Everything Belongs
Home Group Study Guide

Adventure in Faith 2017
October 1 – November 12

UNITY of TUSTIN

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Welcome to the AIF 2017 Study Circle Guide

Introduction

For our annual Adventure in Faith time at Unity of Tustin, we have chosen Richard Rohr’s book, *Everything Belongs*. If this is your first experience with the work of Richard Rohr, you’re in for your first encounter with one of the most respected and challenging voices of spirituality in the contemporary world. And if you are very familiar with the work of this prolific writer, profound teacher and spiritual pilgrim, you will find this time an opportunity to go deeper into the teachings of this “significant prophet.”

While all of Richard Rohr’s work is a challenging invitation to embrace contemplation and self-emptying, this book outlines his simple – though not always easy – path to a deeper kind of prayer, one that allows us to see that “everything belongs.” He is clear that this is a process, an enfoldment, that will probably cause us discomfort as our old ways of seeing reality are shaken loose and exposed.

Adventure in Faith is a time when we commit ourselves, as we must again and again, to the work of learning to “see” differently. In your home study group, you are providing a space and time where Spirit can work through each member to create a diverse and stimulating perspective on this material. Your group, and all our home study groups, as well as our community as a whole, will serve as a living demonstration of “everything belongs.”
Facilitator & Host Suggestions for Your Home Group

**Planning Weekly Gatherings**
Given the number of study questions and exercises provided in the book and in this guide, it is unlikely that your group will be able to cover all the material for each chapter. It would be helpful for you to review the section for the upcoming week and perhaps highlight those questions or activities that may be of particular interest to your group. Naturally, the group itself will help direct the content of your time together.

**Creating a Safe Space**
Preparing the space creates a welcoming atmosphere for the group. Please ask everyone to make sure that all phones are off or on silence and that you minimize distractions so that everyone can be fully present to the group.

There will be people in your group who will be extroverted and easily share. There will be others who will need to be invited to share. Be aware that everyone participates in groups in their own way. Continue to check in as appropriate with group members throughout the series to make sure everyone is feeling comfortable and getting what they are wanting from the group.

**Conscious Sharing For Home Groups**
The purpose of the ground rules is to create a safe and healthy environment for the group. At the first meeting of the study group it is important for all participants to review and be in agreement on the ground rules before the group begins.

- **Confidentiality:** Everything shared by group members is confidential. What is said here, stays here unless express permission is given to share outside the circle.

- **Compassion:** Group members relate to one another with unconditional, compassionate acceptance of each other as human beings. Judgmental comments, and even unspoken thoughts, threaten the group process.

- **Truth and Integrity:** Group members are encouraged and supported by the group to honestly and authentically be who they are. Speaking the truth involves risk and can only occur safely in a compassionate environment.

- **Respect:** Group members show respect for each other and the group by not interrupting others, arriving on time, and not monopolizing the group.

- **Conflict:** Whenever people come together and speak truthfully, the potential for hurt feelings, misunderstandings and conflict exists. If such a situation arises, group members agree to address it within the group process, or one-on-one with the facilitator. Unresolved conflict is toxic to the whole group and not just to the parties involved.
• **Participation**: Group members agree to participate in discussion and group activities; however, each person has the right to ask to sit out or to modify his or her participation.

Each person will be in relationship with Rohr’s teachings differently. The study circle will be a great place to explore how the material is landing with everyone and how it is working in their lives. The purpose of the home group is to pray together, connect with community members, share our spiritual journey and reflect on the AIF book. When you are studying the book, please note that this is not a book critique, a platform to debate the ideas presented in the book, or a time to challenge the philosophy of this or any author or spiritual teacher. It will be important for the integrity of the group to keep the sharing and discussion oriented to how the material is working in people’s lives, challenges they are experiencing and questions that are arising.

**At Each Meeting**
An opening and closing prayer, affirmations and opening practice with silence are described each week. We encourage you to follow this basic structure to provide a sense of consistency and practice with the material.

