

## Gathering for Endings

*For this session, a facilitator guides the Sharing and Closing sections because there is a special Closing Ritual.*

### Words of the Day

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

In my life these days, I am reflecting on the ending of ...

### Opening

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

We clasp the hands of those that go before us,  
And the hands of those who come after us.  
We enter the little circle of each other’s arms  
And the larger circle of lovers,  
Whose hands are joined in a dance  
And the larger circle of all creatures,  
Passing in and out of life, who move also in a dance,  
To a music so subtle and vast that no ear hears it  
Except in fragments.  
*Wendell Berry*

**The Basket** *“Now we’ll read the Words of the Day. I’ll start and pass 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 each other in support** *“Now a few minutes of silence” (2 or 3 minutes)*

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

I wanted a perfect ending. Now I’ve learned, the hard way, that some poems don’t rhyme, and some stories don’t have a clear beginning, middle, and end. Life is about not knowing, having to change, taking the moment and making the best of it, without knowing what’s going to happen next.  
*Gilda Radner*

Life seems sometimes like nothing more than a series of losses, from beginning to end. That’s the given. How you respond to those losses, what you make of what’s left, that’s the part you have to make up as you go. *Katharine Weber*

What the trees can do handsomely – greening and flowering, fading and then the falling of leaves – human beings cannot do with dignity, let alone without pain. *Martha Gellhorn*

All endings, in a way, remind us of the finality of our own. *Steven Winn*

Every time we say goodbye, I die a little. *Cole Porter*

The dark ending does not cancel out  
the brightness of the middle.  
Your day of greatest joy cannot be dimmed by any shame.  
*Tony Hoagland*

There is no real ending. It's just the place where you stop the story. *Frank Herbert*

Where you used to be, there is a hole in the world, which I find myself constantly walking around in the daytime, and falling in at night. *Edna St. Vincent Millay*

Endings are almost always a little sad, even when there is something to look forward to on the other side. *Emily Giffin*

Something's lost, but something's gained  
In living every day  
*Joni Mitchell*

**Deep Listening and Sharing** *For this session, the facilitator guides the Sharing.*

**Round 1. Deep Sharing**

**Round 2. Responses and Comments**

**Closing** *For this session, the facilitator guides the Closing.*

**Closing Ritual**

**Chalice** *"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**