Small Group Ministry

Group Session Plan

**Of Goddesses and Gods**

Preparation for Alternative Activity: Have a variety of short articles, stories or references of goddesses and/or gods for participants to select prior to or during the session.

**Opening Words**:

We are surrounded by *mystery*. We each have our own approach to mystery, from needing concrete answers to living with the ambiguity of possibilities.

Because the mystery is still beyond our ‘control’, we attribute *power* to the mystery, including the power of meaning. We feel a sense of awe for the awesome and awful, leading to beliefs as a way of understanding. This includes a concept of “deity”.

We explain mysteries in terms of what we know, what we have *experienced*. This is the basis for our *culture* and world view, which then folds back into our explanations. We look for our *identity* in the mystery. And we may call the mystery by the name of a deity.

[C. Scott Littleton](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C._Scott_Littleton)'s *Gods, Goddesses, and Mythology* defined a deity as "a being with powers greater than those of ordinary humans, but who interacts with humans [or with whom we interact] positively or negatively, in ways that carry humans to new levels of consciousness beyond the grounded preoccupations of ordinary life."

**Check-in/Sharing**: How is it with you today?

**Topic/Activity**

Deities are depicted in various ways. In some faiths and traditions they may be imagined as having human form, while in others it is considered blasphemous to portray a deity in a concrete form at all. Deities are often thought to be [immortal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Immortality), and may be assumed to have personalities and to posses*s* consciousness, intellects, desires, and emotions comparable but superior to those of humans.

1. We have our own ideas that guide our search for meaning and connection. What guides your search?
2. What in you connects with the mystery or a deity? Why and how?
3. By what names (if any) do you call the mystery?

Alternative: Have a variety of short articles, stories or references of various goddesses and/or gods. Allow time for participants to select and engage with a goddess/god.

1. What deity are you sharing with the group? What myths are you telling? How are you connecting with that deity?

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

**Closing words:** “The spirit is really the bouquet of life. It is not something breathed into life, it comes out of life. This is one of the glorious things about the mother-goddess religions, where the world is the body of the Goddess, divine in itself, and divinity isn't something ruling over and above a fallen nature.... Our story of the fall in the Garden sees nature as corrupt; and that myth corrupts the whole world for us. Because nature is thought of as corrupt, every spontaneous act is sinful and must not be yielded to. You get a totally different civilization and a totally different way of living according to whether your myth presents nature as fallen or whether nature is in itself a manifestation of divinity, and the spirit is the revelation of the divinity that is inherent in nature.” ― [Joseph Campbell](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/20105.Joseph_Campbell), [*The Power of Myth*](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/971052)

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