

UUCR Small Group Ministry Session Plan
The Experience of Authenticity

May your time together deepen your connections – mind, heart and spirit! -Rev. Rebekah

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

“The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.” *Carl Jung*

CHECK-IN

READINGS

Now I Become Myself

May Sarton

Now I become myself. It's taken
Time, many years and places;
I have been dissolved and shaken,
Worn other people's faces,
Run madly, as if Time were there,
Terribly old, crying a warning,
"Hurry, you will be dead before--"
(What? Before you reach the morning?
Or the end of the poem is clear?
Or love safe in the walled city?)
Now to stand still, to be here,
Feel my own weight and density!
The black shadow on the paper
Is my hand; the shadow of a word
As thought shapes the shaper
Falls heavy on the page, is heard.

All fuses now, falls into place
From wish to action, word to silence,
My work, my love, my time, my face
Gathered into one intense
Gesture of growing like a plant.
As slowly as the ripening fruit
Fertile, detached, and always spent,
Falls but does not exhaust the root,
So all the poem is, can give,
Grows in me to become the song,
Made so and rooted by love.
Now there is time and Time is young.
O, in this single hour I live
All of myself and do not move.
I, the pursued, who madly ran
Stand still, stand still, and stop the sun!

“Seek out that particular mental attitude which makes you feel most deeply and vitally alive, along with which comes the inner voice which says, ‘This is the real me,’ and when you have found that attitude, follow it.” *William James*

“If we are unfaithful to true self, we will extract a price from others. We will make promises we cannot keep, build houses from flimsy stuff, conjure dreams that devolve into nightmares, and other people will suffer - if we are unfaithful to true self.” *Parker Palmer*

"if you keepin' it real just to keep it real you ain't keepin' it real" *Snoop-dogg*

“Dare to declare who you are. It is not far from the shores of silence to the boundaries of speech. The path is not long, but the way is deep. You must not only walk there, you must be prepared to leap.” *Hildegard Von Bingen*

“To be nobody but myself-in a world which is doing its best, night and day, to make me somebody else-means to fight the hardest battle any human can fight, and never stop fighting.”
e.e. cummings

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.)

1. Robert Coles, eminent child psychologist, says that we are all indebted to May Sarton for her *“willingness to give her specific fears and desires a chance to be of universal significance; to do that one must believe that private dilemmas are, if deeply examined, universal, and so if expressed have a human value beyond the private.”* Do you believe that Sarton’s “private dilemmas” are “universal” and “have value beyond the private”? Does her poem relate to your “fears and desires”?
2. “Authenticity starts when you set the intention to be genuine.” What makes being fully genuine in our lives so challenging? What fears do you have in setting the intention to living with authenticity?
3. Have you experienced what James describes as “the inner voice which says, ‘This is the real me’”? If so, please share with us.
4. How do we know if we are experiencing or living with authenticity? How do we recognize barriers to authenticity?

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

*“Our deepest calling is to grow into our authentic selfhood, whether or not it conforms to some image of who we ought to be. As we do, we will not only find the joy that every human being seeks—
we will also find our path of authentic service in the world.”*

~Parker J. Palmer

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE