**Chalice Circles & Covenant Groups Session Plan**

**Teachers and Mentors**

Adapted from session plan developed by

Rev. Jan Carlsson-Bull for Circle Ministry at First Parish UU Cohasset, MA

Group Business

OPENING WORDS & CHALICE LIGHTING

Come into this circle in which some are riper than others,

Some are wiser than others,

Some are more seasoned than others,

Some teach more than others,

Some guide more than others,

but all of us ripen,

All of us season,

All of us teach and learn,

All of us guide and are guided,

All of us partake of this offering given and received.

CHECK IN

DISCUSSION: Teachers and Mentors

I do not want just anybody for a teacher. I certainly do not want people who think that they are very wise or very good or have the answers. I want people who appreciate that here is something that is worth their doing, and are willing to do the best they can. I want people who are willing to engage with children, youth, or adults in the spiritual quest that is the core of our faith tradition.

* Helen Zidowecki, Minister of Religious Education, Augusta ME, January 2012

Human beings learn how to be human beings from other human beings. All of us have learned the most startling and important lessons of life from those around us. And for each of us, at some time, some person or persons have touched our lives in deep and formative ways.

* Rev. Calvin Dame, UU minister who pioneered Small Group Ministries

We build on foundations, we did not lay.

We warm ourselves at fires, we did not light.

We sit in the shade of trees, we did not plant.

We drink from wells, we did not dig.

We profit from persons, we did not know.

We are ever bound in community. Amen.

* Rev. Peter Raible, UU minister, activist, and author

With decades of ministry under his belt, Peter knew that we don’t live by our own light alone. We stand on the shoulders of others. We are guided by those whose fires have burned longer and brighter than ours.

The term “mentor” as we use it to refer to one who gives guidance comes from the Greek character, Mentor, in Homer’s Odyssey. When Odysseus set off on his travels, he delegated the guidance of his son, Telemachus, to his trusted friend, Mentor.

Trust is perhaps the prime criterion for one who serves as a mentor. How trustworthy are they to lend guidance, to teach life’s lessons, to offer counsel on the most pivotal of our passages? Some who have served us as mentors have no idea they have done so. We may simply look to them as mentor figures. Others occupy our personal histories as figures with whom we’ve become well acquainted and have perhaps entered into a structured relationship in which we are mentored. None of us learns much alone.

*We never touch someone so lightly that we do not leave a trace.*

*-Peggy Millen, Member Eno River Unitarian Universalist Fellowship*

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

* What are the important characteristics of a teacher? Of a mentor?
* Is there a difference between a teacher and a mentor?
* Who have been your teachers or mentors? And, who have you influenced?
* Have you had different mentors throughout your life?
* Do you agree that *none of us learns much alone*?

LIKES AND WISHES ON TODAY’S DISCUSSION

CLOSING WORDS

Go mindful of paths worn by earlier travelers

who have stopped to give you directions.

Go attentive to paths worn and stories shared

by pilgrims well-worn and story-full.

Go anticipating moments when others will ask you,

“Which way is best and why?”

What directions will you give? What stories will you share?

Go expectantly. Go graciously.