

Notes to Leader for Session G102 — Living in Your Body

SPECIAL NOTES:

1. This topic may be very sensitive for some people, especially those with disabilities or chronic illness and those who have suffered sexual abuse.
2. The focus of this session is more about the experience of being in a body than it is about appearance (though there is likely to be some overlap). You can mention during the preliminaries that there is a future session focusing primarily on appearance.
3. This session incorporates a guided imaging exercise (see attached) rather than the usual sitting in silence. Practice reading the instructions aloud so your delivery and timing will be smooth.
4. You may wish to use a bell or some other audible means of signaling the beginning and end of the meditation. (If you don't have a bell, striking the side of a glass with a spoon would work.)

Session Preparation

The depth of this session will be enhanced if each member thinks about the topic in advance. You might also email it for those who have misplaced their copy or were absent from the previous meeting. Have extra copies at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring theirs.

Preliminaries

Ask for volunteers to light the chalice and do the reading. Make any necessary church-related announcements. Explain that there will be a guided imagery exercise rather than the usual sitting in silence. Explain that there will be three readers for the reading and assign the order in which they will read.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track. If the deep-listening portion goes over the allotted time, you can shorten or eliminate the discussion.

Preliminaries	1 minute
Opening	1 minutes
Check-in	20 minutes
Guided Imagery	15 minutes
Deep listening	60 minutes
Reading	4 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Singing	2 minutes
Closing	1 minute
Total	approx. 120 minutes

Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation for the next session.

Guided Imagery: Connecting With Your Body For Use With Session G102 — Living In Your Body

Please run through these instructions at least once before the session so you feel comfortable doing it and know what is coming up. The important thing is that participants feel they are being *guided* by someone who knows what he/she is doing. Read fairly slowly and in a calm tone. Where the italicized words say, "*Count to ___*," count slowly to yourself before reading the next line.

Introduce the meditation by reading:

As I mentioned before, we're going to be doing a visualization exercise today rather than our usual sitting in silence. This sound (*sound the bell or chime*) will carry us into and out of the meditation.

Put down anything you may be holding and rest your hands in your lap. Close your eyes and settle yourself with your back comfortably straight. Plant both feet on the floor. Begin to notice your breath as it enters and leaves your nose. *Count to 5*.

Sound the bell.

Read:

Take a comfortable deep breath in through your nose. *Inhale audibly*

Now let it all out slowly through your mouth. *Exhale audibly. Count to 3 before going on to the next line*

Take another deep breath in through your nose. *Inhale audibly*

Again, exhale it slowly through your mouth. *Exhale audibly. Count to 3*

Return to your normal breath. Again, notice your breath as it passes in and out through your nostrils. *Count to 6*

Now draw your attention to your spine. *Count to 3*

Let your eyes remain closed and your body relaxed as you become aware of the length of your spine. *Count to 3*

Feel the length of your spine from the tip of your tail bone all the way to the top of your head. *Count to 3*

Feel your spine holding you erect. *Count to 3*

Feel the entire length of your body from head to toe. *Count to 5*

Now, turn your attention to the sides of your body. *Count to 3*

Become aware of the width of your head between your ears ... *Count to 3*

... the width of your neck ... *Count to 3*

... of your shoulders ... *Count to 3*

... of the distance between your outer arms ... *Count to 3*

... the width of your torso ... *Count to 3*

... of your hips ... *Count to 3*

... of your thighs ... *Count to 3*

... of your calves ... *Count to 3*

... of your feet ... *Count to 3*

Feel the width of your entire body. *Count to 6*

Now, be aware of the width of your entire body and, at the same time feel the length of your body. *Count to 4*

Now, pay attention to the front of your body ... *Count to 5*

Become aware of your face ... *Count to 3*
... your Adam's apple... *Count to 3*
... your collar bone ... *Count to 3*
... your chest and nipples... *Count to 3*
... your abdomen and navel... *Count to 3*
... your quadriceps ... *Count to 3*
... your kneecaps ... *Count to 3*
... your shins ... *Count to 3*
... the tops of your feet ... *Count to 3*

