



Respect

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:

“We affirm and promote “Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.”

This concept of interdependence is not only important in biology and ecology and many other sciences, it is also at the very root of our relational theology... There is something more than “I”, something more than the tribal “we”, something more than we can grasp, something more than we can see. And, when that something is revered and embraced, it has the power to heal the brokenness of our individual lives by binding us together to the greater whole of which we are each only a part. Such is religion . . . the study and practice of that which binds us together.

-Rev Jeanne Lloyd, Shoreline Unitarian Universalist Society

Introduction to the Discussion on Respect:

Showing respect to one another is not just a courtesy, it is fundamental to a harmonious society, fostering positive relationships, boosting self-esteem, and creating a sense of belonging, making it essential in all aspects of life, whether personal or professional; it involves actively listening to others' perspectives, valuing their differences, and treating everyone with courtesy, even when disagreeing, ultimately contributing to a more inclusive and supportive environment for all.

-AI Google

Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. Our Fellowship Covenant states: “We commit to showing respect for one another.” What does that mean to you?
2. What is the opposite of respect? Is it shameful to not respect someone?
3. How do you respect someone you disagree with? Someone who holds views that are different from yours?
4. Is it possible to respect someone and not like them? Please explain how this works for you.

Readings

“Respect begins with this attitude: I acknowledge that you are a creature of extreme worth.” — Gary Chapman

“Respect other people's feelings. It might mean nothing to you, but it could mean everything to them.” — Roy T. Bennett

“Friendship- my definition- is built on two things. Respect and trust. Both elements have to be there. And it has to be mutual. You can have respect for someone, but if you don't have trust, the friendship will crumble.” - Stieg Larsson, *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*

“Kindness and respect go hand and hand. Try to leave people better than you found them.” -Marvin J. Ashton

“One of the most basic signs of respect is giving someone your full attention.” - Unknown

“Treat people the way you want to be treated. Talk to people the way you want to be talked to. Respect is earned, not given.” - Hussein Nishah

“Respect for the rights of others means peace.” - Benito Juárez

“To be one, to be united is a great thing. But to respect the right to be different is maybe even greater.” - Bono

“A great relationship is about two things: First, appreciating the similarities, and second, respecting the differences.” -Unknown

“It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.”
- Audre Lorde

“Respect yourself and others will respect you.” - Confucius

“Respect yourself enough to walk away from anything that no longer serves you, grows you, or makes you happy.” - Robert Tew

“You yourself, as much as anybody in the entire universe, deserve your love and affection.” - Buddha

“Our self-respect tracks our choices. Every time we act in harmony with our authentic self and our heart, we earn our respect. It is that simple. Every choice matters.” - Dan Coppersmith

Sitting in Silence (Reflect on questions and readings before sharing starts)

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 or the readings.

(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:

Respect is the foundation of a kind and just world. When we show respect, we acknowledge the worth of ourselves and the people around us. It’s a small act that can make a big difference in our daily lives and communities.

-Carmen Jacob, author

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.