

Notes to Leader for Session 21 -- Ourselves & Our Stories (Adding a New Member -- First Session of Two)

Contacting the group members

Please phone the new group members at least a week before the first gathering.

- Tell them how glad you are they are in the group and how much you're looking forward to meeting them at the first gathering.
- Ask whether they received information that was mailed.
- Ask if they need directions to the meeting place.
- Ask if they have any special seating needs, such as a hard chair?
- Ask them to bring an object that's meaningful to them. It might be an object they treasure, find meaning in or would like to have people know about. It might be symbolic of some part of their life journey or give others some special insight about them. These objects will be placed on a table during the gathering and participants will have an opportunity to briefly tell others about their object.
- Tell them that the group will be sharing stories of how each of us got to where we are now. Suggest that they consider these questions: What brought you to Unitarian Universalism? To the San Jose congregation? To the Small Group Ministries program?
- Suggest that they may, if they wish, prepare some sort of pictorial representation of their life up until now: a collage, a timeline, a map, or whatever else appeals to them. They should focus especially upon religious background, any additional factors that influenced their approach to religion, and major life transitions or crises.
- Get their address, phone number and e-mail address for a member list.

Preparation

Prepare a new list of names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses that includes all the old and new members.

Prepare nametags for this session and the next one.

Recruit someone to read the Elizabeth Tarbox reading, or plan to read it yourself.

Preliminaries

Before the session begins, introduce everyone by name, and distribute an up-to-date list of group members. Make certain that everyone is wearing a nametag. Be sure there is an empty chair in the room.

To begin the ritual for recognizing the group transition, have everyone stand. Then go around the room as often as is necessary, with each person reading one line at a time.

Preparation for the Next Session

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