

Laughter is that most human of activities, brought forth by play and an understanding that each individual is less important than his or her contribution to the whole of humankind. If I take myself too seriously, I lose. ~ *FUCSJ Congregant*

Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in, where nature may heal and give strength to body and soul. ~ *John Muir*

There often seems to be a playfulness to wise people, as if either their equanimity has as its source this playfulness or the playfulness flows from the equanimity; and they can persuade other people who are in a state of agitation to calm down and manage a smile. ~ *Edward Hoagland*

Laughter is carbonated holiness. ~ *Anne Lammott*

Play builds the kind of free-and-easy, try-it-out, do-it-yourself character that our future needs. We must become more self-conscious and more explicit in our praise and reinforcement as children use unstructured play materials: “That’s good. You use your own ideas...” “That’s good. You did it your way...” “That’s good. You thought it all out yourself. ~ *James L. Hymes, Jr.*

So I commend enjoyment, for there is nothing better for people under the sun than to eat, and drink, and enjoy themselves, for this will go with them in their toil through the days of life that God gives them under the sun. ~ *Ecclesiastes 8:15*



SMALL GROUP MINISTRY
FIRST UNITARIAN CHURCH
OF SAN JOSE

Laughter and Playfulness

There is darkness in the world and . . . comedy is a candle. ~ *Mike Meyers*

He deserves Paradise who makes his companions laugh.
~ *The Koran*

Man is most nearly himself when he achieves the seriousness of a child at play. ~ *Heraclitus, philosopher (500 BCE)*

Laughter heals and creates peace. ~ *FUCSJ Congregant*

To be as wise as the Zen master, be as foolish. ~ *The Covert Comic*

At the height of laughter, the universe is flung into a kaleidoscope of new possibilities ~ *Jean Houston*

The key to delight in life. ~ *FUCSJ Congregant*

Preliminaries	<i>Get volunteer to light the chalice.</i>
Centering	<i>See Leader Notes.</i>
Opening / Chalice Lighting <i>~ adapted from Jelaluddin Rumi, in "The Book of Love: Poems of Ecstasy and Longing"</i>	Laughter is an affirmation of our humanness, a face-saving way to express our anxieties, fears, and other hidden emotions. It breaks the ice, builds trust, and draws us together into a common state of well-being. Laughter is called "inner jogging." A robust laugh gives the muscles of the face, shoulders, diaphragm and abdomen a good workout, and sometimes even the arms and legs. Heart rate and blood pressure temporarily rise, breathing becomes faster and deeper, and oxygen surges throughout the bloodstream. We become alive!
Check-in	<i>How goes thy spirit? What do you need to leave behind in order to be fully present here and now?</i>
Bowl Reading	<i>Going around the circle, read the quotations taken from the bowl.</i>
Sitting in Silence	
Sharing/Deep Listening	<i>Speak the thoughts and feelings that arose as you did the preparation for this session. Sharing should be about five minute per person. Deeply listening, without response or thought of response at this time, is the gift we give and receive as we share our thoughts.</i>

Discussion *This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.*

Singing
Hokey Pokey *(Stand and sing with actions)*
You put your right hand in,
You put your right hand out,
You put your right hand in,
And you shake it all about,
You do the hokey pokey
and you turn yourself around
That's what it's all about.

- 2) left hand
- 3) right foot
- 4) left foot
- 5) head
- 6) butt

Closing/ Extinguishing Chalice
~ Rev. Helen Zidowecki
Join hands or link arms as you read the closing words together.
The gods and goddesses must have a sense of humor.
Why else would cats chase things that I cannot see?
Why else would puppies chase their tails?
Why else would something happen to make me smile when I am crying?

Grant me the eyes to see humor that opens a heart.
Grant me the heart that can to be warmed by the smile.
Grant me the smile that makes others wonder what secret I know.
Grant me the gentle humor that engages others –human and otherwise – is seeing the wisdom of the universe.