

# 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 the session, including time expectations.

*Today's theme is the practice of embracing change. When so much is in flux, how do we stay true to our values of love and justice? How can the challenges of this moment become an opportunity for growth and transformation?*

## Chalice Lighting

Our chalice lighting the poem "Connections" by Marge Piercy.

Connections are made slowly, sometimes they grow underground.

You cannot always tell by looking at what is happening

More than half a tree is spread out in the soil under your feet.

Penetrate quietly as the earthworm that blows no trumpet.

Fight persistently as the creeper that brings down the tree.

Spread like the squash plant that overruns the garden

Gnaw in the dark, and use the sun to make sugar.

Weave real connections, create real nodes, build real houses.

Live a life you can endure: make life that is loving.

Keep tangling and interweaving and taking more in, a thicket and  
bramble

wilderness to the outside but to us it is interconnected with rabbit  
runs and burrows and lairs.

This is how we are going to live for a long time: not always.

For every gardener knows that after the digging, after the planting,  
after the long season of tending and growth, the harvest comes.

## Check In

Offer a choice of these questions or one of your own:

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

## Covenant

If this is the first session of a new group, you will want to take some time to create your group agreements. It helps to have a starting place. Here is a sample – ask your group what needs to be refined or added.

*Continued . . .*



## **Sample Covenant**

In this group we intend to

- 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 our experiences of the conversation, not other people's stories;
- Listen respectfully. Avoid giving advice or asking probing questions about others' lives;
- Consider our own and others' identities and how identity shapes the impact of our contributions.

## **Conversation**

This month we are reflecting on our relationship with change.

*Invite participants to respond to a reflection question or share their experience with a practice. 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:

- What helps you to stay grounded in times of change?
- What is one of your experiences of change, and what did you learn from it?

## **Sharing Silence**

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

## **Leaving**

From this conversation about change, what is staying with you, in your heart, mind or spirit?

## **Closing Words**

Adrienne Clarkson has said that "each of us is carving a stone, erecting a column, or cutting a piece of stained glass in the construction of something much bigger than ourselves."

We are not alone.

## **Extinguish the chalice**