



## KINDNESS

Greenville UU Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan

Revised by David Frick, September 2021

**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.*

**Personal Check In:** Share something from our life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

**Opening Reading:** Be kind whenever possible. And it is always possible. ~The Dalai Lama

### Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Have you ever witnessed an act of kindness between strangers? What was it? How did you react?
2. How has your life been affected by kindness?
3. Was there a time when you did something kind that you knew the recipient might not know about or could never repay? What did you do? How did you feel about it afterwards?
4. Do you believe that kindness should be repaid? What do you believe about the idea of “paying it forward?”
5. How can we make kindness part of our daily lives, a habit?

### 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 responses to one or more of 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:

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

~Leo Buscaglia

### Announcements/Plans

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

### Extinguish the Chalice

*We extinguish this flame but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.*

## READINGS

Love and kindness are never wasted. They always make a difference. They bless the one who receives them, and they bless you, the giver. ~Barbara De Angelis.

To err on the side of kindness is seldom an error. ~Liz Armbruster.

Keep doing good deeds long enough and you'll probably turn out to be a good person in spite of yourself. ~Louis Auchincloss

My wish for you is that you continue. Continue to be who and how you are, to astonish a mean world with your acts of kindness. Continue to allow humor to lighten the burden of your tender heart. ~Maya Angelou.

If we cannot be clever, we can always be kind. ~Alfred Fripp

Spread love everywhere you go. Start first in your own house. Let no one ever come to you without leaving better and happier. Be the living expression of God's kindness: kindness in your face, kindness in your eyes, and kindness in your smile. ~Mother Teresa

A man heard noise coming from his yard. He looked out and saw neighborhood boys climbing one of the plum trees in the yard, trying to steal some plums. So he went out into the yard and placed a ladder under the boys in the tree, then quietly returned to his house. Was this a stupid thing to do? ~Buddhist Story

Carry out a random act of kindness, with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you. ~Princess Diana.

What wisdom can you find that is greater than kindness? ~Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

The words of kindness are more healing to a drooping heart than balm or honey. ~Sarah Fielding.

Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see. ~Mark Twain.

A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees. ~Amelia Earhart.

Kindness is like snow. It beautifies everything it covers. ~Khalil Gibran

I've been searching for ways to heal myself, and I found that kindness is the best way. ~Lady Gaga

Kindness is always fashionable and always welcome. ~Amelia Barr

Three things in human life are important. The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. The third is to be kind. ~Henry James

The pleasure of kindness is that it connects us with others; but the terror of kindness is that it makes us too immediately aware of our own and other peoples' vulnerabilities and failures. Kindness is the ability to bear the vulnerability of others and therefore of oneself, which is traumatic for some. Real kindness is an exchange with essentially unpredictable consequences.

~ Adam Phillips & Barbara Taylor, *On Kindness*

When there is a choice between being right and being kind, choose kind.

~Rev. Lisa Bovee Kemper, UU Minister

**For reading and reflection before the session on Kindness,** Random Facts and Further readings about Kindness

The Trait People Desire Most in a Partner. Kindness takes the cake when people are asked to rank an ideal partner's traits. Posted September 20, 2019. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-athletes-way/201909/the-trait-people-desire-most-in-partner>

Try a Little Kindness, June 17, 2017 Articles of the Heart, Personal Development. HeartMath Institute. <https://www.heartmath.org/articles-of-the-heart/try-a-little-kindness/>

People performing kind acts report feeling a rush of euphoria, followed by a longer-lasting period of improved emotional well-being.

Stress-related health problems improve after performing kind acts. Helping reverses feelings of depression, supplies social contact, and decreases feelings of hostility and isolation that can cause stress, overeating, ulcers, etc. Reduced stress has been shown in some people to decrease the constriction within the lungs that leads to asthma attacks. A decrease in both the intensity and the awareness of physical pain can occur.

Positive relationships of friendship, love, or other sorts of positive bonding strengthen the immune system. After performing, receiving, or witnessing a kind act, T-cell count increases by over 50% for up to three days. Additionally, the health benefits and the sense of well-being return for hours or even days whenever the helping act is remembered.

Regular club attendance, volunteering, entertaining, or faith group attendance is the happiness equivalent of getting a college degree or more than doubling your income.

~Allan Luks and Peggy Payne, *The Healing Power of Doing Good: The Health and Spiritual Benefits of Helping Others*. 2001.

Forget Survival of the Fittest: It Is Kindness That Counts, A psychologist probes how altruism, Darwinism and neurobiology mean that we can succeed by not being cutthroat. Scientific American, February 26,2009. <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/kindness-emotions-psychology/>

Kindness, a poem by Naomi Shehab Nye, <https://poets.org/poem/kindness>

Committing to Kindness, a sermon by Rev. Margaret A. Beckman <http://uucastine.org/sermons/committing-to-kindness/>