



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

A Book That Changed a Life

The profit of books is according to the sensibility of the reader. The profoundest thought or passion sleeps as in a mine, until an equal mind and heart finds and publishes it.

- *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

The book to read is not the one which thinks for you, but the one which makes you think. - *James McCosh*

Chalice Lighting

Life is a gift, for which we are grateful.
We gather in community to celebrate the glories
and the mysteries of this great gift.
- *Marjorie Montgomery*

Opening Reading

Read not to contradict and confute; nor to believe and take for granted;
nor to find talk and discourse; but to weigh and consider.
Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed,
and some few to be chewed and digested:
that is, some books are to be read only in parts,
others to be read, but not curiously, and some few
to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention.
- *Francis Bacon*

Quiet Reflection

If you can learn a simple trick, you'll get along a lot better with all kinds of folks.
You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view
. . . until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.
- *Harper Lee, To Kill a Mockingbird*

Sharing/ Check-In

Take two or three minutes to share how you are spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, and physically. You can speak or you can pass. We want to know how you are in this moment.

Topic Reading

It's no coincidence that just at this point in our insight into our mysteriousness as human beings struggling towards compassion, we are also moving into an awakened interest in the language of myth and fairy tale. The language of logical argument, of proofs, is the language of the limited self we know and can manipulate. But the language of parable and poetry, of storytelling, moves from the imprisoned language of the provable into the freed language of what I must, for lack of another word, continue to call faith. For me, this involves trust not in "the gods" but in God. But if the word God has understandably become offensive to many, then the language of the human being, faith in courage and honor and nobility, faith in love, our love for each other, and our dependence on each other. And it involves for me a constantly renewed awareness of the fact that if I am a human being who writes, and who sends

my stories out into the world for people to read, then I must have the courage to make a commitment to the unknown and unknowable (in the sense of intellectual proof), the world of love and particularity which gives light to the darkness.

- Madeleine L'Engle, *Glimpses of Grace: Daily Thoughts and Reflections*

Break/Quiet Contemplation

Sharing/Deep Listening

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 go deeper into the topic.

- What book has had the greatest effect on you? Who wrote it?
- Where were you in your life when you encountered it?
- How did it change your life?
- Have you re-read it? If so, did you experience it differently than the first time, and if so, how/why?

Discussion

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

What did you like about this meeting? What would you like to see change at future meetings?

Closing Reading/ Extinguish Chalice

And now we take our leave.
Before we gather here again--
 may each of us bring happiness into another's life;
 may we each be surprised by the gifts that surround us;
 may each of us be enlivened by constant curiosity --
And may we remain together in spirit
 til the hour we meet again.
- Barbara Cheatham, 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection;
 altered (from UUA Worship Web)