



Laughter

Greenville UU Fellowship- Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan

Written by Judy Brooks, January 2023

Welcome, Chalice Lighting:

Here we are, together in this space. By our love and by our covenant, we make this a sacred space. We light the chalice to honor 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 your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

Opening reading:

Laughter is part of our humanness; it's a coping mechanism in the face of anxieties, fears, sorrows, and other hidden emotions. It has the ability to draw us together in uncertain times. Laughter can be called "inner jogging." A robust laugh gives the muscles of the face, shoulders, diaphragm, and abdomen a good workout, and sometimes evens the arms and legs. Heart rate and blood pressure temporarily rise, breathing becomes faster and deeper, and oxygen surges throughout the bloodstream! Let us laugh together. !

~Youth service on UU Humor, Sangerville, ME. February 15, 2004

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Describe how and about what you and your friends or family are likely to laugh.
2. What has made you smile or laugh with others in the last 24 hours?
3. Share a time when you were hurt by humor, yours or another's.
4. What can we do to increase our sensitivity to the ways in which our humor or laughter might be hurtful to others?

Readings-see below

A time for silence and reflection prior to sharing

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:

Comedian Steve Allen says, "[Humor] is... a remarkably useful thing in the context of the whole process of human communication in that it is an aid to the expression of other emotions and to the transmission of important messages of spiritual, political, educational or commercial nature. It is, come to think of it, an absolute necessity in the maintenance of sanity."

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

"Laughter is man's most distinctive emotional expression. Man shares his capacity for love and hate, anger and fear, loyalty and grief with other living creatures. But humor, which has an intellectual as well as emotional element, belongs to man." ~Margaret Mead

"The secret source of humor is not joy, but sorrow; there is no humor in heaven." ~Mark Twain

"He deserves Paradise who makes his companions laugh." ~The Koran

"Before our ancestors were talking or even thinking in human terms, they were probably laughing, says a distinguished professor of biology and anthropology at Binghamton University. When it is appropriate, laughter puts everyone in a merry mood. In a primitive life of scarcity and fear, laughter might have evolved as a signal for identifying periods of safety and satiety. Fear and hunger are toxic to human development, while laughter is the elixir that makes it possible, for our distant ancestors no less than ourselves." ~David Wilson Sloan

"Comedy is based on truth. You take the truth and put a little curlicue on the end." ~Sid Ceasar

"A good laugh is a mighty good thing, a rather too scarce a good thing." ~Herman Melville

"A good laugh is sunshine in the house." ~William Thackeray

"A smile is a curve that sets everything straight." ~Phyllis Diller

"A smile starts on the lips, a grin spreads to the eyes, a chuckle comes from the belly; but a good laugh bursts forth from the soul, overflows, and bubbles all around." ~Carolyn Birmingham

"A well-balanced person is one who finds both sides of an issue laughable." ~Herbert Procknow

"Always laugh when you can. It is cheap medicine." ~Lord Byron

"Among those whom I like or admire, I can find no common denominator, but among those whom I love, I can: all of them make me laugh." ~W. H. Auden

"An optimist laughs to forget; a pessimist forgets to laugh." ~Tom Nansbury

"And keep a sense of humor. It doesn't mean you have to tell jokes. If you can't think of anything else, when you're my age, take off your clothes and walk in front of a mirror. I guarantee you'll get a laugh." ~Art Linkletter

"As soap is to the body, so laughter is to the soul." ~A Jewish Proverb

"Everyone is so afraid of death, but the real Sufis just laugh: nothing tyrannizes their hearts. What strikes the oyster shell does not damage the pearl." ~Rumi

Session inspired by the following resources:

-**LAUGHING AS A RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY**- a sermon by Rev. Elizabeth L. Greene Boise Unitarian Universalist Fellowship January 23, 2005. - <https://boiseuu.org/sermons/EG-20050123-LaughingReligiousActivity.pdf>

-Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website, Covenant Groups: **Laughter**. UU Fellowship, Vero Beach, FL, August 2015.