

Notes to the Leader for T330 — What Does It Mean to Be a People of Appreciation

Special for this Session

We are participating in Soul Matters Sharing Circle this year. We would like to encourage our members to choose *ONE* question from the preparation to ponder. This is not a hard and fast rule. If people want to do more – let them. Also, to take a look at the resources offered in the journal (first issue of the newsletter). Group members should be encouraged to try one of the spiritual exercises and reflect back on how it went.

Session Preparation

Have extra copies of the preparation available at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring their copies..

Centering Practice: Listen to Your Breath

Leader says (with long pauses between sentences):

Lower or close eyes. ... Get comfortable in your chair. ... Begin to pay attention to your breath. ... While breathing normally, see if you can hear your breath as you inhale. ... Now see if you can hear it as you exhale. ... For the next few minutes, listen to the sound of your breath. ... When your attention wavers, come back to the breath. [*Allow 2 minutes*] And now take a deeper breath, and slowly open your eyes.

Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of the church events from a recent church bulletin. Remind members of the next meeting date and location. Get a volunteer to light the chalice. Pass around the bowl of quotations.

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 practice	3 minutes
Preliminaries	2 minutes
Opening	2 minute
Check-in	15 minutes
Reading	5 minutes
Silence	3 minutes
Deep listening	50 minutes
Discussion	25 minutes
Singing	1 minute
Closing	1 minute
Total	107 minutes

Preparation for the Next Session

Remind people of the date of the next session, and either pass out copies of the preparation for that session or tell members you will send it by email.