



## Music

Covenant Group Session Plan

Greenville Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Greenville, South Carolina

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

### Opening Words:

The music of the spheres.

A harmonious universe-like a harp.

Its rhythms are the equal, repeated seasons.

The beating of the heart.

Day/night. The going and returning of migratory birds.....

Melody, accord, arpeggios,

The harp of the universe.

Unity behind apparent multiplicity.

That is the music.

Ernesto Cardenal, *The Music of the Spheres, Singing the Living Tradition*, Reading no. 532.

### Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. What kinds of music did you grow up hearing? What were the circumstances? Were there people who influenced, joined, or opposed your musical choices? How did music influence your identity growing up?
2. What associations do you have of a particular music or song with key events in your life, good or bad? (i.e. the song played at your wedding, popular music from your formative years, etc.) How do you feel when you hear it now? What pleasant and/or unpleasant associations do you make?
3. Share times in your life when music helped you feel better. (i.e. times of loss, transitions, celebrations, milestones, stress, illness) What was the music? What were its effects on you?
4. If you were creating a CD or playlist of your life titled *My Music*, what songs would you include? What do those songs mean to you today?
5. Has there been a time when music has added to your sense of spirituality, or been influential in a particular spiritual experience? Has the role of sacred music changed or evolved in your life? In what way? How does music play a role in your spirituality?

### Readings

Music hath charms to soothe the savage breast, to soften rocks, or bend the knotted oak. ~William Congreve

The music in my heart I bore, long after it was heard no more. ~William Wordsworth

Where words leave off music begins. ~Henrich Heine

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words and that which cannot remain silent. ~Victor Hugo

After silence that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music. ~Aldous Huxley

Those who dance are considered insane by those who cannot hear the music. ~George Carlin

Music washes from the soul the dust of everyday life. ~Berthold Auerbach

Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness.  
~Maya Angelou

The whole problem can be stated quite simply by asking, Is there a meaning to music? My answer to that would be "Yes." And can you state in so many words what the meaning is? My answer to that would be "No."  
~Aaron Copland

For me, singing sad songs often has a way of healing a situation. It gets the hurt out in the open light, out of the darkness. ~Reba McEntire

Without music, life would be a mistake. ~Friedrich Nietzsche

Music is the shorthand of emotion. ~Leo Tolstoy

If I should ever die, God forbid, let this be my epitaph: THE ONLY PROOF HE NEEDED FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD WAS MUSIC. ~Kurt Vonnegut

Jazz is a music of conversation, and that's what you need in democracy. You have to be willing to hear another person's point of view. ~Wynton Marsalis

Bach gave us God's word. Mozart gave us God's laughter. Beethoven gave us God's fire. God gave us music that we might pray without words. ~From a German opera house. Author unknown.

**Sitting in Silence** (Reflect on questions and readings)

**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:**

When two individual muscle cells from the heart are observed under a microscope, each pulses with its own separate rhythm. Yet when they are moved closer together, they begin to pulse together, perfectly synchronized. ~George Leonard, *The Silent Pulse*

**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.*