you receive when you have no bright ideas left, when you are empty and desperate and have discovered that your best thinking and most charming charm have failed you. Grace is the light of electricity or juice or breeze that takes you from that isolated place and puts you with others who are as startled and embarrassed and eventually grateful as you are to be there...

I do not understand at all the mystery of grace – only that it meets us where we are but does not leave us where it found us.” ~Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies*

- ❖ When have you received or felt unearned love?
- ❖ When have you had a moment to extend unearned love and what impact did that extending of Grace have on your spirit?

MOMENT OF SILENT REFLECTION

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. Theodore Parker)

*We receive fragments of holiness, glimpses of eternity, brief moments of insight.
Let us gather them up for the precious gifts that they are,
and, renewed by their grace, move boldly into the unknown.*

Merry Meet, Merry Part, Merry Meet Again –
Go In peace with love & joy in your heart!

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE