



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Hospitality

We are all wanderers, passing through, guests of the universe, and our job as a religious clan is to share earth's bounty and to set a warm, inviting place for one another. -Carolyn and Tom Owen-Towle

When I let strange people and strange ideas into my heart, I am beginning to shape a new world...Hospitality means we take people into the space that is our lives and minds and our hearts and our efforts. Hospitality is the way we come out of ourselves - Joan Chittister, *Wisdom Distilled from the Daily*

Chalice Lighting (2 min.)

Welcome
to a time of hope and promise,
to a place of peace and comfort,
to a journey toward truth and justice,
and to a community of love and courage
that will help us along the way.
-Anita Farber-Robertson

Introduction to Small Group Ministries and Tonight's Gathering (5 min.)

Opening Words (2 min.)

Small Group Ministries Intentions

We gather together in Small Group Ministries
To discover and honor the inherent worth in ourselves and each other;
To listen deeply to one another, hold each other in compassion, and feel ourselves
equally heard and held in care and love;
To journey together in spiritual practice and intellectual exploration as we
continue along our own spiritual paths;
To create a place, safe from fear of judgment, where we encourage each other to
seek meaning and speak our personal truths, as we grow to understand them;
To experiment with building, for ourselves and each other, the community to
which we want to belong;
To share the welcome we have received, and to use our understanding and
experience of community, compassion, and deep respect in service to our
congregation and the wider world;
To celebrate our part in the wide interconnected and interdependent web of all
existence.

Quiet Reflection (2 min.)

Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people cannot tell the
difference. - David Oxberg

Sharing/Check-In (35 min.)

*Please take two or three minutes to share your name, something about why you are
joining Small Group Ministries this year, and how you are doing in this moment—
spiritually, emotionally, physically, etc.*

Quiet Reflection (2 min.)

*Let's join together in a few moments of shared silence, holding what each of us has
spoken, as well as what remains unspoken, within circle of this group. Let's honor
the feelings of nervousness and anticipation, fear and excitement that come with
starting something new.*

Ground Rules (10 min.)

*Are there any other rules or agreements that you feel would help create a safe,
caring space where all of us can share equally?*

Break (10 min.)

Topic Readings
(3 min.)

We live unavoidably side by side. - *Immanuel Kant*

Practicing hospitality expresses our belief in the inherent worth and dignity of each person. Through our actions of hospitality we move toward creating a world in which we are all treated with justice, equality, and compassion. - *David Rynick*

If you want to be a person of great spirit, you can't do life alone. If spirituality matters to you, you can't do spiritually alone either. To really grow as a human being you need other people -*Daniel Holman and Lonni Collins Pratt*

Sharing/Deep Listening
(25 min.)

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.

- Think about your experiences of friendship, hospitality, being made welcome, having someone greet you as you enter a room of strangers, and being given directions. In what ways have these experiences been similar or different?
- Have you had experiences with others being hospitable or inhospitable toward you? How have these experiences shaped your own beliefs or practices?
- In what situations have you...
 - Not wanted to be hospitable? Why?
 - Wanted to be hospitable, but weren't? What held you back?
 - Been hospitable? What did you do? How did you feel? How did you hope the other person felt?
- What feelings, beliefs, and hopes do you hold as you start this process of forming a new small group community? What, if anything, can we do to extend hospitality to each other? To those outside the group in the larger community?

Discussion
(10 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**
(10 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**
(3 min.)

As We Depart from One Another

As we depart from one another, let our hearts be secure through every human season.

Let our hearts be secure in seasons of anguish as in seasons of joy, in seasons of failure as in seasons of success, in seasons of uncertainty as in seasons of security.

Let our hearts be secure in this dual reality: we are worthy recipients of love and support we can never earn, and we are worthy providers of love and support others cannot earn.

Let our hearts be secure, for hearts know and understand and will respond if invited in.

-James A. Hobart