At the first meeting, there is also information on how to introduce each other and address some of the logistics for your time together. If you have any questions, please contact Rev. Carolyne at carolyne@unitytustin.org or 714-730-3444 ext 104.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone to the first gathering of your circle and introduce yourself. If there is a separate home host, introduce them. Examples of what to share in your introduction can include the following:

a. Name
b. How many years you have been attending Unity and/or Unity of Tustin
c. Why you chose to be a home group facilitator (if you are a repeat facilitator, what have your experiences been?)
d. Any personal history that might be relevant
e. Your intention for the next six weeks, what quality(ies) you are willing to bring to the study group, and what support you would like from the group during this time.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 1 Affirmations & Bible verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.

I Am Journeying to the Core
You Are Journeying to the Core
We Are Journeying to the Core

One person reads:
"Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it." Matthew 7:13-14

Study Circle Introductions
Have everyone go around the group and introduce themselves. This will let everyone get to know each other. It also allows you to get a pulse for why people have joined the study group. Examples of what to ask them to share are:

a. How long they have been attending Unity/Unity of Tustin
b. Why they chose to join a home group this year
c. What their intention is for the next six weeks, what quality(ies) are they willing to bring to the study group, what support they would like from the group during AIF.
It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person, depending on the size of the group. If newcomers join the group after the first meeting, you may wish to ask them to also introduce themselves. This can later be a “check in” at each meeting.

Opening Meditation
Set a meditative field before beginning by ensuring everyone has their cell phones turned off and distractions are minimized.

Each week, our circle starts with a brief time of silent meditation, perhaps 3 to 5 minutes, or longer if your group wants that. Introduce the meditation with AIF prayer or your own words to set the field. Setting a timer is helpful.

Coming together
Setting a safe space for your time together is really important. Please take the time to read through the entire section of “Suggestions for your Study Circle” found on pages 2-5 of your study guide.

Conscious Sharing For Home Groups
Discussions to pay particular attention to:
1. Determining group facilitator
   a. Will your group have 1 facilitator or rotate?
2. Conscious sharing section
   a. Is there anything your group would like to add to ensure the integrity of your group?

Acknowledge when everyone is in agreement with the conscious sharing guidelines. When all other logistics have been determined, it is time to begin.

Book Introduction
In some ways, this book presents a new lens to view Christianity, a way that Richard Rohr as an ordained priest has come to see as necessary for Jesus’ intention to be shared with the world. Each of us, whether we have been trained as Christians or not, has absorbed various ideas about the dominant religion of our culture. It is an invitation to read about Jesus and what he taught that probably goes beyond whatever you know, an opportunity to bring your awareness to another level. Keep in mind that requires openness and the willingness to explore ideas that may seem “simple, but not easy.” As Richard Rohr himself says, “If prayer isn’t simple by the time you finish reading this, I will have failed.” Simple prayer is truly something worth embracing!

Introduction and Chapter One Discussion Questions

1) “One always learns one’s mystery at the price of one’s innocence.” What is the nature of the “innocence” Rohr is referring to here? Can you give an example of lost innocence in your own life? (p. 7)
2) Prometheus is a god in Greek mythology who defied Zeus by giving fire to humans. The Promethean mind might be defined as defiant of the divine and self-willed, similar to Eve eating from the tree of knowledge. Why are Jesus’ teachings difficult to “sell” to those with this mind-set? (p. 11)

3) Yeats’ poem was written in 1919 at the conclusion of World War I. Why does this poem seem particularly relevant almost 100 years later? (p. 13)

4) “If the circumferences of our lives were evil, it would be easier to moralize about them.” Name some examples of the “circumferences” of your life. In what ways do they seem to take your attention away from what’s essential? (p. 13)

5) “For some reason, we seem to prefer fabricated realities to the strong and sensitizing face of what is.” (p. 15)

6) “You have to develop an ego before you can let go of it.” In what ways do people seek their identities in groups and belonging? What do you think means to live through God, living from our center so that “everything belongs.” (p. 23)

Concluding the Evening
Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests
Ask if there are any prayer requests for the week. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives. Sharing of prayer requests are a way to stay connected with each other during the week, providing support for each other as we continue with the material.

