

Notes to the Leader for G290 — Civil Discourse

Session Preparation

The depth of this session will be enhanced if each member thinks about the topic in advance. Please distribute the preparation sheet by email or hard copy well before the session. Have extra copies available at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring their copies.

Centering: Listen to One Sound

Leader says (with long pauses between sentences):

Lower or close your eyes. ... Take a few deep breaths. ... Become aware of all the sounds you can hear right now. ... Pick just one of those sounds and focus all your attention on it. ... If your attention strays, bring it gently back to that sound. *(Allow 2 or 3 minutes.)*

- based on an embodied practice developed by Thandeka, a UU minister who is associate professor of theology and culture at Meadville/Lombard Theological School

Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of the church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Remind members of the next meeting date and location. Get volunteers to light the chalice and read the opening words.

Discussion

The discussion period is meant to allow group members to go deeper, to share things they may have forgotten to share, and to exchange ideas. It is important that people not comment on others' sharing except in a very supportive way.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track. It leaves 15 minutes available in case the sharing portion runs longer or if a Life Ritual is planned. If it appears that portions of the session will run long, the group members can decide whether to stop continue or eliminate other portions.

Preliminaries	2 minutes
Opening	1 minute
Check-in	15 minutes
Reading	5 minutes
Silence	5 minutes
Deep listening	60 minutes
Discussion	15 minutes
Singing	1 minute
Closing	1 minute
Total	110 minutes

Preparation for the Next Session

Remind people of the date of the next session, and either pass out copies of the preparation for that session or tell members you will send it by email.