

Transforming Soul and Society
YEAR ONE—Sample of Themes and Readings for Five Weekends
and Alternate Saturday Readings

This sample represents the previous program so changes may be made for 2015/16.

Week 1 *Emerging Stories: Our Personal Stories, Origin Stories and the Universe Story*

Content: What do we mean by story and why is it so important for each of us? How do we awaken to the oneness of all creation—unity of self, community and cosmos?

- In this week we talk about the big picture – stories of the origin of the universe from some of the major traditions, culminating with and emphasizing the new universe story.
- We invite personal stories—our personal spiritual journeys.
- We note the spiritual community story we are beginning to co-create through gathering in sacred circle.
- The interconnection of these 3 stories is the foundational ground work for the rest of the program.

Typical Practices (each weekend):

- Centering and meditation—what and why
- Circle sharing of personal story—what and why
- Closing community rituals—what and why
- Reflection and writing—spiritual autobiography / journaling—what and why
- Reflection Circles--*conversation on* reading assignments

Week 2—Evolutionary Spirituality: Awakening Consciousness

Content: What do we mean by “evolutionary spirituality” and why does it matter for me personally?

- This week we discuss the evolution of some of the spiritual traditions down through the ages, e.g. Goddess, Earth based, indigenous spirituality; Hinduism, Buddhism, the Christian mystics—Hildegard of Bingen, Meister Eckhart; the Sufi/Muslim mystics.
- We talk about the evolutionary journey without and within—consciousness
- We learn to identify the Divine Presence, within and without.
- We discuss embodied consciousness and the divine feminine, including brain science—thinking/feeling—and our movement towards wholeness.

Readings: Michael Dowd, Thank God For Evolution

Week 3—January 4-6, Mindful Living: Engaged Presence & Sacred Activism

Content: What does it mean to fully explore my soul, my connection to the rhythms of the Divine and my expression of that in the world?

- This week we talk about living in “the now” mindfully and gratefully—with amazement.

- We teach about various forms of meditation—including body prayer
- We discuss being both mystic and prophet—that the full exploration of our inner lives and our connection to the Divine leads to active compassion for a better world.

Readings: Judy Cannato, *Field of Compassion and Radical Amazement*

Week 4—March 1-3, Transformative Relationships: Building Authentic Communities

Content: What does it mean for me to honor myself and others—to be authentic and responsive in all my relations?

- This week we talk about the importance of the 3 characteristics of the universe operating in our lives--diversity, interiority and communion or interconnectedness--and how they are foundational for building relationship and community.
- We talk about creative communication styles, authenticity, and barriers such as shame.
- We discuss how to deal with differences and conflict
- We see how the principles of dialogue, calling the circle and clearness committees promote authentic sharing and deep listening.

Readings: Parker Palmer, *Hidden Wholeness*; Joanna Macy, *Active Hope*

Week 5—May 3-5, Spirited Leadership: Compassionate Empowerment

Content: What does it mean for me to lead in my own areas of family, work and world at this time?

- We discuss leadership as “creating an environment where people can empower themselves.” Leader as facilitator and guide.
- We focus on “spirited” leadership—from inside to outside
- We focus on collaborative vs. competitive relationships
- We see how to “lead together” with common purpose, values, vision and foundational principles (4 fold way, etc.)

Readings: Peter Block, *Community, the Structure of Belonging*