

Spiritual Deepening Circles: February – Inside/Outside

Session 1

Arriving	10 min Before start time	Greet each person
Singing	2 min	Gathered Here Light the chalice
On our hearts Go round	5 min	– each person can say if something is on their heart tonight. Limit 1-2 sentences this is not a time for extended check-in
Gathering	3 min	Walking Toward Morning Victoria Safford
Connecting (go round)	10 min	Propose this question, then one minute of silence. <i>What are your blessings?</i> 1-2 sentences
Activity INside/ Outside	15 min	Read the instructions out loud. Allow ten minutes and then check to see if anyone needs more time . Remind people to read the questions for reflection and then allow for at least 2 more minutes.
Sharing	60 -75 min	Popcorn style. Each person shares once
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound, timer or 12 deep breaths
Responding	10 min	(time permitting) popcorn style Second opportunity for sharing, responding to others, no questions or dialogue. No one speaks twice before everyone who wants to speak has spoken once.
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound, timer or 12 deep breaths
Take Away	10 min	Go around – one or two words – sit in silence till first person speaks, then go clockwise one thing that you will take away from tonight’s session in a few words. For example: what moved you or what insights did you have.
Closing	3 min	A. Powell Davies
Business	3 min	Reminder of the covenant; next meeting time. COLLECT THE DRAWINGS
Singing	2 min	Trust the Light Within Your Heart
		Extinguish the chalice

February – Inside/Outside
Session 1 Gathering reading

WALKING TOWARD MORNING

By Victoria Safford

You know, we do it every day. Every morning we go out blinking into the glare of our freedom, into the wilderness of our work and the world, making maps as we go, looking for signs that we're on the right path. And on some good days we walk right out of our oppressions, those things that press us down from the outside or (as often) from the inside; we shake off the shackles of fear, prejudice, timidity, closed-mindedness, selfishness, self-righteousness, and claim our freedom outright, terrifying as it is—our freedom to be human and humane.

Every morning, every day, we leave our houses, not knowing if it will be for the last time, and we decide what we'll take with us, what we'll carry: how much integrity, how much truth-telling, how much compassion (in case somebody along the way may need some), how much arrogance, how much anger, how much humor, how much willingness to change or be changed, to grow and to be grown. How much faith and hope, how much love and gratitude—you pack these with your lunch and medications, your date book and your papers. Every day, we gather what we think we'll need, pick up what we love and all that we so far believe, put on our history, shoulder our experience and memory, take inventory of our blessings, and we start walking toward morning.

February – Inside/Outside

Session 1 Activity -

You have a 2 drawings each with one side of a mask.

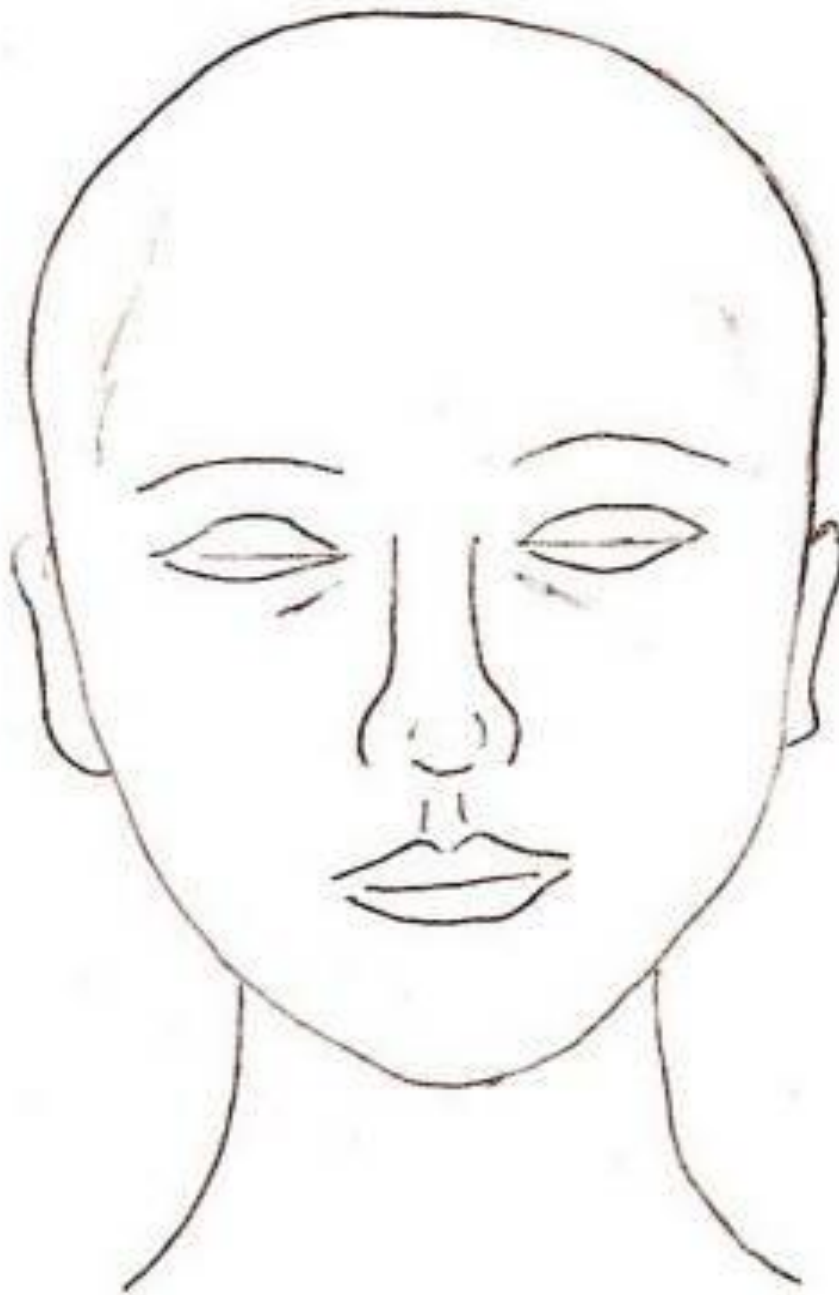
Write your name on the front of each of these pages. We will collect these to use again in the next session.

