

Session 2: Joy

To the facilitator, remember on each chance to share, let each person share in a circle or to each speak from the silence. If the group speaks from the silence, keep track of who has spoken and do not let another speak until each have had a turn or chosen to pass. If you're on zoom, you can establish an order with the first sharing and put that order of names in the chat.

Opening Words

The words of Hafiz: “Ever since happiness heard your name it has been running through the streets trying to find you.”

Sitting in Stillness

As a facilitator, at the first meeting, invite everyone to sit together in silence. In later meetings you may not need to make such an invitation, as people will know. This should be at least a minute, perhaps more. It gives each person a chance to really “arrive” in the space.

Reminder

Remember that we have lived through, are living through, a time unlike any in living memory. We are learning new ways to be in relationship and relearning or remembering how to be in community. We may feel awkward or unsure. As we go through today remember how you are doing in this moment in pandemic. Remember that we each respond to this time in our own unique ways. Allow and offer grace to yourself and to those in the circle as we share in this return to community.

Re-visit Covenant

You can invite one person to read your covenant or ask each person to read a line of it around the circle. If you have new people, which you are likely to, give them a chance to suggest edits or additions.

Check-in

How is the weather of your life? If you were to describe how you are doing in terms of weather, what best describes things? Is it sunny, windy, stormy, cold, hot, beach weather? Name one or two weather descriptions for your life right now.

Embodied Meditation

As I read this out loud, please remember this is just an invitation. If anything feels uncomfortable to you or your body doesn't want to, please don't. As you turn your attention to your body, let your attention soften to just notice what is. Beginning with the lowest part of your body, just notice what you are connected to. What parts of your body touch the ground, or chair, or your own other parts of your body? Notice the contact of your body with your chair. What places touch your chair and how do they feel? Notice, don't change, your breathing. Notice if it's deep, or shallow, or any way you could describe

the rhythm of air in and out of your body. And then turn your attention to the space around you -- what senses connect you to the world around you? Let your gaze or your ears or nose or touch softly take in the world. What are you drawn to? Notice the details of what you're sensing. And then slowly turn your attention to what else you're drawn to. And now, again, notice your breath. How is your breathing now? How is the same? How has it changed? When you're ready, turn your attention back to this group gathered together.

Theme and Activity

Activity

Option 1: Watch video “Som Sabadell Flashmob” performing “Ode to Joy”
<https://youtu.be/GBaHPND2QJg>

Option 2: Journal about or draw something that has brought you joy in the past year. If it is hard to think of something from the past year, you can go further back to something that has brought you joy.

Readings

READING 1:

“Hallelujah!” Is a Dangerous Word by Marcia McFee

Hallelujah! is a dangerous word, especially in the mouths of the creatively maladjusted.*

Hallelujah! is a dangerous word, for it comes always with an exclamation point.

Hallelujah! is a dangerous word,

for it is the sign of a people claiming and exclaiming their sacred worth and praising that which brought them into being.

Hallelujah! is a dangerous word for another reason, my friends,

and that's because it takes an extra pointed kind of breath —

and breath is life — and life, when it's animated, is perhaps a bit dangerous.

Breath not only makes us individually alive,

but when we gather together with others in close proximity

there's something that happens, physiologically,

that raises the amount of boldness and courage of the group body.

So what is this thing called worship that we do, and what good does it do?

Hallelujah!

The moment we open our mouths and we sing and we breathe together,

the law of entrainment takes over —

which is a law of physics that says when two rhythms that are not quite the same come into close proximity with one another, they will entrain, if only for a short time.

Rhythm: each of us has rhythm. And when we come into close proximity,

that rhythm connects — if we allow it enough time to do so.

Breath. Breathing together. Singing together.

Boldness and courage rising.

Hallelujah!

* “Human salvation lies in the hands of the creatively maladjusted.” —Martin Luther King, Jr.

READING 2:

You can prepare

but still
it will come to you
by surprise

crossing through your doorway
calling your name in greeting...

it will astonish you
how wide your heart
will open
in welcome

for the joy
that finds you
so ready
and still so
unprepared.
—Jan Richardson, in [“For Joy”](#)

Questions for Sharing

What are some things that have brought you joy recently?
What gets in the way of letting more joy into your life?
Share and/or describe an object or photo that brings you joy and talk about it.

Silence

Responses to questions without cross talk

Discussion (optional)

Likes and Wishes

Please tell us what you liked and what you wish might have been different about this meeting.

Closing Words

The words of Rev. Sarah and John Gibb Millspaugh: “As we have been blessed, so we bless one another to be a blessing. Breathe in, breathe out, this breath we share with all that breathes. Feel the love of the universe flowing through this community, into you, and out into the universe again. Let the love of all the universe—your love—flow outward, to its height, its depth, its broad extent. You are more than you know, and more beloved than you know. Take up what power is yours to create safe haven, to make of earth a heaven. Give hope to those you encounter, that they may know safety from inner and outer harm, be happy and at peace, healthy and strong, caring and joyful. Be the blessing you already are. That is enough. Blessed Be; Amen.”