



Sample Session

Sources: Session Nine – Reimagining God

Preparation

Email to Participants

Dear UU Wellspring friends,

For our next session on [date], we will be following the example of our Universalist ancestors by reimagining the concept of God. People like John Murray and Olympia Brown looked to scripture and found there not a God of judgment and damnation, but of love and inclusion. How might we, inspired by their vision, continue to reimagine God?

Within our group there will be diverse reactions to this word, *God*. For some, a belief in God might be close to their heart and inspire their spirit. For others, the word may be an outdated or divisive concept. For others, Let's see where this topic takes us.

As a starting point to our reimagining of God, we'll be learning about process theology. Process theology seeks to integrate spirituality, philosophy, science, ethics, and more into a worldview that embraces our expanding knowledge of the universe. The God of process theology is radically different from traditional definitions:

Instead of being omnipotent (having complete power), God in process theology is persuasive. God does not and cannot control the unfolding of the world or of individual actions. Rather, God acts as a "lure" toward the good, using relationship not coercion to open up possibilities and bring about wholeness.

Instead of being perfect and immutable (never changing), God is constantly growing and evolving. The divine constants of love and connection never waver, but God receives every experience and changes accordingly. Through our choices and our relationships, we are creating God as God is creating us.

Instead of an emphasis on the separateness of God from the world, God is present in every moment and in all things, not just human beings. The universe is creative, dynamic and interconnected; what affects one affects all; everything matters.

Sources: Session Nine is a perfect example of a sample session, as it contains the basic elements of each session. Note that other sessions may include presentations, exercises, or other atypical content—as the topic requires. Also note that session plans in the advanced curricula may have some different regular features (for example, Sacred Arts includes a shared observation).

Each session's plan begins with a pre-written email. You may customize it—but the body of the email is prepared for you.

Each email begins with an introduction to the topic.

Readings:

- Key Ideas in "[What exactly is process theology?](#)"
- "[Our Ultimate Canvas](#)" by Rev. Gary Kowalski
- "[All that You Are](#)" by Rev. Theresa Ines Soto
- **Read** how Bobby McFerrin creates moments that embody process theology with an audience. An **optional video**, especially beginning at 57:00 shows McFerrin discussing his spiritual relationship to the audience.
- **Wholly, Holy, Holey** by Rev. Jen Crow

Reflection Questions

- What in the readings particularly resonated with you? Challenged you?
- How does process theology relate to your own idea of God?
- How does process theology embody and expand on the UU source of "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves?"
- Tell about a time you have experienced the God of process theology.

I'm looking forward to seeing you all!

Each email includes a set of readings—they may be sermons, poetry, essays, or videos. These resources come from Unitarian Universalists as well as those in the greater community. UU Wellspring makes an effort to offer a wide diaspora of voices in each session to provide a richer experience.

Finally, each email includes a set of reflection questions based on the topic and the readings. Participants are invited to write answers in their journals; they will have an opportunity to share some of their thoughts in the group session.

Session Nine Plan

Chalice lighting, opening reading, silence (10 minutes)

Our opening reading is "[A Theology Adequate for the Night](#)" by Nancy Shaffer.

Read the poem.

Let's take a few minutes of silence to bring ourselves fully into this circle.

Check in (20 minutes)

What are you carrying in your heart tonight? How is your spiritual practice or spiritual companioning going?

Covenant Review (5 minutes)

Note to Facilitator: Use whatever process your group has established to stay current with the covenant.

Is there anything about the covenant that we should address?

Every UU Wellspring session begins this way—lighting our chalice, a reading, and a time of silence.

Words the facilitator should say are marked in green.

The check in questions are designed to help participants be present in the group. They also help participants check in on their personal spiritual practices and work with a spiritual companion.

In the first sessions, the group will have written their covenant; this short check in allows for reminders and a chance to address any issues.

Notes to the facilitator are marked in gray.

Spiritual Practice Presentation (10 minutes)

Reflection (60 minutes)

- How do you imagine God? Reimagine God?
- What in the readings particularly resonated with you? Challenged you?
- Tell about a time you have experienced the God of process theology.
- How does process theology embody and expand on the UU source of "Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves?"

So What? (10 minutes)

How does this reflection relate to your spiritual journey? What are you inspired or challenged to do next?

Gratitude and closing (5 minutes)

Have everyone stand, holding hands, around the chalice. Each person, as moved, says one or two words about something from this session for which they are grateful or how they are feeling in this moment. After everyone has said a word, close with a brief statement of thanks and appreciation.

In Sources, participants are invited to share spiritual practices with each other.

The reflection questions are the same as those found in the email; some may garner significant conversation, and others may leave the group cold. We encourage facilitators to hold the conversation in response to the participants needs and interests.

A core value of UU Wellspring is putting our faith into action. This question helps participants make the connection between the session and their faith in the world.

Each session ends with this short ritual of gratitude and release.

For More Information

email director@uuwellspring.org

or visit www.uuwellspring.org

