



## Course Organizer's Guide

### G.A.L.A. Study Circles ~ NorthWest Earth Institute Discussion Groups

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#### Global Awareness Local Action (G.A.L.A.)

PO Box 2267  
Wolfeboro, NH 03894  
603-359-6460

[www.galacommunity.org](http://www.galacommunity.org)

#### Northwest Earth Institute

107 SE Washington St, #235  
Portland, OR 97214  
503-227-2807

[www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org)





## 1. INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in volunteering your time and energy as a Global Awareness Local Action (G.A.L.A.) Study Circle Organizer in your community! This discussion group program is developed and distributed by Northwest Earth Institute (NWEI) in Portland, Oregon in keeping with their mission statement: *“Inspiring people to take responsibility for Earth.”* Since 1993, over 120,000 people have participated in NWEI programs. During 2007 G.A.L.A. facilitated its first group in Wolfeboro, NH through the NWEI’s New Hampshire affiliation - Granite Earth Institute (GEI) - and its popularity led to GEI handing over the program to G.A.L.A. to nurture and pollinate around the state. G.A.L.A.’s mission is to *“Establish a contagious community building model that translates sustainability education into locally inspired action that is practical, effective, and fun.”*

The heart of the program is a series of twelve, self-facilitated study/discussion courses, or Study Circles, that foster informal, small group dialogue, and which can be offered in the workplace setting, a home, center of faith, community center or anywhere groups are inspired to meet:

- ❖ A World of Health: Connecting People, Place, and Planet
- ❖ Choices for Sustainable Living
- ❖ Discovering a Sense of Place
- ❖ Changes by Degrees: Addressing the Climate Challenge
- ❖ Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability
- ❖ Menu for the Future
- ❖ Reconnecting with Earth
- ❖ Sustainable Systems at Work
- ❖ Voluntary Simplicity

The small group discussion experience provides an enjoyable, supportive setting in which to examine personal values and habits, engage in stimulating conversation, create meaningful community, and consider ways to take action towards creating a more sustainable future.

Each program listed above is a participant-led series of weekly discussions held over a two to nine week period (depending on the book topic chosen). Participating groups meet for an hour, to an hour and a half, each week to discuss readings included in the discussion course book.

There is no outside presenter or teacher of these discussion courses. Rather, anyone can organize a group in their community with the role of facilitator rotating with each meeting. On some occasions, a G.A.L.A. representative may be available to assist the Organizer with the first study session. At all times, G.A.L.A. is available to answer any queries or concerns an Organizer may have in the course of coordinating a Study Circle group.

These discussion courses emphasize individual responsibility, the importance of a supportive community, and the dual need to walk lightly on and to take action on behalf of the Earth.



## Organizer's Guide & Other Resources

This Organizer's Guide provides information that will assist you in beginning a Study Circle. If you have any questions about the process please contact the G.A.L.A. office at 603-539-6460 or by email at [contact@galacommunity.org](mailto:contact@galacommunity.org). This guide is available at [www.galacommunity.org](http://www.galacommunity.org) where you'll also find a link to NEWI's training video for Organizers and the various forms, flyers and press release templates that support this program.

NorthWest Earth Institute's website [www.nwei.org](http://www.nwei.org), is a tremendous resource for comprehensive information including a full description on each of the study courses, supportive materials such as individual course flyers and sample press releases, an online training video and all the forms necessary for a class organizer. Their Outreach Team can be contacted at (503) 227-2807 or by email at [contact@nwei.org](mailto:contact@nwei.org).

## How to Order Books

To order discussion course books for your group, fax or mail the order form attached at the end of this guide, call the NWEI office directly, or order online at [www.nwei.org/order-form](http://www.nwei.org/order-form) - **being sure to list Global Awareness Local Action (G.A.L.A.) as your "affiliated organization"**. Most books cost \$25 a piece (depending on book topic/length, ranging from \$5 to \$35). The cost of the book can be covered by the organizing community group (e.i., a library) that can then keep the books at the end of course, or covered by the participants themselves, who will keep the book at the end of the course.

The purchase of these books helps G.A.L.A. financially. As a non-profit and the NWEI New Hampshire partner, we receive a portion of the book cost to help continue our programming. Thank you.

