



## Love

Greenville UU Fellowship Greenville, South Carolina

Covenant Group Session Plan

Revised by Denise Frick, February 2023

**Welcome, Chalice Lighting:** We light this chalice to affirm that new light is ever waiting to break through to enlighten our ways; That new truth is ever waiting to break through to illumine our minds; And that new love is ever waiting to break through to warm our hearts. May we be open to this light and to the rich possibilities that it brings us. ~Rev. Charles A. Howe, UUF Wilmington, NC

**Personal Check In:** Briefly share something from your life since we last met and how you are feeling now.

### Opening Words:

We believe that we are hurt when we don't receive love. But that is not what hurts us. Our pain comes when we don't *give* love. We were born to love...We function most powerfully when we are giving love. The world has led us to believe that our well-being is dependent on other people loving us...the truth is that our well-being is dependent on our *giving* love. It is not about what comes back; it is about *what goes out*.

~Alan Cohen - *Chicken Soup for the Soul*

### Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. How have you experienced love in your life? What do you truly value in "love"?
2. Love is often linked to acceptance of self/others and forgiveness of self/others. How does acceptance and forgiveness connect to love for you?
3. Must you love yourself first in order to show love to others? Provide examples from your own life to make your point.
4. What do you do to make love visible in your life? How would you like to see this manifested at our Fellowship?

### 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 one or more responses to the session questions.

#### This is a 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:

The hand in yours belongs to a person whose heart is sometimes tender, whose skin is sometimes thin, whose eyes sometimes fill with tears, whose laughter is a beautiful sound. The hand that you hold belongs to a person who is seeking wholeness, and knows that you are doing the same. As you leave this gathering, may your hearts remain open, may your voices stay strong and may your hands remained outstretched.

~Reverend Erika Hewitt, UUA General Assembly, 2014

### 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

To love deeply in one direction makes us more loving in all others. ~Anne Sophie Swetchine, Russian mystic

While we are focusing on fear, worry, or hate it is not possible for us to be experiencing happiness, enthusiasm or love. ~Bo Bennett, founder of eBookit.com

Love takes off the masks that we fear we cannot live without and know we cannot live within.

~James Baldwin, novelist, poet, playwright, social critic

The most important thing in life is to learn how to give out love, and to let it come in.

~Morrie Schwartz, subject of book *Tuesdays with Morrie*

Loving only ourselves is escapism; loving only our opponents is self-loathing; loving only others is ineffective. All three practices together make love revolutionary, and revolutionary love can only be practiced in community. - Valarie Kauer

The way to love anything is to realize that it may be lost. ~Gilbert K. Chesterton, author & poet

Since love grows within you, so beauty grows. For love is the beauty of the soul. ~St Aurelius Augustine

You come to love not by finding the perfect person, but by learning to see the imperfect person perfectly.

~Sam Keen

To love a person is to learn the song that is in their heart, And to sing it to them when they have forgotten.

~Arne Garborg

To love well is the task in all meaningful relationships, not just romantic bonds.

~bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions*

Love makes your soul crawl out from its hiding place. ~Zora Neale Hurston

There is more love somewhere. There is more love somewhere. I'm gonna keep on 'till I find it. There is more love somewhere.

~Words and Music: African American hymn, *Singing the Living Tradition*, #95

An ethic of love lives at the heart of our UU faith. It reflects the core question, "How are we to live?" It calls us to courage to continually grow and learn and adapt in ways that foster love and justice. It is not a weak or sentimental love. It burns like the fire at the center of our chalice. It's fierce in a way that compels us to demand justice in our world, but also fierce in how it calls us to courageous conversations, to radical practices of welcome, compassion, forgiveness, and belonging. Let this love burn brightly in hearts and in all our communities. May it be the energy and resilience we need to keep on loving, to keep on learning, to keep on showing up for each other and our neighbors in resistance to evil and in creating refuge from the trauma of oppression. ~Rev. Susan Frederick-Gray, <https://www.uuworld.org/articles/embrace-ethic-love>