

Leader's Guide: Sports and Spirituality

This session focuses on the subject of sports and spirituality.

Pre-Meeting Instructions

Make a list of the last names of your covenant group members in alphabetical order. Bring a small ball (such as a tennis ball or Nerf ball) to use as a speaking token to be passed from speaker to speaker. The shared readings will be done differently. Read over the shared readings section here to acquaint yourself with the changes for this session.

Chalice Lighting (2 min)

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

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

Blessed is the flame that burns in the heart's secret places.

Blessed is the heart with strength to stop its beating for honor's sake.

Blessed is the match consumed in kindling flame.

—Hannah Senesh

Sharing of Joys and Sorrows (10 min)

Ask each person, for one minute each, to identify what has been most prominent in their life in the last couple of weeks.

Silence (3 min)

Start with the following words: "Get comfortable in your seat. Close your eyes. Take a deep breath in, and then a deep breath out. And now just breathe gently." Then give your group the gift of three minutes of silence.

Shared Readings (5 min)

Introduce a different way of determining the order in which each person will share the readings for this one meeting. Have the last names of group members ready (in alphabetical order) to call out. (For example, if the last names of your members are Brown, Jones, and Smith, you'll first call out, "Brown!" When that person has done a reading, you'll call out, "Jones!" And when it's time for the next reading, call out, "Smith!") Bring a small ball (such as a tennis ball or Nerf ball) to use as a speaking token to be passed from speaker to speaker.

Say: "Men and women have unique conversational customs around sport. To keep the talk focused on sport this meeting, we'll make a 'game' of passing a ball from person to person to use as a speaking token during the shared readings. We'll do this alphabetically by last name, and I'll call out the names in order." Then start by calling out the first of the group member's last names. (And don't forget to include yourself, alphabetically!)

Softly toss the ball to the person who will start the readings.

Deep Sharing and Deep Listening (65 min)

Round 1 (10 min): When you discuss sports with family and friends how does the discussion usually go? What type of remark do you usually make?

Round 2 (40 min): Share stories, feelings, and experiences in response to the homework.

Round 3 (15 min): Use this time to make a connection to something another participant said during sharing.

Closing Words (1 min)

In sports, spirituality is cultivated through allegiance or commitment to a team, either as a fan or as a spectator. Themes within sports may also typically include freedom and escape from normal life, discovery of meaning in life, commitment to a set of ethics and possibly a rediscovery of play in its purest sense.

—Ian Lawrence

Closing Song (1 min)

“Thank You for Your Loving Hands”

Group Business (5 min)

Pass out the homework for next time.