

LEADER'S GUIDE TO THE SOURCES SUPPER

The Sources Supper process is mostly self-explanatory. The script has directions and time lines embedded in it for the whole group to see. Read through the script and note the places where you will be reading directions. There is a two page orientation for leaders. Following are extra pointers passed on past experience.

Arrival and Settling In (about 25 minutes)

1. Greet everyone and point them to name tags and hors d'oeuvres.
2. A living room is the best place to sit people for the first part of the ritual.
3. Begin the ritual at the 30 minute point even if not everyone is present, unless you now that someone will be arriving very shortly.

Introductions (about 3 minutes)

1. Pass out the scripts. The script begins with asking for introductions: Ask everyone to introduce themselves with two simple questions: name and how long at Unity. Here's how it is scripted:

“Let's have introductions now. We'll be getting to know one another more during the ritual, so for now we'll just do very brief introductions. Two questions: What's your name, and how long you have been connected to Unity Church?”

[Experience has taught that without clear instructions for the brief introductions, some groups spend a long time with their stories of coming to Unitarian Universalism, and then run out of time for the full ritual. So begin with this simple, two-part introduction, with the expectation of deeper connection as the event moves along. If anyone starts to monologue or if we people get into asking questions like “where were you before Unity?” gently bring them back to the simple introduction.]

The Conversation Flow

- **Talking stick format.** The script contains directions for the “talking stick” format for the whole group (without the stick) in which people speak one at a time without cross-talk. The Sources Supper is a ritual rather than a discussion group. The flow works well when people share individually and others just listen without “me too,” “I don't agree,” or “That reminds me of a story....” There is ample time in the small group breakouts for back and forth discussion, and the meal time is informal. The instructions are in the script for all to see, but part of the leader's job is to gently remind people if they veer off. Extraverts may feel a bit

constrained, but it's for the common good. And it's a good spiritual discipline to listen deeply without responding.

- **Ending the whole group sharing.** After the individual shares in the whole group, you can ask who would like to go next. When it seems that most people who want to share have done so, you can say, "Does anyone else want to share before we move on?" In some groups, most participants want to say something each time; in others, just a few share each time. There are not expectations and pressure here.
- **Spaces for the small group discussions.** Figure out in advance where the groups can sit comfortably in a circle or around a table. Then assign locations: group 1 to this part of the room, group 2 over here, etc.
- **Bring the whole group back after the small groups.** Use a watch or clock to keep track of the time for the small groups. Give them an extra minute or two if they all seem really absorbed, but not if one group has clearly finished and are looking around. Tingling a spoon on a glass is a nice way to bring people back from small group discussions. The whole group sharing after small groups does not have to be a "report" from groups. People can share what they said personally in the small group, or sometimes people report on the themes of their group. Either way is fine.

Starting Back After the Meal

The meal generally takes about 30 minutes, and it's important to return the group to the ritual at that point. There are two more stories and questions to end the ritual.

Music

The songs are simple and familiar but require some preparation on your part. Here are three options:

- If you know the songs and can start the singing, that is great. It's good to start out strongly even if you are not quite sure of yourself; the group will pick up the tune.
- Alternatively, you can ask someone who is coming to your Sources Supper to take responsibility to lead the songs.
- We have a DVD recording of the songs (that we can also put on an MP3) so that you can learn them or play them to the group to sing along with.