**Small Group Ministry**

**Group Session Plan**

**Mysticism**

**Opening Words**

 Man is made by his belief. As he believes, so he is.

 Bhagavad Gita

The knower and the known are one. Simple people imagine that they should see God, as if He stood there and they here. This is not so. God and I, we are one in knowledge.

 Meister Eckhart

**Check-in/Sharing**

**Topic/Activity**

Mysticism, according to William James, consists of experience that meets the following criteria: it is ineffable, it is transient, it is noetic (that is it seems to reveal deep, profound truth), it is transient, and it is a passive state (a sense of being gripped by a force greater than self). Other qualities mentioned by John Horgan in his book *Rational Mysticism* are blissfulness and a sense of union with all things.

1. Have you had experiences in your life that you would call mystical? Describe them to the extent that you can.

2. How would you relate mystical experience to religion? Are they the same?

 Different?

3 What importance do you give to mystical experience? Is it a goal or even possible to be enlightened or to become blissfully happy?

**Likes and Wishes**

**Closing Words**

Our free will can hinder the course of inspiration, and when the favorable gale of God's grace swells the sails of our soul, it is in our power to refuse consent and thereby hinder the effects of the wind's favor; but when our spirit sails along and makes its voyage prosperously, it is not we who make the gale of inspiration blow for us, nor we who make the sails swell with it, nor we who give motion to the ship of our heart; but we simply receive the gale, consent to its motion and let our ship sail under it, not hindering it by our resistance.

St. Francis de Sales

© Unitarian Universalist Community Church, Augusta, Maine