Experiential Learning and Faith Development

We will use a learning and teaching method based on the "experience, reflection, action cycle" first articulated by Brazilian educator Paolo Freire (1921-1970) This method encourages the participant to engage a number of different and often conflicting perspectives and, together with other members of the group, come to their own understanding of a complex reality. As a tool for fostering lifelong vocation (where our deep passions intersect with the world's great needs) this approach has proven dramatically more effective than exposing participants only to variants on the "correct" point of view.

Concrete Experience

Actions Observed:

Your Reactions:

Stories/Dialog Heard:

Reflection

Questions:

Reflect upon, journal, or share with others these questions

a. Where were you uncomfortable or stretched?

b. What stories/actions did you experience that impacted you?

c. What did you learn, unlearn, relearn?

d. What did you experience that informs "what it means to be human in diverse communities of mixed species" and "our response to this understanding."

e. How do UU values, traditions, and faith inform this activity and your response to it?

f. What kind of impact did you or this activity have on others, their multispecies communities, the environment or society at large?

g. What are the larger societal and ecological issues, and evolutionary forces in play in this situation?

h. How will this activity change who you are and what we do as individuals and as a congregation? What might we do to encourage a positive change? Specifically what changes would you like to make in your own life, in the congregation, and in the community? What more do we need to learn to inform what "is ours to do" and what subsequent steps we would like to take?

Next Steps:

What to research:

How to modify activity:

When to do activity:

Taking Action

Actions Observed:

Your Reactions:

Stories/Dialog Heard:

Reflection Questions During Action:
(see Reflection questions above)

Chalice Words

The vision and reality of the beloved multispecies community comes when people have direct experience of each other and other species, experience interdependence unmediated by governmental sanctions and cultural codes, and when people have a rich array of opportunities to interact with human and nonhuman nature in community, interactions which draw out and encourage the human impulse toward all life, together. (adapted from Parker Palmer)

Only as we allow the world's pain to break us open to the flow of divine love will we be able to risk love in hard places. And only as we risk it will the private rhetoric of intimate caring become a public language of love. (Parker Palmer)

Unitarian Universalists aspire to radical hospitality and developing the beloved community. Therefore, we affirm that the natural world exists not for the sole benefit of one nation, one race, one gender, one religion, or even one species, but for all. Working in the defense of mutual interests, Unitarian Universalists acknowledge and accept the challenge of enlarging our circle of moral concern to include all living creatures. - Ethical Eating and Environmental Statement of Conscience

Let ours be a time remembered for the awakening of a new reverence for life, the firm resolve to achieve sustainability, the quickening of the struggle for justice and peace, and the joyful celebration of life. -Earth Charter 2002 (Endorsed by Unitarian Universalists as an Action of Immediate Witness at General Assembly June 2002)

Unitarian Universalist Faith Development Through Multispecies Experiencing

Activity:_____

Participant's Guide

Reverence for Life: Towards the Beloved Multispecies Community

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