Voluntary Simplicity
A SIX-SESSION DISCUSSION CIRCLE FOR THE HOME, FAITH CENTER OR WORKPLACE

Purpose

⇒ To gain an understanding of the meaning of voluntary simplicity.
⇒ To explore the material and psychological distractions that prevent us from caring for Earth.
⇒ To consider how life might be enriched through the practice of simplicity.
⇒ To develop a personal Action Plan to integrate simplicity into their lives.

“The course has given me a sense of hope and support for a happier, healthier, more balanced life.”

- Voluntary Simplicity circle participant, Portland, Oregon

Session Descriptions

1. The Meaning of Simplicity: The concept of simplicity, as a religious practice or philosophy of life, has a long history. Inner simplicity and outer simplicity are both involved. What are some common misconceptions about a simple life?

2. Living More with Less: Accumulating material possessions is part of the American Dream. For some, the dream has become a nightmare. When do material possessions add meaning to our lives and when do they detract?

3. Making a Living: A growing number of people wish to resolve the conflict between the desire to make and spend money and the desire for a more enjoyable lifestyle. Why is that so difficult in our culture?

4. Do You Have the Time?: In modern society, our minds are focused on the "busyness" of the day, our current problems, and our future challenges. Are there alternatives to the fast pace of mainstream culture?

5. Living Simply and Sustainably: As a society, we engage in patters on material consumption that are damaging the environment. How much do we really need?

6. Call to Action—Wrap-Up

For information on how to join or start a Choices for Sustainable Living discussion circle in MD or DC, please visit www.simplicity-matters.org/info

Simplicity Matters Earth Institute
Simple living for a sustainable future

www.simplicity-matters.org | contact@simplicity-matters.org | 301-432-8721
Voluntary Simplicity
Readings and Excerpts

1. THE MEANING OF SIMPLICITY

2. LIVING MORE WITH LESS
   “When It’s All Too Much” by Barry Schwartz ♦ Excerpt from Stepping Lightly by Mark Burch ♦ “The Secret to Happiness” by David Myers ♦ “Cleaning the Closet” by Juliet Schor ♦ “Teachings of World Religions on Consumerism” by Alan Durning ♦ “When Enough is Enough” by F. Marina Schauffler ♦ Action Plan

3. MAKING A LIVING
   “In Praise of Slowness” by Carl Honore ♦ “Economy and Pleasure” by Wendell Berry ♦ Your Money or Your Life by Joe Dominguez and Vicki Robin ♦ “What Should I Do With My Life?” by Po Bronson ♦ Action Plan

4. DO YOU HAVE THE TIME?

5. HOW MUCH IS ENOUGH?
   “The Green Triangle” by Earnest Callenbach ♦ “Conservation is Good Work” by Wendell Berry ♦ “Living Simply and Strengthening Community” by Richard Czapinski ♦ Excerpt from “Small Wonder” by Barbara Kingsolver ♦ “Everyday Ought to be Earth Day” by Ann Lovejoy ♦ Final Action Plan

6. CALL TO ACTION—WRAP UP
   Evaluation and Next Steps

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