

First Parish Church of Groton, Small Group Ministry

Session : Aging

Facilitator/Date _____

Supplies: Chalice, Singing Bowl, matches, printed questions for each participant, pencils, pens

1. Chalice Lighting/Opening Words: 2 min

O light of life,
Be kindled again in our hearts
As we meet together
To celebrate the joy of human community
Seeking a wholeness that extends beyond us.
~Samuel A. Trumbore

2. Check-in/Sharing: up to 30 min (Divide the time by number of participants, allowing for short interval of silence in between sharing.) Invite people to check in by sharing:

- *How is it with your spirit? —or—What has stirred your passion this week?*
- *And/or: Did you have any further thoughts about last week's topic?*

3. Topic: TOTAL TIME 60 min

A. Introduction and Questions: 5 min

For the aging person, it is a duty and a necessity to devote serious attention to [the] self.
~Carl Jung

The actual task is to integrate the two threads of one's life...
the within and the without.
~Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

This next reading is from Angeles Arrien's book, The Second Half of Life.

"The second half of life requires that we come to understand what has been most significant and meaningful in our lives. If we are to live our best second half of life, to embrace these years and flourish in them, we need to consciously shift our perspective. [We need to]:

- Invite new experiences into our lives.
- Reflect on roles we have played earlier in life, and learn to assume the new role of elder.
- Care for and enjoy our bodies even as we come to terms with their limitations.
- Deepen our relationships in more intimate and mature ways.
- Use our creativity to enhance our lives, contribute to our communities and leave a lasting legacy.
- Find the courage to be authentically ourselves in the world.
- Replenish our souls in silence and in nature and take time for reflections.
- Actively engage in practices of non-attachment and prepare for our passing from this world."

(Distribute Questions, last page, & Read out loud)

B. Silence for Reflection/Writing/Drawing: 10 min

Invite group into 5-10 minutes of silence during which they are asked to reflect on the questions. Participants are invited to use this time for writing and drawing their responses if they wish. [Tell your group to feel free to invent their own better-suited questions if they prefer.]

C. Sharing: 40 min

Invite each person to share their response as they feel moved, rather than clockwise. Give each person equal time to share. *If time* after each person has shared, invite people into a more free flowing discussion of the theme. Coaches may need to direct the conversation back to the questions.

4. Check-out: 10 min

Encourage people to check out with a final thought or reflection about the theme (or any other thoughts about the session) and how the session might shape or impact their life in any way in the week ahead.

5. Introduction of Next Week's Topic 1 min

6. Closing Words 1 min

Ten thousand flowers in spring,
the moon in autumn,
a cool breeze in summer,
snow in winter.
If your mind isn't clouded by unnecessary things,
this is the best season of your life.
~Wu-Men

7. Blessing to Extinguish the Chalice (Distribute Blessing) 1 min

May the efforts we have made here today
to listen with caring and compassion sustain us in the days ahead.
May these efforts bring peace into our lives
and into the lives of all those whom we touch.
And now, may love surround us, may joy gladden us, may peace lie deep within.
May our lives and the lives of all those we love go well.

Questions for Reflection: Aging

1. In what ways are you embracing or denying your present stage of life?
2. How do you view the journey of your life at this time?
3. What has surprised you about the process of maturing so far? Have there been unexpected joys or pleasures?