Final Prayer
Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone back to your second gathering. Welcome any people who are new to your circle and briefly introduce yourself. Remind everyone about the Conscious Sharing For Home Groups agreements you all made last week. You may even wish to briefly review as a way to continue to affirm that this is a safe space.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 2 Affirmations & Bible Verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.

I Am Cultivating the Beginner’s Mind
You Are Cultivating the Beginner’s Mind
We Are Cultivating the Beginner’s Mind

One person reads:
“Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.” Romans 12:2

Circle Check-In
Have everyone go around the group and check in. Examples of what to invite them to share are:

a. What has your experience of the material been this past week?
b. What is an insight you had this week?
c. What is on your heart/mind tonight that you need to share so you can be fully present?

It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person.

Chapter 2 Discussion Questions

1) “We have to learn to see what is there.” How might prayer, a “way of living in the Presence” help you to see in this new way? (p. 30)

2) “Spirituality is about seeing. It’s not about earning or achieving.” Why is this sometimes difficult for us in a success-oriented culture? (p. 33)
3) “When we have too many words, we tend not to value them, even if they might contain life for us.” Where in your life do you encounter the most words? Do words ever overwhelm you? What words do you continue to value? (p. 39)

4) “We aren’t born again. We are born again and again and again.” Reflect on the way you view religious experience. Does it leave space to experience God as “patient”? (p. 52)

5) How do you define spiritual hunger? Why does Rohr say it’s hard to remain spiritually hungry? (p. 43)

6) “We must go inside the belly of the whale for a while.” What does this metaphor mean to you?

Concluding the Evening

Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests
Ask if there are any prayer requests for the week. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives. Sharing of prayer requests are a way to stay connected with each other during the week, providing support for each other as we continue with the material.

Final Prayer
Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone back and welcome any people who are new to your circle. Briefly introduce yourself and remind everyone about the Conscious Sharing For Home Groups agreements you all made. You may even wish to review them as a way to continue to affirm that this is a safe space.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 3 Affirmations & Bible Verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.
   I Am Inside and Outside
   You Are Inside and Outside
   We Are Inside and Outside

One person reads:
“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you.” Matthew 15:16

Circle Check-In
Have everyone go around the group and check in. Examples of what to invite them to share are:
   a. What has your experience of the material been this past week?
   b. What is an insight you had this week?
   c. What is on your heart/mind tonight that you need to share so you can be fully present?

It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person.

Chapter 3 Discussion Questions
1) “Try to realize that everything is right here, right now.” Take a moment to reflect on those words. What beliefs about your past and future would change if you came to accept this idea? (p. 60)
2) “Because our moments are not tasted or full or real or in the Presence, we are never full.” How do you create and hang on to artificial fullness? What egoic states keep you from being in the present moment (e.g., wanting things to be predictable, wanting to be right, wanting to be better than…). What do we miss out on by clinging to these egoic states? (p. 61)

3) “To become more present we must reach into a deep inner spaciousness, then we can speak with more intelligence and clarity, with a little less ego, and with less of our agenda in the way.” How can you connect with this deep inner spaciousness? (p. 62)

4) Richard Rohr talks about God being non-blaming and non-judgmental. Similarly, he says “The present moment has no competition, it is not judged in comparison to any other.” Explain the following “When I am in competition, I am not in love.” In what areas of your life do you struggle with comparison, competition, games of power? (p. 62)

5) What evidence do you have from your own experiences that the Universe is a friendly place? (p. 65)

6) “After eight years at the Center of Action and Contemplation, I’m convinced that I must primarily teach contemplation.” Think about some of the social reforms mentioned by Rohr in this chapter. In what way can they sometimes be “head” answers that don’t transform consciousness? (p. 73)

7) “I need to recognize that I’m in a river that is bigger than I am. The foundation and the flow of that river is love. Life is not about me, it is about God, and God is about love.” What helps you to shift from ego into this flow of love/life? What does the following statement mean to you: “My life is not about me. I am about life.” How does it change your perceptions and/or feelings about your life? (p. 79)

8) “All that is needed is surrender and gratitude.” Describe in your own words the meaning of playful prayer. (p. 89)

Concluding the Evening

Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests
Ask if there are any prayer requests for the week. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives. Sharing of prayer requests are a way to stay connected with each other during the week, providing support for each other as we continue with the material.