Feel the entire front of your body from your forehead to the tips of your toes. *Count to 5*

Now, turn your attention to the back of your body. *Count to 5*

Become aware of the back of your head and the curve of your skull ... *Count to 3*

... the nape of your neck ... *Count to 3*
... your shoulder blades ... *Count to 3*
... your back ribs ... *Count to 3*
... every vertebra in your spine *Count to 3*
... the small of your back ... *Count to 3*
.. your buttocks ... *Count to 3*
... your hamstrings ... *Count to 3*
... the backs of your knees ... *Count to 3*
... your calves ... *Count to 3*
... your Achilles tendons ... *Count to 3*
... your heels ... *Count to 3*

Feel the entire back of your body. *Count to 3*

Now become aware of the front surface of your body and the back surface of your body at the same time. *Count to 3*

And now, feel the depth of your body, the distance between front and back. *Count to 6*

Add the feeling of the width of your body, the distance from one side to the other. *Count to 6*

Add the feeling of the length of your body, the distance from the soles of your feet to the crown of your head . *Count to 6*

Feel the center of your body supported by its length ... *Count to 4*

... by its width ... *Count to 4*

... by its depth ... *Count to 4*

Feel the volume of your body. *Count to 4*

Feel how the volume of your body takes up space. *Count to 4*

Feel your entire body — its length, its width, its depth — taking up space. *Count to 2*

Now prepare to turn your attention to the individual parts that make up your body's volume. If you would like to, you can imagine a comfortable warmth spreading through each part of your body as we focus attention on it.

Become aware of your brain within your skull ... *Count to 2* ... your eyes and your eyebrows and your eyelids ... *Count to 2* ... your ears and all the tools for hearing that are inside your head ... *Count to 2* ... your sinuses and nose ... *Count to 2* ... your tongue ... *Count to 2* ... your teeth ... *Count to 2*

Feel your neck supporting your head ... *Count to 2*

Become aware of your spine doing such a good job of holding up your body ... *Count to 2* ... feel your rib cage ... *Count to 2* ... both your lungs ... *Count to 2* ... the four chambers of your heart ... *Count to 2* ... Feel the inside of your entire chest area, its length, its width, its depth ... *Count to 6* ...

Move your attention down into your abdomen. Be aware of your liver on the right side of your body just under the rib cage ... *Count to 2* ... your spleen on the left side of your body ... *Count to 2* ... your stomach ... *Count to 2* ... your small intestine ... *Count to 2* ... your large intestine ... *Count to 2* ... your organs of elimination ... *Count to 2* ... your kidneys nestled in the back of your abdominal cavity ... *Count to 2* ... your generative organs ... *Count to 2* ... your pubic region ... *Count to 2* ... Be aware of the volume of your entire abdomen ... *Count to 2* ... Feel the volume of your entire torso. *Count to 6* ...

Move your attention and spread warmth through all of your four limbs... *Count to 2* ... into each hand and foot ... *Count to 2* ... into each finger and toe. *Count to 5*

Now feel a warmth throughout your entire body ... its length ... *Count to 3* ... its width ... *Count to 3* ... its depth ... *Count to 3* ... feel the warmth in every bone of your body... *Count to 3* ... in every organ ... *Count to 3* ... in every muscle ... *Count to 3* ... moving throughout your bloodstream, through every artery and vein ... *Count to 3* ... Feel the warmth covering your skin from the top of your head to the bottoms of your feet ... *Count to 5* ...

Feel the entire volume of your body — its length, its width, its depth — filled with warmth ... *Count to 6* ... Feel every inch of your body, inside and out, suffused with that pleasant warmth ... *Count to 6* ... And now, let the feeling of warmth and the awareness of your body remain with you as the bell sounds and as you gently open your eyes. *Count to 3*
Sound bell.