

Session 3: Spiritual Histories

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Session Metadata	
Session	3
Title	Spiritual Histories
UU Source	Direct Experience
Unit	1st Source: Direct Experience
Head / Hands / Heart	Hands
Has Exercise	No
Has Ritual	No
Has Spiritual Practice Presentation	No
Special Blocks	None

Preparation

Note to Facilitator: *Before sending email note that the amount of time each participant will get to share their spiritual histories depends on how many people are in your group. The “ten minutes” referenced in this email and in the session plan assume a group of eight; if you have more or fewer participants, change the time accordingly by dividing 80 minutes by the total number of people in your group.*

Email to Participants

Tips for online. Make sure your settings allow for participants to share their own screen in case they want to share photos, a video, or text with the group. Add this information to the email so participants know what to expect.

Our next session on [date] offers us a chance to take the ideas we talked about during our last session and apply them to our own lives. There are no books or articles as homework this time, just

the invitation to “read” your own life, inspired by our first UU source:

“Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.”

During the session, **you’ll be given [ten] minutes to present your spiritual journey** in any way you choose. It may be through talking about your religious homes, or a few major turning points in your journey, or through thematic questions that you’ve tried to address. Feel free to bring any pictures, artwork, objects, music and/or video if that helps you to share your spiritual journey.

In preparation for this sharing, use your UU Wellspring journal to reflect on these questions:

- How would you describe the sacred text of your life — the main characters, important scenes, recurring themes?
- What peak spiritual experiences have you had? What spiritual struggles have you faced?
- How has religion been a part of your life? What do you want to let go of from your religious past? What do you want to carry forward?
- Where does your journey seem to be taking you and how might UU Wellspring be a part of the next steps on your path?

Clearly, those are some pretty big questions. Remember, you’ll have [ten] minutes to talk about your spiritual journey. That is enough time to tell much of your story, but not nearly enough time to answer all of the above questions. Focus on what feels most important for you to share with us.

But you don’t need to be done with these questions just because of the time limit of our session. These questions can be very helpful as a starting point with your spiritual director. Use your time with your spiritual director to go more deeply into your answers and see what other questions arise.

It will be good to be together again and hear one another’s stories! If you feel called, share some highlights of your story (or pictures) on the [UU Wellspring Facebook****Page](#) and our Instagram page by searching for UU Wellspring. Please follow us for regular inspiration from our programs.

In Faith,

(Name(s) of Facilitator(s))

Session Plan

Chalice Lighting and Silence

Today we are continuing to connect with the first source of UUism, which is:

“Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life.”

UUA

Our opening reading is “[Love After Love](#)” by Derek Wolcott. If you prefer to have words and visuals, the [poem with subtitles is found here](#) on YouTube. We aren’t adding music today since we want to reserve the time for sharing.

Let’s take a few minutes of silence to bring ourselves fully into this circle.

Covenant Review

Use whatever process your group has established to stay current with the covenant.

Is there anything about the covenant that we should address?

****Note to Facilitators: At this point in the year, be prepared for participants to have questions about how much silence to share. Reassure them that this discomfort is normal and will work itself out over time. This can be especially difficult if someone has a very emotional check-in (or an emotional spiritual history during this session). It’s hard to sit by silently and watch someone cry! But the silence that is at the core of true listening can hold much more pain and emotion than our words can; encourage your group to leave room in the circle for that kind of listening to happen.*

Note that it is not required to stare into the center of the circle. Many groups prefer to gaze at one another as part of being present during their deep listening. Various forms of nonverbal, nonphysical expression can be a natural part of deep listening.

Check-In

Today’s session will be slightly different than others. In order to make sure we have enough time for everyone to share their spiritual histories, we are going to shorten our check-in time slightly — but it’s still important we share how our spiritual life is going! Please briefly check in about your spiritual practice and spiritual direction.

Reflection

Note to Facilitators: Divide the time available by the number of people in the group. An electronic timer is very useful — allow the sound of the timer to remind someone their time is up instead of you having to cut them off. Some people appreciate a “one minute warning” so they know to start wrapping up. Be sure to leave silence in between each speaker as well.

*Your job this session (as always) is to protect the process. Make sure everyone has the opportunity to share their story in a safe and loving space. Do not let this run into the next session.*If you have extra time after everyone has shared, ask the group:

- What new insights do you have about your own story now that you have heard others’?

So What?

What does thinking about your own spiritual history and hearing from others call you to do in the world?

Gratitude and Closing

Have everyone focus on the chalice. Each person, as moved, says one or two words about something from this session for which they are grateful or how they are feeling in this moment. After everyone has said a word, close with a brief statement of thanks and appreciation.

Revision #2

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