

## **SESSION 6: Theological Reflection Conversations**

**Session:** In groups of 3: Practice working with the Theological Reflection Circle. Each participant will have a chance to be Listener, Storyteller, and Observer.

### **OUTLINE OF SCHEDULE:**

**15 min:** Gathering Words and Processing Homework

**20 min:** Triad Activity

**20 min:** Triad Activity

**20 min:** Triad Activity

**10 min:** Large Group Processing

**05 min:** Closing Prayer

### **COPIES THAT NEED TO BE MADE:**

**1 copy per participant**

Triad Exercise

**1 copy per group**

Group Worksheet

**Have extras on hand—at least 1 per participant**

Theological Reflection Worksheet

### **By the end of this session:**

#### **KNOWLEDGE**

- Participants will be able to identify their skill strengths and skill needs.
- Participants will articulate the difference in the roles in the Theological Reflection process: From personal use, as the Storyteller, as Listener, and as Observer.

## INSTRUCTOR'S CONTENT

### 15 min: Gathering Words and Processing Homework

Gathering Words by Rev. Barbara J. Pescan-

LEADER:

O Thou that hears, listen!

In the beginning is the cry -- inarticulate -- inchoate -- essential.

The primal cry of desire.

Much later comes the word -- ordered -- various -- pattern on a dark glass.

O, how we must listen to hear the wanting within the word

O, listen to hear the meaning in the soul of what is said.

The first act of a prophet is to hear one's own first cry.

In the silence, let us listen...

*Let us observe a minute of silence together. (Make it a full minute, at least.)*

Desire is good and longing is the first prayer.

Let us bless ourselves with knowing and bless each other with words that are true.

And let us be glad. Amen.

Processing Homework-

Open the floor for feedback on using the Theological Reflection Circle as a personal reflection tool. Ask:

How well were you able to work through the circles to describe your experience?

Did you uncover things in the experience that you hadn't noticed before?

If so, how will you work with the new insights?

What did working through your very own experience teach you about this tool and your use of it?

What do you need to sharpen in your listening or questioning skills?

### 20 min: Triad Activity

This session is comprised of three Theological Reflection conversations. Groups of 3 will work together throughout the session. Keep the groups on time.

*These directions appear on the handout:*

You have 20 minutes for each segment of this exercise.

In groups of three, practice the Theological Reflection process. Use same roles as in last session:

Storyteller (Mentee,) Listener (Mentor,) Observer.

In each round, you should play a different role.

**Storyteller:** Tell your story of something interesting from the past month and answer questions but do not rush to move conversation yourself, let the Listener practice the process. If you would prefer to try a role-play, two scenarios are provided below.

**Listener:** Use Observer as a back-up if you are uncertain what to ask or where to go.

*Remember your instruction from listening exercises to notice what's not in a conversation.*

*When looking at the circle/process of reflection, you have a visual representation of how to do that:*

*If you are unsure what to ask in any part of the process,*

*imagine how what you've heard fits on the circle diagram.*

*Make notes on the diagram if necessary.*

**Observer:** Make notes on the Group Worksheet regarding the conversation.

Use the "Situation" to write a quick synopsis of the presented issue.

Note anything you consider significant under the action headings:

Focus, Describe, Explore, Change.

Call time at 15 minutes and process the exercise in threesome.

**Process questions** that all three of you should answer at the 15 minute mark in each conversation:

Were moments of transition palpable? Were transitions smooth?

What options presented themselves that weren't used?

What did you wish you had a better grasp of as the conversation progressed?

How did we improve in this conversation?

Complete the General category on the Group Worksheet with any conclusions you have as a group.

**20 min: Triad Activity**

Change roles and repeat the process

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Change roles and repeat the process

**10 min: Large Group Processing**

Begin this last conversation by asking participants if they can see improvement in their skills, especially with Theological Reflection Conversations. Are you getting better at using this nonlinear process? What evidence do you have to this?

Then ask them to name the skills with which they feel strong and those with which they still need further development. (If possible make a list of these on newsprint.)

