

Notes to the Leader For Session 5 – Gratitude as a Spiritual Practice

Session Preparation

The depth of this session will be enhanced with preparation. So please distribute the preparation for this session at the end of the prior session. Have extra copies available at the gathering in case people forget their copies. Make sure boxes of facial tissues are available.

Preliminaries

“Group Calendar” – Please take a few minutes to go over the meeting calendar for the next quarter, if your group hasn’t done so already. You might also remind the group about upcoming church events during the holiday season.

Time is at a premium in this session. People will have to respect time limits to do everything. If the deep listening is long and meaningful the discussion can be eliminated. The following table will let you know if you are running over.

	<i>section minutes</i>
preliminaries	8
opening	2
check-in	15
reading	5
silence	10
deep listening	50
reading	3
discussion	20
song	5
closing	2

Not everyone is comfortable reading poetry. Ask for volunteers to read the “Listen” poem. Four volunteers would work best, one for each stanza. If no one volunteers, the leader should read it.

Note that we move right into silence after the reading of the poem with no transitional words. You might want to highlight that for folks so they don’t wonder what is going on.

There is a reference to our UU principles in the discussion. If anyone needs a refresher, you might read them at the beginning of the discussion.

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity, and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

Preparation for the Next Session

Before everyone leaves, distribute copies of the preparation for the next session.