

TESTIMONIALS

"It was so nice to get to know other people outside my usual group, especially across generations."

"Felt I could say anything in my group, and even if people didn't agree with it, I know that they would still respect me and listen to me."

"I expected to get to know other people better. What I didn't expect was that I grew to know myself better."

"Now I have people I can really talk to about things that are important in my life."

"I learned something from everyone in my group, about every topic that we explored."

SAMPLE TOPICS

Passion

What is your life passion?
How does it get developed?
How does it get fed?
What gets in its way?

Identity

Is the question, "Who am I?" really relevant for us anymore?
What are the ways in which we discover who we are or what we understand as most important to us?

Spirituality

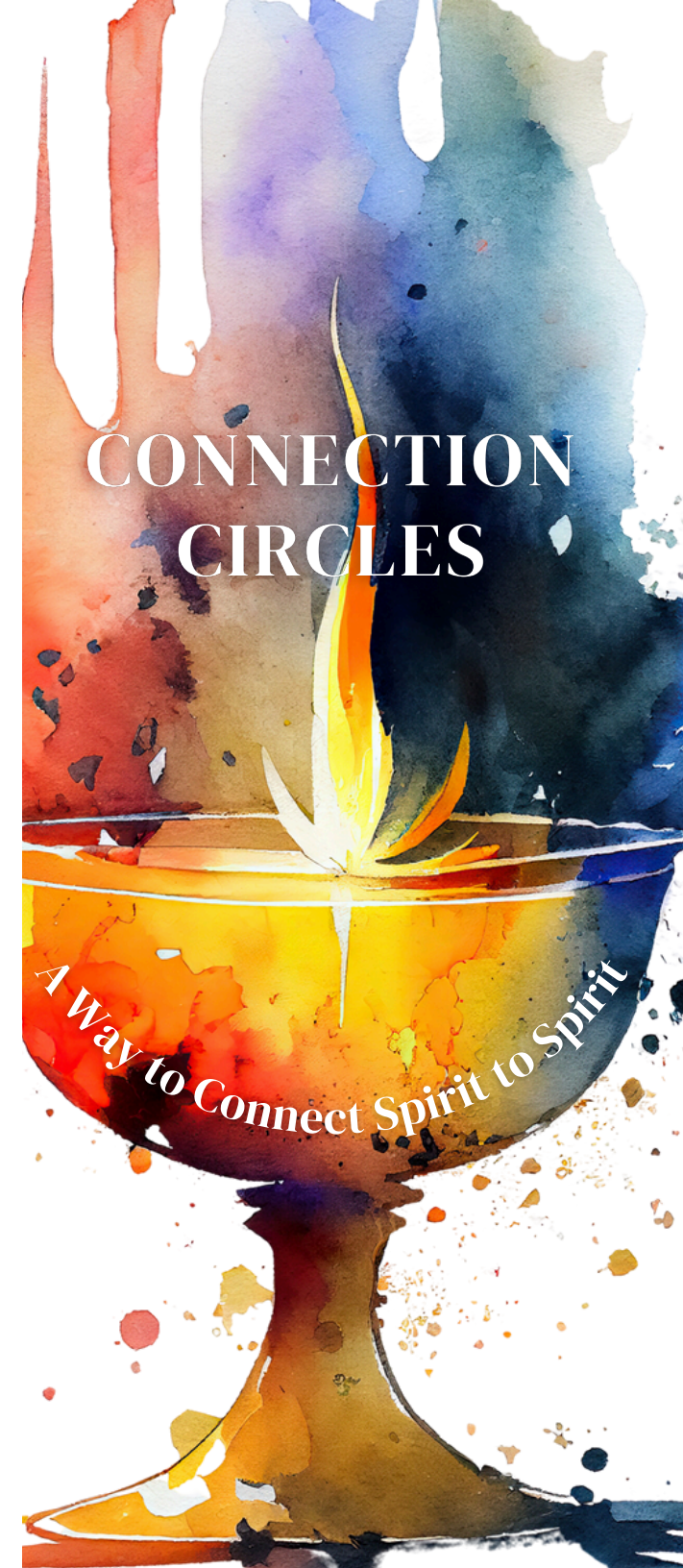
What does spirituality mean to you?
What spiritual experiences have you felt in your life?

Relationships

Do we look for others just like us in relationships?
How do we begin relationships, how do we end them?
What are the responsibilities of relationship?



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WHAT ARE CONNECTION CIRCLES?

Connection Circles are an opportunity to grow while getting to know one another better. As members share personal insights, concerns and struggles in a nonjudgmental atmosphere, they discover the wisdom of others and the comfort of knowing that they have something in common with everyone. In short, it's a chance to connect in a deeper way with this religious community.

HOW LONG AND HOW OFTEN DO GROUPS MEET?

Each meeting lasts two hours. You will be assigned to a group according to your preferences of place and time and the need to manage the size of the groups. Most groups meet 8 times over a two to three-month period and begin in October and February. The groups can meet every week or every other week depending on the preferences of the group members. Mini-groups meet for 4 consecutive weeks during July and August.

WHERE DO THE GROUPS MEET?

The groups meet either in a member's home, or at the Meeting House. Both the Meeting House and some homes are physically accessible. Please indicate any special needs (accessibility) allergies, child care, etc.) on the sign up sheet.

WHAT HAPPENS AT A MEETING?

Meetings are facilitated by a trained facilitator according to the following loose but consistent format: brief check-in, opening with chalice lighting, gathering words, sharing experiences and thoughts on questions based on a reading, and a brief closing. The tone is spiritual rather than intellectual, personal rather than educational.

WHAT KINDS OF TOPICS ARE DISCUSSED?

Every group explores the same topics at approximately the same time, so that there is a shared experience among groups. Topics and readings are chosen from a variety of sources, typically introduced by some kind of reading, and mostly along spiritual/personal/religious themes. Some sample topics are on the back of this pamphlet.

WHAT IF I HAVE KIDS?

Connection Circles are intended to be an adult activity, to which older teens are also welcome. Childcare should be arranged for younger children. The exception is "Family Friendly CC", which has childcare arranged at the Meeting House.

WHO CAN PARTICIPATE?

Connection Circles are open to adults and older teens who can commit to the 8 or 4 sessions of the particular group. Participants do not need to be members of this congregation. Because of the cohesive nature of the groups, visitors or drop-ins should not come to CC meetings without prior registration for that particular group.

SHOULD I JOIN WITH MY SPOUSE OR A FRIEND?

You are free to do what you are most comfortable with. Many people find, however, that they gain the most from groups in which they don't know many people at the beginning.

WHAT ABOUT REFRESHMENTS?

At the first meeting, the host provides simple refreshments. After that, group members decide whether they want to continue to have refreshments and, if so, they share that responsibility.

HOW MUCH PERSONAL SHARING IS EXPECTED?

Part of the benefit of participating in a Connection Circle is to be able to share your story with others, and know that your experiences will be honored. However, Connection Circles are neither "encounter" groups nor a kind of group therapy. Participants are encouraged to share only what they feel comfortable disclosing. Deep listening is essential, and respect for others is expected. All sharing is kept confidential within the group.