The OUTSIDE “public” face of the mask is for you to draw, or write words to describe what you show to the world. You could consider roles that you play, qualities that you try to express, things that people have said about you, etc.

On the INSIDE is for you to draw or write words to represent how you know yourself, your internal perspective, who you truly are.

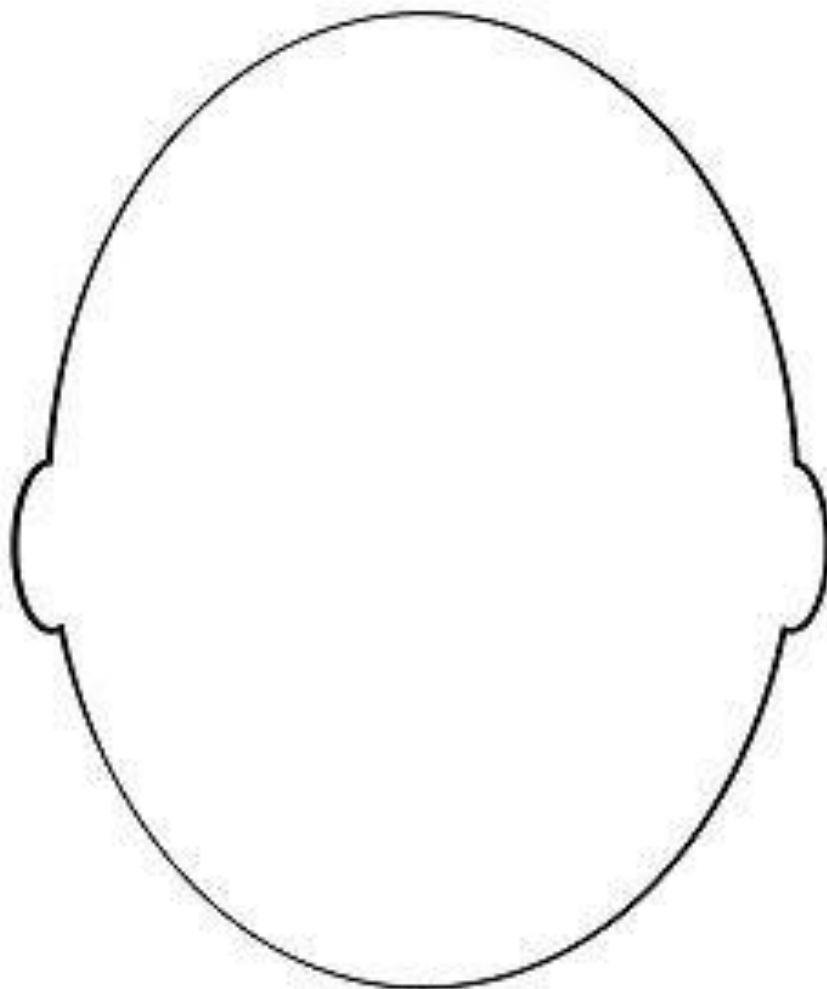
After you have finished drawing or writing words on each mask, consider the following questions for sharing time. Answer any or all.