Final Prayer
Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone back. Remind everyone about the Conscious Sharing For Home Groups agreements you all made. You may even wish to briefly review as a way to continue to affirm that this is a safe space.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 4 Affirmations & Bible Verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.
   I Am Cleansing the Lens
   You Are Cleansing the Lens
   We Are Cleansing the Lens

One person reads:
“God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” 1 John 16-18

Circle Check-In
Have everyone go around the group and check in. Examples of what to invite them to share are:
   a. What has your experience of the material been this past week?
   b. What is an insight you had this week?
   c. What is on your heart/mind tonight that you need to share so you can be fully present?

It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person.

Chapter 4 Discussion Questions

1) “When civilization has flourished, when great music, art, and literature have emerged, it’s always when human beings have felt good about being human.” Think about people in your daily life – co-workers, family, friends. Who tends to
believe in the dignity of being human? How do people express that dignity in their own lives? (p. 96)

2) "Remember St. Teresa of Avila's stark admonition, "For the most part all our trials and disturbances come from our not understanding ourselves" (Interior Castle, IV, 1, 9) I'm afraid we must learn to observe our own stream of consciousness." (p. 103) Explore in self-examination what are my prejudices? What is my predisposition? What is my agenda? What are my angers, and more deeply what/who hurt me in the past that I am holding onto as my only story? Am I willing to forgive?

3) "The discernment process is often called the third eye or the third ear. It refers to the ability to stand away from ourselves and listen, and look with some kind of calm, non-judgmental, objectivity. My watching and judging don't change what IS. Prayer, however is not finally self-observation but rather to "fall into the hands of the living God (Heb. 10:31)" (p.104-105) Have you experienced “falling into the hands of the living God”? What have you noticed in your body, heart/mind, presence and outer life as you pray?

4) “It is frankly much easier to be against than to be for.” Think of examples of the divisive practices in politics and religion. How do these compare with the freedom of contemplation? (p. 107)

5) "Jesus meant what he said. ‘Forgive them, they know not what they do’ (Luke 23-24).” The greatest barrier to the next level of conscience or consciousness is our comfort and control at the one we are at now” (p. 112-113) How have you practiced this call of forgiveness, and moved forward to the next level of freedom in Awareness?

6) When Richard was in the Kentucky Hermitage he met an ex-abbot now a recluse for some time. "While walking on a trail path, the recluse said, 'Richard.' That surprised me. He was supposed to be a recluse. 'Richard, you get chances to preach and I don't. When you are out there and preaching, just tell the people one thing. God is not 'out there.' God bless you.'" (p. 117-118) Describe from your own experience and in your own words what you think it "God is not 'out there'" means.

7) “You and I came along a few years ago and we’re going to be gone in a few years. The only honest response to life is a humble one.” How could this awareness of our short time on earth affect the way we live? The way we pray? (p. 120)

8) "In reality our growth is hidden. It is accomplished by the release of our current defense postures, by the letting go of fear, and our attachment to self-image. Thus we grow by subtraction much more than by addition." (p. 121) Describe in your own words what you think it means to grow by subtraction? In
other words, could this mean less is more? Could this subtraction be a part of your cleansing the lens?

Concluding the Evening

**Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests**

Ask if there are any prayer requests for the week. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives. Sharing of prayer requests are a way to stay connected with each other during the week, providing support for each other as we continue with the material.