## How it's Done – A Step by Step Overview

1. Based on your community's or group's interest, pick a course study theme – there's a link to a description of each course at [http://www.nwei.org/discussion\\_courses/course-offerings/course-offerings](http://www.nwei.org/discussion_courses/course-offerings/course-offerings).
2. Watch NWEI's training video for Organizers at [http://www.nwei.org/discussion\\_courses/get\\_started](http://www.nwei.org/discussion_courses/get_started)
3. Locate a meeting venue (e.i. church, library, community center, home, school, workplace)
4. Decide date/time/place and registration deadline for your discussion group
5. Do outreach to form a group, ideally 8-12 people – contact G.A.L.A. for sample flyers and press releases (also downloadable from [www.galacommunity.org](http://www.galacommunity.org))
6. Order course discussion books based on the number of people you have signed up or anticipate attending. Shipping is cheaper for one order versus individual orders. (See *How to Order Books* above)
7. Distribute books to course participants prior to first meeting if possible.
8. Hold first session of your Study Circle
  - Introduce yourself and have a round of introductions
  - Describe the discussion topic
  - Describe the process for the course – be sure to mention the evaluation forms
  - Hand out discussion books for those who don't have them
  - Collect payments for books if you don't already have them
  - Have everyone fill out their contact details on the registration form
  - Have everyone sign up to be a facilitator and/or an "opener" for each session



- Remind everyone to do the readings for the first session and agree upon the time and place to meet for the following course sessions
  - Discuss plans for the closing “celebration”
9. Continue with remaining discussion group sessions
    - A new “opener” and facilitator each session (*see Course Schedule Templates below*)
    - Collect evaluations from each prior session
  10. Close with the Celebration – usually a potluck.
    - Collect any outstanding evaluations (*in book*)
    - Check out opportunities and potential for future Study Circles
  11. Return all evaluations and the contact list of participants to G.A.L.A.

### Ideas on how to form a Study Circle group

- Invite others to join via newsletters, flyers, email networks, personal invitations, and the media.
- Call a meeting or host a brown bag lunch in a workplace to offer an informal presentation on Study Circles and how they work.
- Organize a group online through a site such as Meetup.com.
- Invite the public to hear a guest speaker on a relevant topic, with an opportunity to sign up for a discussion course
- Matchmaking - identify individual participants who are interested in a course and then form a group or groups to take the course
- Networking - identify a “sponsor” to organize an introductory meeting by arranging a time and place and inviting people to attend
- Reach out to local non-profits such as an environmental organization, adult education center that might be receptive to offering courses. The same networking approach mentioned above can be effective
- Host an introductory group meeting at home, your community or faith center, local library or municipal office. If you would like to host an introductory group meeting in order to form a group, visit [www.nwei.org/course\\_resources](http://www.nwei.org/course_resources) to download NWEI’s Introductory Presentation Manual for ideas.

Most discussion courses get started during one of two informal “seasons”: September-early November (after summer vacations, and before the holidays) and January-April (after the holidays and before summer vacations). The best times for networking to get introductory meetings scheduled are July-September and November-March.

### The Study Circle Philosophy

- ***We are a resource, not a teacher or preacher.*** We believe that people will learn in a way that has the most profound impact through self-discovery and discussions with others.
- ***We are inclusive and nonjudgmental.*** We reach out to all people, recognizing that each person has immense potential to become a better protector of the earth.



- ***We work without expectations of others.*** The courses will impact people at different levels. Because each person is unique and has unique circumstances, the response to the course will vary greatly from person to person.

Having said this, it needs to be noted that diversity in Organizers is encouraged. Each will have his or her unique style. The suggestions presented here are not intended to regiment the process. Rather, these guidelines document a process that has been successful, and provide the minimal structure needed to ensure the quality of presentations. The first rule of mentoring is, “be yourself”. Handle each new situation in a way that is comfortable for you.

## 2. THE INTRODUCTORY SESSION – GETTING STARTED

G.A.L.A. Study Circles typically devote the first meeting of the group to introductions – people, procedures, policies, course content and final celebration planning. The first discussion group session on the course materials therefore, is actually on week two. This being said, this format is not set in stone, so tailor it to your group’s needs. There are other formats described on NWEI’s website.

