

Notes to the Leader for G199 — Our Migration Stories

Centering Practice:

Some groups have mentioned that their members sometimes have a difficult time segueing from pre-meeting socializing into concentrating on the topic. Beginning each session with a few minutes of a centering practice is one way to formally mark the start of the session and to become fully present in the moment. The centering practice for this session is:

Three-part Exhalation

Leader says (with long pauses between sentences):

Let's take a moment to come fully into this moment, into this place. ... Close your eyes. ... Feel yourself sinking into seat. Feel your feet on the floor. ... We're going to take some deep breaths, letting each breath out in three stages. ... Take a deep breath in. ... Now release one-third of the air in your lungs. Pause. Now release another third. Pause. Now empty your lungs completely. Inhale a complete breath and repeat. Continue for three more breaths at your own pace and then gently open your eyes.

Preliminaries

Following the centering, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of the church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Remind members of the next meeting date and location. Get volunteers to light the chalice and read the opening words.

Reading Round the Circle

Reading-round-the-circle is used in this session to read the Rumi reading on the back of the order of worship. This should be done in a way that allows people to "opt out" and not read, since some may be uncomfortable reading. If someone wishes not to read, encourage him or her to say so at the beginning of the session.

Discussion

The discussion period is meant to allow group members to go deeper, to share things they may have forgotten to share, and to exchange ideas. It is important that people not comment on others' sharing except in a very supportive way.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track. It leaves 15 minutes available in case the sharing portion runs longer or if a Life Ritual is planned. If it appears that portions of the session will run long, the group members can decide whether to stop continue or eliminate other portions.

Centering	3 minutes
Preliminaries	2 minutes
Opening	1 minute
Check-in	15 minutes
Reading round the circle	5 minutes
Silence	5 minutes
Deep listening	60 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Singing	1 minute
Closing	1 minute
Total	about 110 minutes