

Small Group Ministry
Group Session Plan
Starting in the Middle

Opening Words:

We begin in the middle of things. ...we begin - as we always do - in the middle of things. There is no other place to begin. Sometimes the middle is messy and uncertain. Sometimes it is exciting, even frightening when everything changes all at once. Or the middle can seem dull when it appears that nothing has changed for a long time and never will. But

--Inside the stillness of its cocoon, a caterpillar dissolves and reorganizes itself into a butterfly, growing wings that will unfold in their own time.

--Warmth and moisture trigger changes in a seed, and a young plant sends its first roots into the soil.

--Yeast transforms flour and water into soft bubbling dough in a bowl on a kitchen table, and then in the heat of an oven that sticky dough becomes hot fresh bread.

--One person refuses to cooperate with violence or oppression and others follow, until systemic injustice yields to the power of countless voices raised together.

--A pebble that falls in the right place, at the right time, can start a landslide that changes the course of river or the shape of a mountain.

What is beginning for you now, in the middle of things? What transformations are waiting?

Claire Curole, "Transformation", Soul Matters Packet, UUCC, January 2015

Check-in/Sharing:

Topic/Activity:

Transformation can mean taking the pieces of what we already have and putting them together in a new and beautiful way. Improvisation, assemblage, bricolage - there are many words for this idea of doing something new with the materials at hand. Very rarely are we called to build something entirely new out of nothing at all; usually we have to start with what we've already got.

Claire Curole, "Transformation", Soul Matters Packet, UUCC, January 2015

1. When have you started on a project or activity, expecting a specific result, to find something different-than you expected? (A creation, a meal, a trip, helping another, etc.)

What was your reaction? Are you more comfortable with "knowing" the outcome or with "being surprised" at the result?

2. Have you tried any of these suggestions for Spiritual Practice, or others? Please share your experience.

--Put things together in unexpected ways, make something new out of something else:

--Be open to the unexpected, to new things in familiar places. Look for colors that stand out next to each other, new sounds, rearranged spaces. How does your world change a little at a time?

--Make a new food — use an unfamiliar ingredient or a new combination of flavors.

--Let your inner artist come out to play. Make a collage with bits of paper, fabric scraps, string, glitter, etc. Build a small sculpture out of found objects.

3. What transformation is occurring right now? What is beginning for you now, in the middle of things? What transformations are still to come?

Check-out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words:

"Scared and sacred are spelled with the same letters. Awful proceeds from the same root word as awesome. Terrify and terrific. Every negative experience holds the seed of transformation."

— author Alan Cohen

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