



Adversity in Our Lives

Greenville UU Fellowship

Easley Covenant Group Session Plan

Welcome, Chalice Lighting: *Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a holy place. We light the chalice of Unitarian Universalism in honor of the light that lives in each of us, the light that shines among us, and the light we bring into the world.*

Check In: What adversities have you faced this past week and what successes have you enjoyed?

Opening Reading: In all things there is both something broken and something beautiful, that there is a moment of lightness on even the darkest of nights, a shadow of hope in every heartbreak, and that rejoicing is no less rich even when it contains a splinter of sadness. It's the practice of believing that we really do need both the bitter and the sweet, and that a life of nothing but sweetness rots both your teeth and your soul. Bitter is what makes us strong, what forces us to push through, what helps us earn the lines on our faces and the calluses on our hands.

~Shauna Niequist

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. What are some circumstances of adversity or challenges you've faced in your life?
2. What did you learn about yourself through those experiences?
3. Did the experience strengthen or weaken you?
4. In what way(s) would you be a different person if you had not faced these adversities?

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear readings)

Readings- Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings –see below

Sharing - This is a time to speak without interruption and for deep listening. Deep listening means no interrupting, no fixing, no saving, no advising, and no setting each other straight. Please share one or more responses to the session questions.

(This is usually a good time to take a brief break)

Open Discussion -This is a time to respond to something another person said about the topic or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared their thoughts on this topic. Continue to practice deep listening.

Closing reading:

We all face adversity and challenges in our lives at some point. It is these times of challenge that can truly show us who we are and what we are ultimately capable of. Sometimes adversity brings out the best in us; showcasing our inner strengths. Sometimes it highlights our weaknesses and fears. Adversity can have either a positive or negative impact on our life; depending on how we handle it.

Announcements/Plans

Check out: As we close today, how are you feeling now?

Extinguish the Chalice

Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings:

Adversity has the effect of eliciting talents, which in prosperous circumstances would have lain dormant.

~ Horace

There is nothing with which every man is so afraid as getting to know how enormously much he is capable of doing and becoming.

~ Soren Kierkegaard

Each difficult moment has the potential to open my eyes and open my heart.

~Myla Kabat-Zinn

You gain strength, courage and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, 'I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along.' You must do the thing you think you cannot do.

~Eleanor Roosevelt

I have one concern, and that is to be worthy of my suffering.

~Paraphrased from Tolstoy

Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers, but to be fearless in facing them.

Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain, but for the heart to conquer it.

Let me not look for allies in life's battlefield, but to my own strength.

Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved, but hope for the patience to win my freedom.

Grant me that I may not be a coward, feeling your mercy in my success alone;

But let me find the grasp of your hand in my failure.

~Rabindranath Tagore -- *Singing the Living Tradition*, #519

This session adapted from a session on the UU Small Group Ministry Network By Patty Odom, Unitarian Universalist North Atlanta Metro, GA