

## Preparation for G203 — Language of Reverence

The members of Unitarian Universalist congregations have been wrestling with the “language of reverence” for the last several years. Rev. Kendyl Gibbons (Unitarian Universalist minister and co-dean of the Humanist Institute) describes three different purposes for which Unitarian Universalists might need a language of reverence: “to respond in the moment to our experiences of awe and communion; to describe those experiences to others; and to solicit such experiences, both in ourselves and in others.” “Human Reverence” UU World, Summer 2006

In this session we will wrestle ourselves with these language issues and the feelings this language evokes.

1. Think of a time that you experienced a moment of awe. Write a paragraph describing it. Go back and underline the words that you used that evoke that spirit of awe.
2. Where do those words come from? Did you feel that some of the words are borrowed from other traditions? Can you make them your own?
3. What do you revere? How do you name it? How do you convey it to others?
4. What vocabulary do you use to engage in religious conversation? How comfortable are you engaging in religious conversation with those of different religions? Does the language become a minefield?
5. When have you felt limited by the words you feel comfortable using? When have you felt a need for a common language
6. How do you feel about defining/redefining these words?
  - Blessing, blessed
  - Sacred
  - Holy
  - God, god, goddess
  - Higher Power
  - Divine
  - Spirit
  - Pray, prayer
  - Amen
  - The Lord

### Resources for further study:

UUA archived Website: <http://archive.uua.org/news/2003/vocabulary/index.html>

*UU world articles*

“Human Reverence” <http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/4026.shtml>

“Reason and Reverence” <http://www.uuworld.org/ideas/articles/6558.shtml>