

# First Parish Church of Groton, Small Group Ministry

## Session 2: What is Essential?

Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately,  
to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach....

I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life,  
to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life.

~Henry David Thoreau~

**2. Check-in: 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. Revisit the Covenant

Are there any questions or concerns from last week? You may wish to read the Covenant again. If so, have extra copies.

### 4. Topic: TOTAL TIME 60 min

#### A. Introduction and Questions: 10 min

It is only with the heart that one can see rightly, what is essential is invisible to the eye.

~ Antoine de Saint-Exupery~

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched—  
they must be felt with the heart.

~Helen Keller~

Simplicity is the journey of this life with just baggage enough.

~ Charles Dudley Warner~

The ability to simplify means to eliminate the unnecessary so that the necessary may speak.

~Hans Hofmann~

Let us learn to live simply, so that others may simply live.

~ Mahatma Gandhi~

Three grand essentials to happiness in this life are  
something to do, something to love, and something to hope for.

~Joseph Addison~

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

**B. Silence for Reflection/Writing/Drawing: (up to 10 min)**

Invite the group into 5-10 minutes of silence during which time they are asked to reflect on the questions. Participants are invited to use this time for writing and drawing their responses to the questions if they wish. If another question/aspect of the topic comes up for them, they are welcome to respond to that. (see last page)

**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.

**5. Introduction of Next Session's Topics (optional): 2 min**

**6. 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 impact their life in the week ahead.

**7. Closing Words 2 min**

... I am looking at the outside of a shell, the outside of my life—the shell.  
The complete answer is not to be found on the outside, in an outward mode of living.  
This is only a technique, a road to grace. The final answer, I know, is always inside.  
But the outside can give a clue; can help one to find the inside answers.  
One is free, like a hermit crab, to change one's shell.  
~ Anne Morrow Lindbergh~

In thinking about your life and what is essential, what daily practice might you adopt to quiet your mind, to be observant of your surroundings, to be aware of your priorities?

Steps to consider:

- Write in a personal journal, perhaps a gratitude journal
- Go for walks or take time to observe nature each day
- Daily meditation
- Affirm priorities upon waking

**8. 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.  
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

What might characterize your own “core” life? Or, what does “essential” mean to you?

What do you do to remind yourself of the essentials of life, the things that are most important to you?

Think about your deepest, innermost value. How do you remind yourself of that value and what is important to you?

What aspects of today, or any day last week, felt best to you?