

## Small Ministry Groups

### Session 20: Atheism

#### **OPENING WORDS:**

“Cherish your doubts, for doubt is the attendant of truth. Doubt is the key to the door of knowledge; it is the servant of discovery. A belief which may not be questioned binds us to error, for there is incompleteness and imperfection in every belief. Doubt is the touchstone of truth; it is acid which eats away the false. Let no one fear for the truth that doubt may consume it; for doubt is the testing of belief. The truth stands boldly and unafraid; it is not shaken by testing: for truth, if it be truth, arises from each testing stronger, more secure.”

Robert T. Weston

#### **CHECK IN/SHARING**

- Current state of physical or spiritual health
- Joys or concerns about loved ones
- Concerns/excitement about what is happening in our lives

#### **REVIEW COVENANT**

#### **TOPIC/ACTIVITY:**

Hindu, Buddhist, and Taoist beliefs are not based on the concept of a deity. They are essentially atheistic. Dan Kennedy in a recent article in *UU World*, “Are You with the Atheists?” state that 46% of UUs in 1997 identified themselves as humanists—a category that includes atheists and agnostics, and according to a 2001 report 18% of UUs polled in Ohio, West Virginia, and western Pennsylvania considered themselves to be atheists. The following month’s issue of *UU World* contained a letter to the editor which stated: “When liberal theologians use the word “God” to mean precisely what the general population means by “not God,” atheists see this not as a matter of semantics, but rather as a matter of dishonesty. Do you believe in God, or do you merely believe in the word ‘God’?” Another letter asked “Can we find any evidence for the supernatural gods, devils, saviors, miracles, etc. If we cannot, how can we voice the honest conclusion?”

1. Can you find any evidence for the supernatural?
2. Are you an atheist? If so, why? If not, why not?
3. If you are an atheist, have you felt welcome in our congregation?

## **CHECK OUT**

What did you like about this meeting? What do you wish had been different?

## **CLOSING WORDS**

“A person will worship something—have no doubt about that. We may think our tribute is paid in secret in the dark recesses of our hearts—but it will out. That which dominates our imagination and our thoughts will determine our lives and character. Therefore, it behooves us to be careful what we worship, for what we are worshipping we are becoming.” Ralph Waldo Emerson