



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Spiritual Journeys

The road of life twists and turns and no two directions are ever the same.
Yet our lessons come from the journey, not the destination. - *Don Williams, Jr.*

A holy restlessness is what prompts the pilgrimage of the spirit — a journey real or metaphorical that calls us away from what we have grown to think of as our home in order to discover a deeper sense of being at home with our human nature. - *Rev. Sarah York, Pilgrim Heart: The Inner Journey Home*

Personal answers to ultimate questions. That is what we seek. - *Alexander Eliot*

Chalice Lighting

(1 min.)

We gather around this flame that symbolizes:

the truth we know
and the truth we seek,
the community we share
and the community we aspire to,
the learning that enables us
and the mystery that encompasses.

Here we speak the languages
of memory and hope.

Here we are welcomed,
our journeys embraced and shared.

- *Ray Nasemann (1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection,
from UUA Worship Web)*

Opening Reading

(2 min.)

Roads

I enjoy looking at other people's roads.

They are different from mine

and yet basically the same.

The all facilitate journey
from here to there,
from self to other,
and they are all interconnected.

The fact that I love my own road
with its comfortable landmarks
and familiar faces,
doesn't restrict my appreciation
of someone else's neighbourhood.

And if I go into another area
and walk a mile or two with someone else,
I return a larger being.

The love of my own road is deepened,
the appreciation of other roads is widened,
and I am blessed in the knowledge
that all roads lead to the same Eternal Spirit.

- *Joy Cowley, New Zealand poet and hymn writer (from One and Universal:
Prayers and Meditations from Around the World), adapted*

Quiet Reflection (2 min.)	The way of being with another person which is termed empathic means temporarily living in their life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments.... To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter the other's world without prejudice...a complex, demanding, strong, yet subtle and gentle way of being. - <i>Carl Rogers</i>
Agreements (2 min.)	<i>Please remember the Agreements that we discussed last time, and that are posted here. Does anyone have any questions or concerns about them?</i>
Sharing/Check-In (35 min.)	<i>Take this time to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. We want to know how you are in this moment.</i>
Quiet Reflection (1 min.)	<i>Let's join together in quiet meditation as we honor what everyone has shared, as well as those highs and lows that we still hold in silence. May our delight and celebration multiply each other's joys, and may our presence and compassion lessen each other's sorrows.</i>
Topic Readings (3 min.)	<p>It is easy to imagine that the spiritual journey is about something other than our daily life. But in fact, the spiritual journey is our everyday life. How do we choose to meet and live each moment? We are always practicing something. Everything we do has some consequence to our spirit, and as the existentialists tell us, what we do repeatedly becomes who we are. When our actions spring from our deepest truth, we become more alive and aligned. When our actions are out of step with what is most true in our core, we are left feeling disconnected and diminished. – <i>David Rynick, "The Spiritual Practice of Hospitality," UU World, Summer 2007.</i></p> <p>[As I searched]...for my spiritual identity and my sense of place in the world, I began to intentionally, deliberately, seek out and read spiritual autobiography. ...Had anyone else ever searched they way I did? Made wrong turns? Tried to realize a deep calling? And even more confusing and embarrassing perhaps, had not succeeded and needed then to re-create and evaluate his or her life? – <i>Katherine Kurs, Searching for Your Soul: Writers of Many Faiths Share their Personal Stories of Spiritual Discovery</i></p>
Break/ Quiet Contemplation (10 min.)	<p>We are not born all at once, but by bits. The body first, and the spirit later... Our mothers are racked with the pains of our physical birth; we ourselves suffer the longer pains of our spiritual growth. - <i>Mary Antin</i></p> <p>Our real journey in life is interior; it is a matter of growth, deepening, and of an ever greater surrender to the creative action of love and grace in our hearts. - <i>Thomas Merton</i></p> <p>Any path is only a path, and there is no affront to oneself or to others, in dropping it if that is what your heart tells you. - <i>Carlos Castaneda</i></p>
Sharing/Deep Listening (40 min.)	<p><i>Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you see as the primary aim of your current spiritual/ religious life? Have you had different goals before, or do you anticipate different goals later in life?

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- What are the roots of your present spiritual/religious life? What other religions or belief systems have you belonged to or spent time exploring? Have you incorporated parts of these faiths into your current beliefs?
 - What role have family, friends, spiritual mentors, or others had along your spiritual path? Have certain people helped or hindered you along your journey?
 - What makes something a spiritual practice for you? Do you consciously incorporate any spiritual practices into your life? If so, what do they include? Are there any that you would like to learn more about or add to your life?

Discussion
(15 min.)

This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

**Checkout/
Likes & Wishes**
(5 min.)

*What did you like about this gathering?
What would you like to see change at future gatherings?*

Announcements (2 min.)

**Closing Reading/
Extinguish Chalice**
(2 min.)

Amid all the noise in our lives,
we take this moment to sit in silence—
 to give thanks for another day;
 to give thanks for all those in our lives
 who have brought us warmth and love;
 to give thanks for the gift of life.

We know we are on our pilgrimage here but a brief moment in time.

Let us open ourselves, here, now,
to the process of becoming more whole—
 of living more fully;
 of giving and forgiving more freely;
 of understanding more completely
 the meaning of our lives here on this earth.
- Tim Haley (*from UUA WorshipWeb*)