

The Divine

Chalice Lighting

Sharing of Joys and Concerns

Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support.

Shared Readings

Quick Check-in

Transition Reading

From *The Color Purple*

This conversation, between two rural, Black women, speaks of the sometimes painful transition between images of God, and is quite theologically sophisticated.

Reader #1 Celie: I don't write God no more. I write to my sister.

Shug: What happened to God?

etc....Celie: Who that?

Shug (looks surprised)

Celie (defensive) Big a devil as you is, you not worried bout not God, surely?

Shug: Wait a minute. Hold on just a minute here. Just because I don't harass it like some peoples us know don't mean I ain't got religion.

Celie: What god do for me?

Shug (shocked) Celie! He gave you life, good health, and a good woman that love you to death.

Celie: Yeah, and he give me a lynched daddy, a crazy mama, a lowdown dog of a step pa and a sister I probably won't ever see

again. Anyhow. The god I been praying and writing to is a man. And act just like all the other mens I know. Trifling, forgetful, and lowdown.

Shug: You better hush. God might hear you.

Celie: Let 'im hear me. If he ever listened to poor colored woman the world would be a different place, I can tell you. (pause)

Shug: (I used to believe God was an old white man. but now,) Here's the thing. The thing I believe. God is inside you and inside everybody else. You come into the world with God. But only them that search for it inside find it. And sometimes it just manifest itself even if you not looking, or don't know what you looking for. Trouble do it for most folks, I think. Sorrow...

Celie: It?.

Shug: Yeah, It. God ain't a he or a she, but a It.

Celie: But what do it look like?

Shug: Don't look like nothing. It ain't a picture show. It ain't something you can look at apart from anything else, including yourself. I believe God is everywhere. Everything that is or ever was or ever will be. And when you can feel that, and be happy to feel that, you've found It. (pause) My first step from the old white man was the trees. Then air. Then birds, then other people. But one day when I was sitting quiet and feeling like a motherless child, which I was, it came to me: that feeling of being a part of everything, not separate at all. I knew that if I cut a tree, my arm would bleed. And I laugh and I cried and I run all around the house.

Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

Discussion, if time

Group Business

Closing Words

Song "Go Now in Peace"

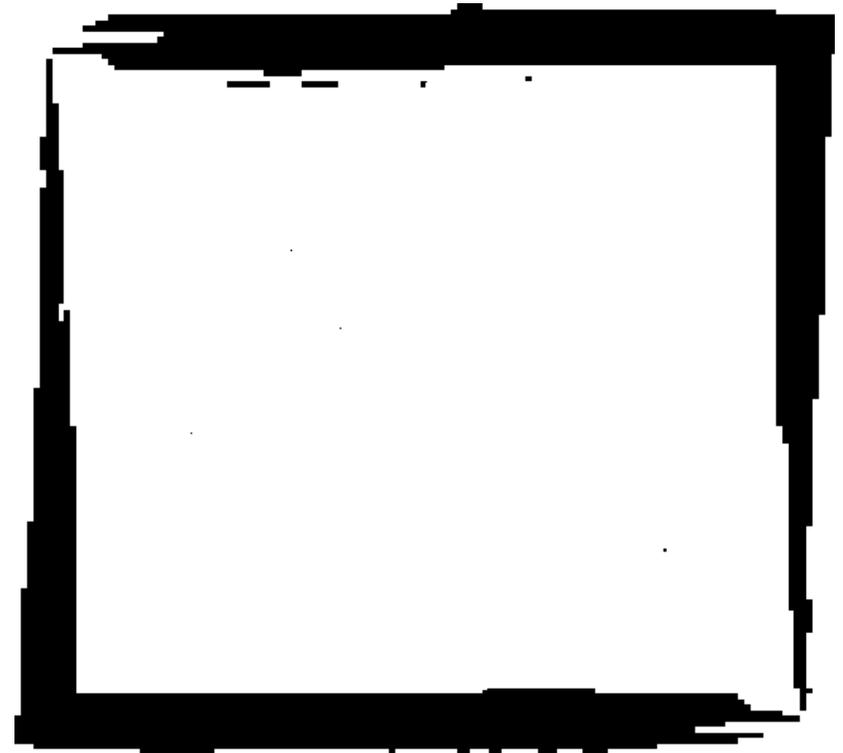
I commit myself:

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group.
- to honor the group by letting the leader know if I will be absent and to come to the group one last time and say goodbye if I need to quit.
- to share with the leader the responsibility for good group process by watching how much time I take to speak and noticing what is going on for others.
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and not tell other people's stories.
- to listen to what others share with an open heart, and to share deeply in my turn.