- How do the outside and inside compare? Any surprises?
- What are some reasons why the two sides are different?
- In what ways is it hard to show the world your true self?
- How do you know when you are being authentic?
- How do you know when someone else is being authentic?



OUTSIDE

Name _____



INSIDE

February – Inside/Outside

Session 1 Closing Reading

None of our private worlds is big enough for us to live a wholesome life in.

We need the wider world of joy and wonder, of purpose and venture, of toil and tears.

What are we, any of us, but strangers and sojourners forlornly wandering through the nighttime, until we draw together and find the meaning of our lives in one another, dissolving our fears in each other's courage, making music together, and lighting torches to guide us through the dark?

We belong together. Love is what we need. To love and be loved. Let our hearts be open; and what we would receive from others, let us give. For what is given still remains to bless the giver – when the gift is love.

A. Powell Davies, UU minister

Spiritual Deepening Circles: February – Inside/ Outside

Session 2

Arriving	10 min	10 minutes before starting time
Singing	2 min	Gathered Here Light the chalice
On our hearts Go round	5 min	– each person can say if something is on their heart tonight. Limit 1-2 sentences this is not a time for extended check-in
Gathering Reading		And now a word from the Goddess of Mercy and Compassion
Connecting (go round)	10 min	One question for each to answer: How do you know when someone has self-confidence? 1-2 sentence answer, go around.
Reading	3 min	
Activity	10 min	(make sure that everyone has something to write with and something to write on. Pass out the drawings from session 1.) We will pass out a piece of paper for you that has the instructions for the activity written on the top. (Read the instructions from the paper, respond to any questions) <i>Are there any questions? You will have 10 minutes for this activity.</i> (After 10 minutes remind them of the reflection questions give them at least 2 more minutes)
Sharing	45 min	Popcorn style, time limits controlled by facilitators, no dialogue, questions or comments
Silence	2 min	May use bell or sound (or 12 deep breaths)
Responding	10-15 min	Second opportunity for sharing, responding to others, no questions or dialogue. popcorn style. No one speaks twice before everyone who wants to, speaks once.
Take Away	10 min	Go around – one or two words – sit in silence till first person speaks, then go clockwise one thing that you will take away from tonight’s session in a few words. For example: what moved you or what insights did you have.
Closing	3 min	The time will come Derek Walcott
Business	10 min	Final comments by facilitators, reminder of confidentiality and no unsolicited comments/advice. Reminder of covenant. Date of next meeting
Singing	2 min	Trust the Light Within Your Heart Extinguish the chalice

February - Me, Myself and I
Session 2 Gathering reading

And Now a Message from the Goddess of Mercy and Compassion
By Lucy Bunch

You are me
Do not be afraid of this
Do not create false barriers
The world does not need you to hold yourself back

I am the source from which you draw,
but you are the vessel that brings my spirit to the world
Do not be afraid of this
You have been making yourself ready for a long time

I have been watching you, guiding you and protecting you

The world needs you to be fully yourself
To offer your gifts completely
Do not be afraid of this.

Do not ask permission,
Do not make excuses
Do not beg forgiveness

Love is a force that can cut through fear.

There is nothing to be afraid of but inaction and regret.

February – Inside/Outside

Session 2, Activity: Self-confidence and Self-doubt

Review the inside/outside drawings from the last session.

Circle or mark the items (on either side) where you feel that you have confidence in how you do things and how you present yourself to the world.

Circle or mark the items where you feel that you have self-doubt.

There may be some items where you have both self-confidence and self-doubt.

Add any areas of self-doubt or self-confidence that are not reflected in the drawing.

In preparation for sharing time consider the following questions:

- Where and how are you most self-confident?
- How does Self-doubt show up in your life? How do you deal with your self-doubts?
- Reflect on the areas where you have both self-confidence and self-doubt. What makes them a challenge for you?

February – Inside/Outside

Session 2 Closing reading

The time will come
when, with elation
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror
and each will smile at the other's welcome,

and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you

all your life, whom you ignored
for another, who knows you by heart.
Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,

the photographs, the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit. Feast on your life.

Derek Walcott