

Leader's Guide: Endings

This session represents the last session for your covenant group as it currently is. Our lives are full of beginnings and endings. We will spend some time looking at the ending of this covenant group, along with other endings, with awareness, reflection, and appreciation.

Pre-Meeting Instructions

There is a lot to do in this last meeting. The sharing time has been abbreviated to allow time for the closing ritual. As written, the meeting should last about an hour and a half, but it could go over.

Closing Ritual Instructions

Bring a large index card (unlined) for each person in the group and an assortment of Sharpie fine point markers. Cut out the "speech" found at the end of this document. Read over the closing ritual to become acquainted with it.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

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

We gather this hour as people of faith
with joys and sorrows, gifts and needs.
We light this beacon of hope,
sign of our quest
for truth and meaning,
in celebration of the life we share together.

—Christine Robinson

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)

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 (55 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): Share a story about a good-bye from your childhood.

Round 2 (30 min): Share more deeply feelings and experiences about endings you gained from doing the homework.

Round 3 (15 min): Pass out an index card to everyone. Ask each person to write his/her name on one side. Then have each person pass their card to the person next to them, who will write a characteristic, adjective, or phrase on the back of the card describing the person whose name is on the card. For instance one card might have phrases like loving, deep, compassionate, or great hugger. Another may say sensitive and optimist.

Closing Ritual (10 min)

When done, group members will pass the card on to the next person. When everyone has added a phrase to each person's card, gather up the cards. Mix the cards and pass them out (preferably without anyone getting their own card).

Begin with the card you passed out to yourself. Start by reading this introduction: "[Name of person], you have been a valuable presence in our group. You have shared your story with us, told us your joys and sorrows, and allowed us to enter into your life. You are [read the words written by group members]. Your gifts have enriched us."

This introduction is found at the bottom of this document. Pass it around as each person reads the words on the card they are holding, before they return the card to its owner.

Closing Words (1 min)

Read or ask someone to read the closing words.

Spirit of Life, known to us in beginnings and endings,
In possibilities and promises
We give thanks for all that has led to this moment,
And all that is yet to come.
—Kathleen Rolenz

Closing Song (1 min)

"Thank You for Your Loving Hands"

Group Business (5 min)

Talk about the details of the potluck.

CUT HERE

[Name of person], you have been a valuable presence in our group. You have shared your story with us, told us your joys and sorrows, and allowed us to enter into your life.

You are [**read the words written by group members**].

Your gifts have enriched us.