



Religious Education Small Group

A Model for Using the Spiritual Literacy DVDs

Group Makeup: An adult Religious Education group at a Unitarian Church with 3-6 participants. Members are aged 40 or older, college educated, most with graduate degrees in various disciplines.


Goal of Group: Authentic sharing and attentive listening around experiences of the spiritual in everyday life.

Preparation: Group facilitator spends an hour each week watching the episode and finding quotes and resources from the SpiritualityandPractice.com website. Facilitator creates a handout for the session with questions from the Spiritual Literacy discussion guides in the Spiritual Literacy section of the SpiritualityandPractice.com website.

Group Process: The group meets for an hour and a half. It begins with the facilitator lighting a candle and reading a quote about the DVD topic. Participants are then asked to ponder the episode quality and write down some notes about it on an index card. The episode is then watched. Afterwards, participants read the discussion questions on the handout and make some notes on it about the passages that interested them in particular.

The facilitator starts the group discussion by asking them to look at what they wrote about the quality before watching the DVD and how their feelings about it have changed after watching the episode. The group members then discuss which selections/passages intrigued them the most. The group ends with everyone committing to pay greater attention to that quality in their lives and with a commitment to do some spiritual practice every day.

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A Sample Group Experience

After watching the Meaning episode, everyone shared what brought them meaning in their lives. The responses varied from walking in cities, to watching baseball, to doing their work or favorite hobby. Some said it was their family. One participant felt it was having ongoing questions in his life that brought him the most meaning. Group members lit up as they shared what it was for them that made their life meaningful.

Benefits of Participating in the Group:

Group members commented about finding themselves being more attentive to their lives overall. One participant said this class refreshed his focus on nature and also encouraged him to begin taking Tai Chi. Another participant said that watching the DVDs helped her change her perspective about taking risk in life. She felt more willing to step into the unknown after taking the class.

One group member suggested that participants become more involved in the future by being asked to find the quotes on the DVD episode topic to start each session. The facilitator is going to try this the next time she offers the class.