



## The Third Source: Wisdom from the World's Religions

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:** Wisdom from the world's religions inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life. In Unitarian Universalism, we recognize that the world's religions contain many examples of uplifting words, thoughts and ideas from which we can benefit and which can help us grow our lives into peace with the world we live in, peace with each other and peace within ourselves.

### Questions to prompt and guide discussion:

1. From which of the world's religions have you been particularly inspired? How have these ideas benefitted your spiritual or ethical life?
2. How do you draw inspiration from a specific religious source and still feel true to your Unitarian Universalist faith?
3. How does the aspect of cultural appropriation come into your experience of drawing from various world religions? (Cultural appropriation is the unacknowledged or inappropriate adoption of the customs, practices, ideas, etc., of one people or society by members of another and typically more dominant people or society.)
4. What religious texts or songs inspire you? Share a favorite short reading or passage from one and tell your circle what it means to you.

### Readings – Words from the Common Bowl: Quotes/Readings

**Sitting in Silence** (Reflect on questions just posed as you prepare to hear 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:** *From Islam:* To worship God is nothing other than to serve the people. It does not need rosaries, prayer carpets or robes. All peoples are members of the same body, created from one essence. If fate brings suffering to one member, the others cannot stay at rest. ~Saadi, *Singing the Living Tradition*

### Announcements/Plans

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

**Extinguish the Chalice**

## READINGS

*From Buddhism:* Let us cultivate boundless goodwill. Let none deceive another, or despise any being in any state. Let none in anger or ill-will wish another harm. Even as a mother watches over her child, so with boundless mind should one cherish all living beings. Radiating friendliness over the whole world, above, below, and all around, without limit.

~*Metta Sutta, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Buddhism:* Never does hating cease by hating in return; only through love can hatred come to an end. Victory breeds hatred; the conquered dwell in sorrow and resentment. They who give up all thought of victory or defeat may be calm and live happily at peace. Let us overcome violence by gentleness; let us overcome evil by good; let us overcome the miserly by liberality; let us overcome the liar by truth. ~*Dhammapada, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Sikh:* Why do you go to the forest in search of the Divine? God lives in all and abides with you too. As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror, so the Divine dwells inside everything; seek therefore in your own heart. ~*Tegh Bahadur, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Taoism and Confucianism:* When all the people of the world love, the strong will not overpower the weak. The many will not oppress the few. The wealthy will not mock the poor, the honored will not disdain the humble. The cunning will not deceive the simple. ~*MoTse, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Taoism and Confucianism:* If there is to be peace in the world, there must be peace in the nations. If there is to be peace in the nations, there must be peace in the cities. If there is to be peace in the cities, there must be peace between neighbors. If there is to be peace between neighbors, there must be peace in the home. If there is to be peace in the home, there must be peace in the heart. ~*Lao-tse, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Native American:* Then I was standing on the highest mountain of them all, and round beneath me was the whole hoop of the world. And while I stood there, I saw more than I can tell and I understood more than I saw. For I was seeing in the sacred manner the shape of all things of the spirit and the shapes as they must live together as one being. And I saw that sacred hoop of my people was one of many hoops that make one circle, wide as daylight and starlight, and in the center grew one mighty flowering tree to shelter the children of one mother and one father. ~*Black Elk, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Jewish Tradition:* O source of peace, lead us to peace, a peace profound and true, lead us to a healing, to mastery of all that drives us to war within ourselves and with others. May our deeds inscribe us in the Book of life and blessing righteousness and peace! O Source of peace, bless us with peace. ~*Gates of Repentance, Singing the Living Tradition*

*From Christian Tradition:* Let us love one another because love is from God. Whoever does not have love does not know God, for God is love. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us. God is love, and those who abide in love, abide in God, and God abides in them. There is no fear in love, for perfect love casts out fear. Those who say, "I love God" and hate their brothers and sisters are liars, for those who do not love a brother or sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us. ~*I John 4, Singing the Living Tradition*