

Leader's Guide: Crime and Punishment

In this session, we'll be exploring what constitutes crime . . . and punishment.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

Ask someone to read the chalice lighting reading found in the bulletin as you light the chalice.

Help us to bring darkness into the light,
To lift out the pain, the anger,
Where it can be seen for what it is—
The balance-wheel for our vulnerable, aching love . . .

Help us to be the always hopeful
Gardeners of the spirit
Who know that without darkness
Nothing comes to birth
As without light
Nothing flowers.

—May Sarton

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows (10 min)

Ask group members to check in, telling in one or two sentences how they are doing this week. Share information about absent members.

Silence (3 min)

Give your group the gift of three minutes of silence. Time it if you would like.

Shared Readings (5 min)

Read this statement: "These quotes may come from times when words like 'man' and 'mankind' were used generically. We present these quotes as written and intend them to apply to everyone."

Have each person in turn read from the shared readings found in the bulletin until all the readings are finished.

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening (65 min)

Do three rounds of deep sharing and deep listening. Pay close attention to the time allotted each person to ensure that everyone gets a turn to share.

Round 1 (10 min): What elements do you believe are necessary for a true crime to exist?

Round 2 (40 min): What punishments do you believe are effective in deterring crime?

Round 3 (15 min): Tell what criminal acts would you be willing to do and why, or speak to something that has come up for you in this session.

Closing Words (1 min)

Read or ask someone to read the closing words.

For centuries the death penalty, often accompanied by barbarous refinements, has been trying to hold crime in check; yet crime persists. Why? Because the instincts that are warring in man are not, as the law claims, constant forces in a state of equilibrium.

—Albert Camus

Closing Song (1 min)

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business (5 min)

Pass out the homework for next time.