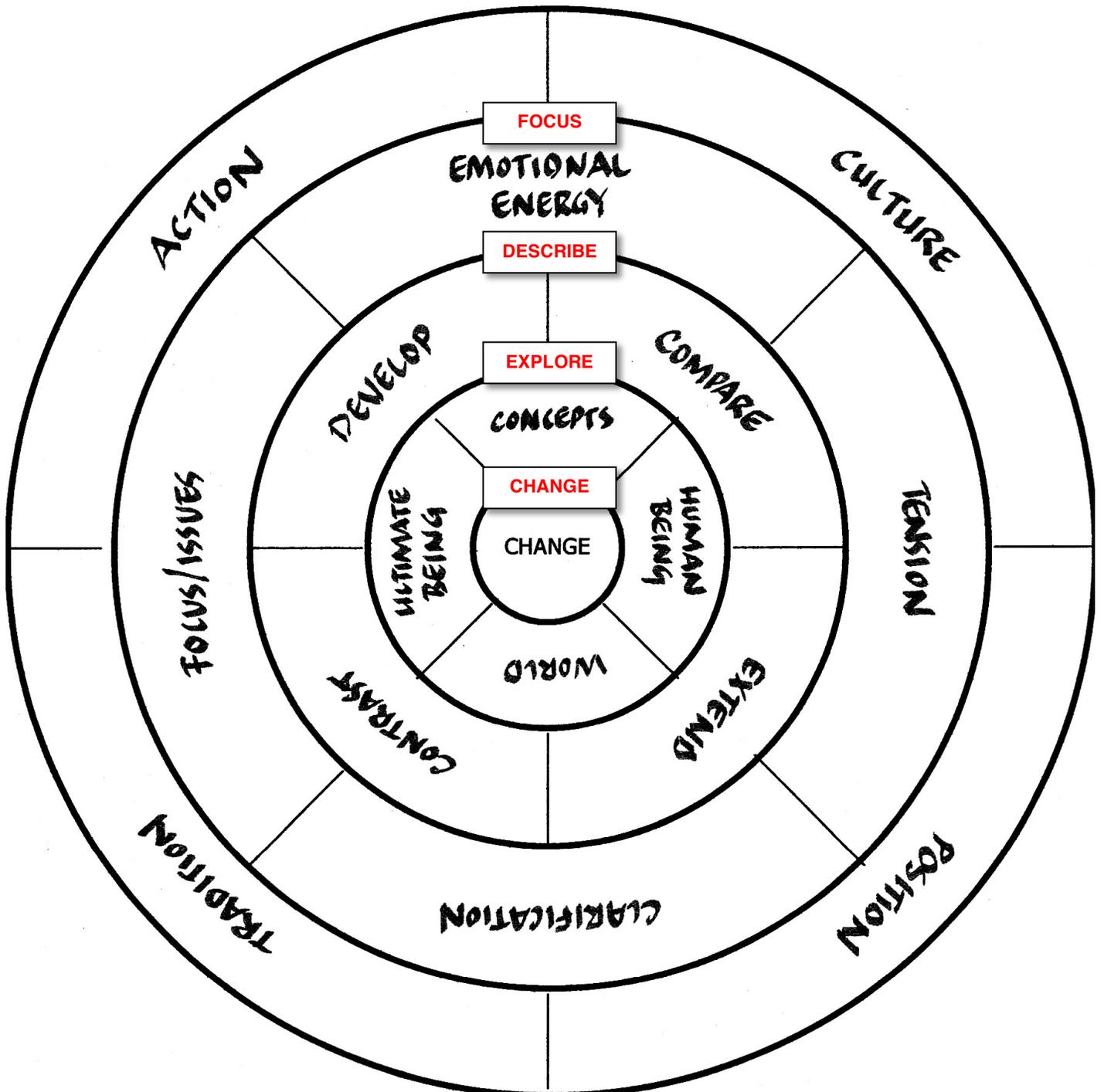
Conclude by asking: What has changed because you have spent six weeks working on Spiritual Mentoring skills?

Thank for participants for their efforts. Invite participants to continue to develop their skills both through personal practice and participation in upcoming modules dedicated to exploring the world's religious Traditions. If you know when the next module will begin offer that information.

**05 min: Closing Prayer**

*Distribute the handout for the final prayer/blessing.*

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION WORKSHEET



## TRIAD EXERCISE

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## ROLE PLAY OPTIONS

BB has just returned to work after an eighteen-month layoff. The new workplace has everyone placed on work teams with responsibilities shared as a group and leadership changing regularly. BB is used to having a set job description and clear chain of command. BB has been meditating for about 3 years and working on letting go of ego identity. BB is surprised by how disconcerting this new work structure is and how little progress the meditation has seemed to yield in light of it.

Ram was "undone" when the shootings happened in Newtown in 2012; he was reminded of an assault on a friend just three years before. He was frozen at home for a couple days and then got back to work. He has made the right moves for psychological help, but now his counselor has suggested it's time to sort out his religious beliefs, too. Ram has come to you with:

Anger over the injustice of the situation

Fear that there is nothing he can do to make the world a better place

Uncertainty about the nature of humanity, predestination and redemption, and grace

Confusion about the nature of a God that permits evil to continue

## GROUP WORKSHEET

<b>Situation</b>	<b>FOCUS</b>
	<b>DESCRIBE</b>
	<b>EXPLORE</b>
	<b>CHANGE</b>
	<b>GENERAL</b>
<b>Situation</b>	<b>FOCUS</b>
	<b>DESCRIBE</b>
	<b>EXPLORE</b>
	<b>CHANGE</b>
	<b>GENERAL</b>
<b>Situation</b>	<b>FOCUS</b>
	<b>DESCRIBE</b>
	<b>EXPLORE</b>
	<b>CHANGE</b>
	<b>GENERAL</b>

**CLOSING PRAYER**  
**ICUU Global Chalice Lighting For October 2010**  
**Rev. Dr. Petr Samojsky Religious Society of Czech Unitarians**

**LEADER:**

Everything that has begun will end.  
Like the day changes into night, Like the night changes into day,  
In the same way, One stage changes into another.  
*(Light a candle and place it in the middle of the group.)*

**ALL:**

Your life began And so did mine;  
One day your life will end And so will mine.

**LEADER:**

Everything will end, Everything changes,  
Everything transforms From one shape into another.

**ALL:**

In the course of changes so characteristic of life in this world,  
There is, however, Something constant:  
Something which remains untouched By all the changes and twists.

**LEADER:**

We may call it Being, Existence, Meaning, Life, God;  
It is the Untouched Source of all that is.

**ALL:**

In the midst of changes, When we feel insecure, Threatened or isolated,  
Let us calm our minds and Move deep into our hearts  
Into the Source of all that is, Where the Being rises.

**LEADER:**

Let us stay in that place with that Being for a moment.  
It is our foundation, It is our stable point.  
*Look into the flame and*  
*Feel this quiet joy in your heart.*  
*Let us observe a minute of silence together.*  
[In our time together, we have told sacred stories and listened to our hearts  
and learned to listen to others with skill.  
Now our time together is ending.  
As we extinguish the flame in this room, may you carry your skills as a light  
To help others find their way in the world.

I invite you to turn to the people you've worked with in this session and offer this blessing to each other:

*May you rest secure in the Source of your life.*  
*May you rise to the challenge of a holy life.*  
*May you be a light to others on their way.*

*(Blow out the candle.)*

May you go forth in peace, in love, and in service!]