

# First Parish Church of Groton, Small Group Ministry

## Session : Honesty

**Facilitator/Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supplies:** Chalice, Gong, matches, printed questions for each participant, pencils, pens

### 1. Chalice Lighting/Opening Words: 2 min

It takes two to speak the truth, one to speak, and another to hear.  
~Henry David Thoreau

Honesty: Fairness and straightforwardness of conduct.  
~Merriam Webster

The flaming chalice symbolizes the spirit of community, of witness, testing, courage, and illumination. Tonight we light the chalice in honor of our shared dialogue about honesty and what it means to each of us.

### 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

Often misconstrued, authenticity is not about being an open book,  
revealing every detail of yourself without rhyme or reason.  
It is simply the act of openly and courageously seeing what needs to be seen,  
saying what needs to be said, doing what needs to be done,  
and becoming that which you are intent on being.  
~Scott Edmund Miller

Most of us feel that others will not tolerate emotional honesty.  
We would rather defend our dishonesty on the grounds  
that it might hurt others...and settle for superficial relationships.  
~John Powell

Honesty without kindness, humor and good heartedness can be just mean.  
From the very beginning to the very end, pointing to our own hearts to discover what is true  
isn't just a matter of honesty but also of compassion and respect for what we see.  
~Pema Chödrön

You don't always have to chop with the sword of truth. You can point with it too.  
~Anne Lamott

**(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.

**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**

Navigating [honesty]...may take some skill and a willingness  
to experience discomfort and step into unknown territory.

This is probably why so many of us avoid it so much of the time.

...We prioritize harmony, and we lose depth and authenticity.

Ultimately the source of the difficulty is about seeing honesty and care as mutually exclusive  
instead of recognizing the extraordinary possibilities that arise  
when we bring our dilemmas, our sorrows and doubts, and our less-than-together selves to each  
other at the same time as our love, empathy, and understanding.

The result is nothing short of resilient and graceful intimacy, the kind we all desire.

~Miki Kashtan, PhD.

**7. Blessing to Extinguish the Chalice 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: Honesty

1. Are you always honest? Give an example of when it's been difficult to choose being honest.
2. Describe a situation in which someone you care about took the risk of being honest with you. Are you someone with whom people feel they can be honest?
3. What does an environment in which it is safe to be honest look like to you?
4. How can honesty contribute to emotional intimacy?
5. Describe how making a decision to be honest might impact your life.