

Notes to the Leader for S95 – The Path to Forgiveness

About this Session

Having a community dialogue and worship around the topic of forgiveness is not completely new to our congregation, but may still seem unfamiliar to many people. Some members may not think of forgiveness as a spiritual practice. It may open past wounds or even make members feel defensive about past actions. You might wish to make a short supportive statement to the group, such as the one we've shown below under "Preliminaries."

Session Preparation

Frequently, members don't have time to do the Preparation or just prefer to "wing it." However, for this session, we encourage you to urge them to really contemplate the topic of forgiveness and its role in their lives. Please distribute the preparation sheet at the end of the prior session and make sure absent members receive a copy. Have extra copies available at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring their copies.

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 a volunteer to light the chalice.
- You may wish to mention to the members that we know forgiveness can be a sensitive topic but we hope that our small group is an environment in which people are encouraged to share what as they can, and feel loved and supported.

Discussion

The discussion period is meant to allow group members to go deeper, share things they may have forgotten to share, and 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	Deep listening	45 minutes
Opening	3 minutes	Discussion	20 minutes
Check-in	15 minutes	Singing	5 minutes
Responsive Reading	5 minutes	<u>Closing</u>	<u>5 minute</u>
Silence	5 minutes	Total	~105 minutes

Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation sheet for the next session.