

USG SGM ~ Celebrating Blessings ~ June, 2022

drawn from Soul Matters materials, see the full packet for more of all of these elements

www.soulmatterssharingcircle.com



Chalice Lighting A blessing is not something that one person gives another. A blessing is a moment of meeting, a certain kind of relationship in which both people involved remember and acknowledge their true nature and worth and strengthen what is whole in one another. - Rachel Naomi Remen

Check-in *Share your highs and lows since we last met focusing on what drains you and what lifts you up. We give each other the gift of listening without asking questions or offering advice to allow people the safety to share what's in their hearts.*

Intro: Roots of Blessings "The Aramaic word underlying our English word blessed is *tubwayhun* which literally means "ripe" or "ready for the picking"... And when that word is used in reference to people, it can mean integrated, whole, complete, mature."

Spiritual Exercise: Write A Blessing for Yourself

Words of blessing are often written as traveling partners, offering us not only hope but guidance for the path ahead. They point to what's possible. They highlight treasures otherwise easily missed. They function as maps, reminders and challenges all rolled into one. They help us get to where we need to go.

And nobody knows where we need to go better than ourselves. So while all those blessings written by others are nice, maybe it's time to take up a pen and be your own blessing writer. Here's how:

1. Start by reflecting on where you are right now on your journey and where you need to go.
2. Jot down a list of what you think you need to hold on to and remember as you take the next steps of the journey in front of you.
3. Read some of the blessings below for inspiration and structure ideas.
4. Put pen to paper or finger to keyboard and get writing.

- **Benediction, Bernadette Miller**
<https://gratefulness.org/resource/benediction/>
- **A Blessing for Traveling in the Dark, Jan Richardson**
<https://www.uua.org/worship/words/poetry/blessing-traveling-dark>
- **A Blessing of Discomfort**
<https://www.paulistcenter.org/a-franciscan-prayer-may-god-bless-you-with-discomfort/>
- **Beannacht, John O'Donohue**
<https://medium.com/@onbeing/beannacht-a-poem-8c2c29a4d14e>
- **A Blessing for One Who is Exhausted, John O'Donohue**
<https://onbeing.org/blog/john-odonohue-for-one-who-is-exhausted-a-blessing/>
- **A Blessing for Presence, John O'Donohue**
<https://mindfulselfcompassionuk.com/a-blessing-for-presence/>

Quotes for Inspiration/Readings

I recognize that even in the valley of the shadow of my own tangled thoughts there is something holy and unutterable seeking to restore my soul ... I always stop and touch the coarse gray bark of one particular tree with my hand or cheek, which I suppose is a way of blessing it for being so

strong and beautiful. Who knows how long it has been standing there wearing its foliage like a crown even though a part of it is dying? Because of that quality of sheer endurance one morning I found myself touching it not to bless it, but to ask its blessing, so that I myself might move toward old age and death with something like its stunning grace and courage. - Frederick Buechner

May God bless us with discomfort
At easy answers, half-truths, and superficial
relationships
So that we may live from deep within our
hearts.

May God bless us with anger
At injustice, oppression, and exploitation of
God's creations
So that we may work for justice, freedom,
and peace.

May God bless us with tears
To shed for those who suffer pain, rejection,
hunger, and war,

So that we may reach out our hands to
comfort them and
To turn their pain into joy.

And may God bless us with just enough
foolishness
To believe that we can make a difference in
the world,
So that we can do what others claim cannot
be done:
To bring justice and kindness to all our
children and all our neighbors who are poor.
A Franciscan Benediction

Questions: *Pick the one question that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is to figure out what being a part of a people of Celebrating Blessings means for you and your daily living.*

1. When in your life have you most felt like you were a blessing?
2. How would you complete the sentence: "I've been blessed with _____."?
3. Is there anything held in common by the people you know who feel blessed by life? What do they have to teach you about "the secret to feeling blessed"?
4. They say blessings come when we are still enough to notice them. How good are you at being still?
5. Have you thanked your various "fathers" for their blessings? Many of us have more than one father figure in our lives. When was the last time you told them thanks for their gifts? And let them know you carry them and their influence with you still?

Sitting in Silence *Take a few moments to sit quietly and reflect upon your thoughts.*

Sharing/Deep Listening *Respond with your thoughts and experiences with the topic. We create a safe space by listening deeply and not responding. When sharing, connect with what is true for you. When listening, give the speaker your full attention rather than thinking about what you will share.*

Reflection and Gratitude *This is a time to respond briefly to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared. Consider lifting up one comment or experience for which you are particularly grateful.*

Singing: Click [HERE](#) for the YouTube playlist on [Celebrating Blessings](#)

Extinguishing the Chalice Sometimes our inner light goes out but is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled this inner light. - Albert Schweitzer

