

Aging

UU Small Group Ministry Network Website
Compiled from various session plans by Tom Dente

Chalice Lighting and Opening Words

(Take a moment to breathe and center.)

Leave aside the thoughts and worries that distract you.

Come into this circle of hope, holiness, and health.

Come into this sanctuary of sharing.

Come in and feel secure and comfortable.

Come in, knowing that you will be able to explore and learn and discover.

Come in, knowing that you will be heard and will be able to hear.

Check-in

For up to 2 minutes, share how you are today. Is anything distracting you today that you would like to let go of, so as to be fully present to the group?

Topic Introduction

“Aging” is often used to refer to “Old Age.” The reality is we start to age the very day we are born. Each stage in our lives has its own challenges, rewards and disappointments. With the passage of time come changes: physical, cognitive, psychological, emotional, spiritual.

Our Western view of time is linear, with a progression through beginnings, middles and endings, and it influences the way we view aging. Our lives have birth, childhood, youth, adulthood, old age, death. Other cultures view time as more cyclical, such as in Asia and India, where the idea of rebirth or reincarnation is common. Zen Buddhists say time is all in the mind.

Questions

1. What are the positive and negative experiences, feelings, and attitudes you have toward aging.
2. How were elders treated in your family when you were growing up? How was aging regarded? Has your family ethnicity influenced your attitudes and behaviors regarding aging?
3. Is there anything you fear about getting older? Is there anything you look forward to? Have your feelings about aging changed as you have gotten older? Have societal attitudes influenced how you respond to your own aging?
4. Do you think of yourself as any particular age, regardless of your chronological age? Explain. If you could be any age you choose, what would it be and why?
5. What frightens you about aging? What comforts you about aging?

Likes and Wishes/Feedback/Check-out

Closing Reading and Extinguishing the Chalice

“Spring passes and one remembers one’s innocence.

Summer passes and one remembers one’s exuberance.

Autumn passes and one remembers one’s reverence.

Winter passes and one remembers one’s perseverance.”

~Yoko Ono