**Final Prayer**

Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone. Remind everyone about the Conscious Sharing For Home Groups agreements you all made. You may even wish to briefly review as a way to continue to affirm that this is a safe space.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 5 Affirmations & Bible Verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.
I Am Appropriating the Mystery
You Are Appropriating the Mystery
We Are Appropriating the Mystery

One person reads:
“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have been brought to fullness. Christ is the head over every power and authority.” Colossians 2:9-10

Circle Check-In
Have everyone go around the group and check in. Examples of what to invite them to share are:
  a. What has your experience of the material been this past week?
  b. What is an insight you had this week?
  c. What is on your heart/mind tonight that you need to share so you can be fully present?

It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person.

Chapter 5 Discussion Questions

1) How might developing spiritual awareness and higher consciousness let us “believe in such a way that we give hope and meaning to the next generation.” (p. 123)

2) What is Rohr’s criticism of New Age spirituality? How have you grounded your own beliefs? (p. 126)
3) “What we know about God is important, but what we do with what we know about God is even more important.” What does the diversity of healthy religions say about God, who is “not threatened by differences.” (p. 128)

4) God uses your “sins” (missing the mark) to transform you. How have you recognized this in your own life? (p 129)

5) “How we relate to one thing is probably how we relate to everything.” Reflect on how you relate to God, to things, sexually and to other people. Can you see a pattern in your own relations and those of people around you? (p. 136)

6) Do you agree that life is “a great school of love?” (p. 143)

7) “Without this awareness of the river, without a sense that we are supported, we succumb to fear.” How in your own life have you begun to trust the presence of God? What role can prayer pay in your life? (p. 145)

Concluding the Evening

Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests
Ask if there are any prayer requests for the week. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives. Sharing of prayer requests are a way to stay connected with each other during the week, providing support for each other as we continue with the material.

Final Prayer
Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.
Welcome & Prayer
Welcome everyone. Remind everyone about the Conscious Sharing For Home Groups agreements you all made. You may even wish to briefly review as a way to continue to affirm that this is a safe space.

At this time invite everyone to join together in prayer.

Prayer
You may wish to use or include the official AIF prayer provided in the weekly Sunday bulletin and in the weekly emails.

Week 6 Affirmations & Bible Verse
Invite everyone to join together in saying this week’s affirmations.

I Am Returning to the Sacred
You Are Returning to the Sacred
We Are Returning to the Sacred

One person reads:
“There are six days when you may work, but the seventh day is a day of Sabbath rest, a day of sacred assembly. You are not to do any work; wherever you live, it is a Sabbath to the Lord.” Leviticus 23:3

Circle Check-In
Have everyone go around the group and check in. Examples of what to invite them to share are:

a. What has your experience of the material been this past week?

b. What is an insight you had this week?

c. What is on your heart/mind tonight that you need to share so you can be fully present?

It may be necessary to limit this sharing to 3 minutes per person.

Chapter 6 Discussion Questions

1) Why does Rohr feel the threshold is the best place to be? What things help us to remain at the threshold? (p. 155)

2) What is the “system” that needs to be questioned according to Rohr? (p. 157)
3) “Part of us always has to die.” What part of yourself do you find dying when you enter a sacred space? (p. 158)

4) “If we’ve never lived, we will be terrified of death.” How do you view death? Do you know that life is eternal? (p. 165)

5) “Opposites collide and unite, and everything belongs.” This uniting of seeming opposites, of the secular and the sacred, is how we can see the world when we are in true contemplation. What are your thoughts on this. (p. 159)

6) Why does Rohr say that he doesn’t want to go to a heaven where the people have all done it right? (p 167)

7) “Our religion is not pure detachment or pure attachment: it’s a dance between the two.” Reflect on these words in light of the title of the book *Everything Belongs*. (p. 170)

**Concluding the Evening & Your Study Circle Group for 2017**

**Sharing of Gratitude & Prayer Requests**
Invite people to share their most significant aha from these past six weeks. Invite people to email Rev. Carolyne and or post on facebook if they are willing.

Ask if there are any prayer requests for this final gathering. Allow time for some closing thoughts to be shared with the group. These comments might include sharing of gratitude for something that happened in the group tonight or for something in their lives.

**Final Prayer**
Invite someone (or you can do it) to lead everyone in a closing prayer.