Your version of god, like all that is your life, will no doubt be different from mine, and that is not only ok, but we UU's cherish the fact that our differences enrich our conversation. So my hope and my prayer for you this morning, is not that your version of god come out just like mine, but only that, when the time comes, and it always will, for debuggings and revisions, that you will take that path of growth, and find it good, and find here in this community, the resources and conversations to serve you on the journey. Christine Robinson

Covenant Groups

The Divine



The Lord's Prayer

513

Our Father in heaven
Hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come,
Your will be done
On earth, as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
As we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
But rescue us from evil.
Matthew 6

514

God, lover of us all,
Most holy one,
Help us to respond to you
To create what you want for us here on earth.
Give us today enough for our needs;
Forgive our weak and deliberate offenses,
Just as we must forgive others
When they hurt us.
Help us to resist evil
And to do what is good;
For we are yours,
Endowed with your power
To make our world whole.
Lala Winkley

#524

Earth mother, star mother,
You who are called by
A thousand names,
May all remember
We are cells in your body
And dance together.
You are the grain and the loaf
That sustains us each day,
And as you are patient
With our struggles to learn
So shall we be patient
With ourselves and each other.
We are radiant light
And sacred dark – the balance –
You are the embrace that heartens
And the freedom beyond fear.
Within you we are born,
We grow, live, and die –
You bring us around the circle to rebirth,
Within us you dance
Forever.
Starhawk

Leader's Notes Session III (The Divine)

Getting Ready: As people drift in, recruit readers for the dialogue from "The Color Purple" and the three versions of the Lord's Prayer.

Light the Chalice

Share any Joys and Concerns- Inform the group about any member not present.

Sit in silence. You might start this by saying "Let's spend a couple of minutes together in silence, and hold each group member in turn in our hearts." (remember....two full minutes!)

Shared Readings: Three versions of "the Lord's Prayer" from our hymnal. (#513, 514, and 524 are attached. Ask for volunteers to read and leave some space for pondering between)

Quick Check In: Everyone will have been asked to think about and bring a drawing, symbolization, or narrative of the way their ideas about God have changed over the years. Ask people to think about ONE thing they'd like to briefly share about their past belief or relationship with God. (a few sentences)

Transition: Ask your readers to read the dialogue from *The Color Purple* (in the day's folder.)

Deep sharing/deep listening:

Now ask people to focus their thoughts on what they believe now, what their relationship to God is, now, where they find the divine, how they think about this, what their reaction is to the quotations or readings....now.

Do your two rounds, and a third if there is time. However, you need a bit more time for business than usual this session:

Business: 20 minutes before the end of your assigned time

Ask people how these meetings are going for them. Is this valuable? Is it what they had in mind when they signed up? Does it work? Does anyone need to withdraw from the group? Any suggestions for you, the leader?

The second meeting of the November and the second meeting of December might be difficult to schedule. You'll want to spend a few minutes making sure that most people can come at the assigned time.

Closing – Read paragraph on back of bulletin by Christine Robinson

Sing: Go Now In Peace

The Divine - Homework

Think about these quotes, or find some of your own to bring on this subject!

Why do you go to the forest in search of the Divine? God lives in all, and abides with you too. As fragrance dwells in a flower, or reflection in a mirror, so the Divine dwells inside everything; seek therefore in your own heart. Tegh Bahadur

A small child was drawing a picture and the teacher said, "That's an interesting picture. Tell me about it." "It's a picture of God," said the child. "Well, nobody knows what God looks like." "They will when I get done."

"I found god in myself and I loved her. I loved her fiercely. " Ntozake Shange

I believe in Omnipresence and find footsteps in grammar rules, in oyster shops, in church liturgies, in mathematics, and in solitude and in galaxies. Ralph Waldo Emerson

If triangles made a god, they would give him three sides. Charles de Montesquieu

Tell me, what is God? He is the breath inside the breath. Kabir

We can't capture God, but we can tell how we have experienced God. -Bishop Spong

"Faith is not so much a binary pole as a quantum state, which tends to indeterminacy when closely examined. At the end of the millennium, and of a century that has the Holocaust at its center, the reasons for doubt in God's existence are so easily come by—His invisibility, his apparent indifference to the torrents of pain and cruelty that history books and the news media report, the persuasive explanations that science offers for almost all phenomena once thought mysterious—that church attendance must be taken ...as a willful decision to evade that G.K. Chesterton called "atheist respectability."" - John Updike, New Yorker, 11/29/99

Do this project!

Your History with the Divine: Draw a picture, a symbol, or using words, depict:
The God of your childhood
The God of your youth
The God of your now

What have you kept and left behind in each of these images of the divine?