

Small Group Ministry
Group Session Plan
Grief: Remembrance and Acceptance

Opening Words:

In our time of grief, we light a flame of sharing, the flame of ongoing life. In this time when we search for understanding and serenity in the face of loss, we light this sign of our quest for truth, meaning, and community. Christine Robinson (Singing the Living Tradition, #435)

Check-in/Sharing

Topic:

There are many readings about grieving and remembrance. Several are presented here in with two focuses:

Remembrance: These are written from the perspective of the person who has died, suggesting how they want to be remembered. Please take time to reflect on one of these (at the end):

"Do Not Stand At My Grave..."

"I'm Free"

"All Is Well"

How does the imagery resonate with you?

What would you want to say to comfort loved ones who are mourning for you?

Acceptance: These relate to grieving and moving through grief. Please reflect on "For Grief"

"When Sorrow Comes"

"Tossed By Difficult Times"

Share an experience with grieving, your own or being with someone who is grieving.

What has been helpful for you?

How would you describe the process from grieving to accepting?

Check out/Likes and Wishes: How was the session for you?

Closing Words: Indian Prayer

When I am dead

Cry for me a little

Think of me sometimes

But not too much.

Think of me now and again

As I was in life

At some moments it's pleasant to recall

But not for long.

Leave me in peace

And I shall leave you in peace

And while you live

Let your thoughts be with the living.

READINGS FOR REFLECTION

REMEMBRANCE

Do Not Stand At My Grave

Do not stand at my grave and weep
I am not there, I do not sleep
I am a 1,000 winds that blow
I am the diamond glints on snow
I am the sun on ripened grain
I am the gentle autumn rain
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled light
I am the soft star that shines at night
Do not stand at my grave and cry
I am not there; I did not die.
Anonymous

I'm Free

Don't grieve for me, for now I'm free
I'm following the path God laid for me.
I took His hand when I heard him call;
I turned my back and left it all.
I could not stay another day,
To laugh, to love, to work or play.
Tasks left undone must stay that way;
I found that place at the close of day.
If my parting has left a void,
Then fill it with remembered joy.
A friendship shared a laugh, a kiss;
Ah yes, these things, I too will miss.
Be not burdened with times of sorrow
I wish you the sunshine of tomorrow.
My life's been full, I savored much;
Good friends, good times, a loved ones touch.
Perhaps my time seems all too brief;
Don't lengthen it now with undue grief.
Lift up your heart and share with me,
God wanted me now, He set me free.
—0 Linda Jo Jackson
[Also attributed to Unknown. Version by
Shannon Lee Mosley has slight variation
words.]

All Is Well

Death is nothing at all,
I have only slipped into the next room
I am I and you are you
Whatever we were to each other, that we
are
still.
Call me by my old familiar name,
Speak to me in the easy way which you
always used
Put no difference in your tone,
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow
Laugh as we always laughed at the little
jokes we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me, pray for me.
Let my name be ever the household word
that it always was,
Let it be spoken without effect, without the
trace of shadow on it.
Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was, there is
unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind because I am
out of sight?
I am waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near,
Just around the corner.
All is well. by Henry Scott-Holland.

GRIEVING TO ACCEPTANCE

For Grief by John O'Donhue

When you lose someone you love,
Your life becomes strange,
The ground beneath you gets fragile,
Your thoughts make your eyes unsure;
And some dead echo drags your voice down
Where words have no confidence.

Your heart has grown heavy with loss;
And though this loss has wounded others
too,
No one knows what has been taken from
you
When the silence of absence deepens.

Flickers of guilt kindle regret
For all that was left unsaid or undone.

There are days when you wake up happy;
Again inside the fullness of life,
Until the moment breaks and you are thrown
back
Onto the black tide of loss.

Days when you have your heart back,
You are able to function well
Until in the middle of work or encounter,
Suddenly with no warning,
You are ambushed by grief.

It becomes hard to trust yourself.
All you can depend on now is that
Sorrow will remain faithful to itself.
More than you, it knows its way
And will find the right time
To pull and pull the rope of grief
Until the coiled hill of tears
Has reduced to its last drop.

Gradually, you will learn acquaintance
With the invisible form of your departed,
And when the work of grief is done,
The wound of loss will heal
And you will have learned
To wean your eyes
From the gap in the air
And be able to enter the hearth
In your soul where your loved one
Has awaited your return
All the time.

When Sorrow Comes

When sorrow comes, let us accept it
simply,
as a part of life. Let the heart be open to
pain; let it be stretched by it. All the
evidence we have says that this is the better
way. An open heart never grows bitter. Or
if it does, it cannot remain so. In the
desolate hour, there is an outcry; a
clenching of the hands upon emptiness; a
burning pain of bereavement; a weary ache
of loss. But anguish, like ecstasy, is not
forever. There comes a gentleness, a
returning quietness, a restoring stillness.
This, too, is a door to life. Here, also, is a
deepening of meaning—and it can lead to
dedication; a going forward to the triumph
of the soul, the conquering of the
wilderness. And in the process will come a
deepening inward knowledge that in the
final reckoning, all is well. A. Powell Davies

Tossed by Difficult Times

We know that the love which blooms inside
us is stronger than fear, for people who love
find strength they didn't know they had. We
know that the love inside us is stronger than
illness, for people who love hang in when
physical health is gone. And we know that
love is indeed stronger than death, for
people who love are like stones tossed into a
pool; the circles of love radiate out and echo
back long after the stone has come to rest at
the bottom. So we remember, our love is
the source of our strength. So we remember
who we are: lovers tossed by these difficult
times."

William DeWolfe. UU minister