

Discussion Guide

Welcome

Greet everyone. If this is a drop-in group or if there are newer folks present, do a go round of names. Give a brief overview of our time together today, including time expectations.

Today's theme is the practice of "Cultivating Joy: How does experiencing joy promote resilience and resistance?"

Chalice Lighting

Our chalice lighting is by Ben Soule:

Out of the darkness, light.

Out of the light, warmth.

Out of the warmth, joy.

Out of the joy, togetherness.

May this flame hold us

for the time we are here with one another.

Covenant

Review the covenant as agreed upon at the last meeting. As participants become more familiar with the covenant, you can change up how you refer to it. For example, you might ask people to name the phrase that feels most meaningful or important to them today. (Don't forget to mention that it's fine to repeat phrases).

- Speak as personally and deeply as we wish--or not. It is always okay to pass.
- Speak kindly about ourselves and others.
- Speak from our own experiences.
- Hold confidentiality. Share your experience of the conversation, not other people's stories.
- Listen respectfully. Avoid giving advice or asking probing questions about others' lives.
- Be aware of power differentials. Consider our own and others' identities and how these identities shape the impact of our contributions.
- (Include any agreements added by your group)

continued . .

Check In

Offer one of these questions or one of your own:

- How goes it with your spirit?
- What's in your mind and heart today?

Conversation

This month we are exploring the practice of Cultivating Joy and how we experience joy (or don't) in our social justice work and our lives.

People can offer their responses to the service, the reflection questions, their experience with one of the practices, or any of the theme packet contents. You may choose to begin with a go-round or simply let the conversation flow, making sure everyone has a chance to share. If there is a lull, let the silence sit for a time, then offer up a question to continue the conversation.

Optional Starting Questions

- When you think back, can you see moments of joy that have come as part of your work for social change?
- How do you think things would change if we centered joy in all the work of this community (or congregation, or group)? If you had a magic wand, what is the first thing you'd change to make it more joyful?
- Share one thing that has brought you joy in the past - it can be something very small.

Sharing Silence

Before closing the session with the check out and chalice extinguishing, offer a minute of silence to give people a moment to process all that has been said and to share a time of quiet respite.

Leaving

From this conversation about the joy and the many ways it manifests in our lives, what is staying with you, in your heart, mind or spirit?

Closing Words

May we leave renewed by companionship, conversation, possibility - and open to joy wherever it arises.

Blessings.

Extinguish the chalice