

## Gathering for Parenting

*This Gathering has suggestions for introducing sections. The “will you go next?” questions give the next person an opportunity to be ready. A timer and a clock are used in the Silence and the Sharing rounds.*

### Words of the Day

*As people arrive, ask them to write the Words of the Day and put them in the basket.*

If I were going to re-parent myself, I would . . .

### Opening

**Chalice Lighting** *“We’ll begin with the chalice lighting.” Ask for a volunteer.*

Your children are not your children.  
They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.  
They come through you but not from you,  
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.  
You may give them your love but not your thoughts,  
For they have their own thoughts.  
You may house their bodies but not their souls,  
For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow, which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams. You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.  
*Kahlil Gibran*

**The Basket** *“Now we’ll read the Words of the Day. I’ll start, and pass it along to the right (left).”*

### Being Together

**Sharing of Joys and Concerns** *“Now we’ll share joys and concerns. I’ll begin and we’ll go around the circle. Will you go next?”*

**Silence, holding ourselves and each other in silent support** *“We’ll have a few minutes of silence.” (2 or 3 minutes)*

**Shared Readings** *“I’ll start the first Shared Reading. Will you go next?”*

Always kiss your children good night even if they are already asleep. *H. Jackson Brown, Jr.*

Whoever does not have a good father should procure one. *Friedrich Nietzsche*

Our relationship with our parents is the “original” relationship of our lives, the template for all other connections. *Dale Atkins and Nancy Hass, I’m OK, You’re My Parents*

Remember that your children are not your own, they were lent to you by the Creator.  
*Native American Proverb*

Treat a child as though he already is the person he’s capable of becoming. *Haim Ginott*

If a child is to keep alive his inborn sense of wonder without any such gift from the fairies, he needs the companionship of at least one adult who can share it, rediscovering with him the joy, excitement and mystery of the world we live in. *Rachel Carson*

Children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. *Linda Creed and Michael Masser*

In Unitarian Universalist churches we intentionally raise our children to make their own adult religious choices. *John Beuhrens and Forrest Church, A Chosen Faith*

The United Nations is child's play compared to the tugs and splits and need to understand and forgive in any family. *May Sarton*

## Deep Sharing/Deep Listening

**Round 1: Deep Sharing.** *“Now we will share reflections on parenting and the preparation.”*  
*Then say “I’ll go first” or, if you’re not ready, “Who is ready to go first?”*

**Round 2: Responses and Comments.** *After all have shared or passed, check the time left. Say “We have about \_\_ minutes for a 2nd round.” Begin your response or ask “Who is ready to start?”*

## Closing

**Closing Circle** *“Now we’ll go around the circle and say a word or sentence about what we are taking away from the session. I’ll go first, and would you be willing to go next?”*

**Chalice** *“Now we will extinguish the chalice.” Read in unison, or ask for a volunteer.*

We extinguish this flame and we remember the warmth of our community, the light of our wisdom, the generosity of our sharing. We keep these in our heart until we meet again.

**Song/Chime** *Ask for a volunteer.*

## Announcements

### The Covenant

**I commit myself:** *italicized elements are proposed changes, not yet approved*

- to come to meetings when I possibly can, knowing that my presence is important to the group
- to let the *group* know if I will be absent or need to quit
- to share with the *group* the responsibility for good process by watching how much time I take to speak, noticing what is going on for others, *and considering problems as they occur*
- to do the reading and thinking about the topic ahead of time
- to not gossip about what is shared in the group, and tell only my own story to others
- to honor the safety of the group by listening to what others share with an open heart
- to refrain from cross-talk, judging, giving advice, or advocating a specific view
- to share as deeply as I can when it is my turn and to stay on the “I-message.”