- ***Contact the Study Circle participants*** well in advance of the first session and confirm the date, time, place, size of the class and cost of the book. Most of the course books are \$25 plus shipping but the price varies depending on which study course is taken (ranging from \$5 to \$35). Clarify the outline of the first/introductory session.
- ***Take the following materials with you*** to the first session: 1) an opening, 2) your copy of the course book and others if they were shipped to you, 3) class schedule for class members to sign up for openings and facilitation for the remaining sessions, 4) class registration sheet for names and addresses, and 5) organizer’s checklist, if you use one. (*See below*). You may also like to arrange ahead of time for a whiteboard and/or flipchart and pens.
- ***Arrive five minutes early*** for the first session. Greet each new arrival. Assume the meeting will begin on time, but take your cue from the group as to when to start, and encourage them to start on time for future meetings.
- ***Introduce yourself to the group.*** Say a sentence or two about how you came to be a volunteer. This is a good time to find out how many people have previously taken a course.
- ***Hand out the course books*** and collect any outstanding payments. The course books are each about 100 pages, with a diverse collection of short essays, articles, and book excerpts, organized by session. Participants complete the readings in advance, and the course book provides the meeting format, goals, discussion questions and action items to guide each session.
- ***Have a round of introductions.*** Introductions serve several important functions, even if the group is already well acquainted. First, participants begin the process of sharing with each other on a personal level. Second, introductions allow participants to acknowledge the very best in themselves and to have that affirmed by a supportive group. Finally, introductions provide an



opportunity to “get each person’s voice into the room.” Once someone has spoken and been listened to, that person is more likely to participate in the rest of the session.

- Ask participants to say their names and something personal about themselves. For an earth-centered group, one good approach is to ask them to tell the group a brief portion of their “eco-story” - an experience, place, person, or event from the past that helped them develop their love of nature. If the group is more focused on simplicity, a good approach is to ask them what one aspect of their life might be simplified. You may have a better question for the group, but it should elicit a personal response. Also, since there is a lot to do in the first session, encourage participants to be brief. Give your answer first to model what you want in length and content. As people say their names, you might make a seating chart for yourself. You can then refer to people by name during the discussion.
- ***Suggest how group members can assure the success of the class.*** 1) attend every meeting, 2) arrive on time for the opening, 3) prepare for each class by doing all the readings, 4) respect all opinions, and 5) seek clarity, not consensus.
- ***Call attention to the course evaluation form*** at the beginning of the course book. Stress the value of participants making notes on this form each week, and completing it at the end of the course as it provided valuable feedback to NWEI and G.A.L.A.
- ***Circulate the Class Registration Sheet.*** This information is not given to other groups. It is for use by G.A.L.A. and NEWI only.
- ***Circulate the Class Schedule.*** This gives the group members an opportunity to sign up to present an opening and to facilitate one of the sessions. You may prefer to wait until you have described the opening and the role of the facilitator before asking group members to volunteer for these. If the group has more members than remaining sessions, schedule two openings for sessions as required assuring each participant presents an opening. It is recommended that you, as the Organizer, be the first facilitator so as to be a role model for others.
- ***Describe an opening.*** Each session should begin with an opening, a brief informal presentation by one of the group members. The purpose of the opening is twofold: 1) It provides a transition from some other activity to a purposeful discussion, and 2) gives the participant presenting the opening an opportunity to share something personal with the group.

The goal of an opening is to express something personal and significant that relates to the course. For example, an opening might capture a person’s:

- Appreciation for nature (*Discovering a Sense of Place*)
- Attraction to simplicity (*Voluntary Simplicity*)
- Concern for future generations (*Choices for Sustainable Living & Change by Degrees*)
- Healthy Food (*Hungry for Change, Menu for the Future*)
- Engaging employees and employers (*Sustainable Systems at Work*)



The opening helps to set the tone for the discussions. In order to encourage creativity, you might consider presenting an opening that is something other than a reading from a book. A picture, a rock, a song, a story, worms from a compost bin, or something you've written, may all be good choices. Select an opening that reveals something about you. You might keep a number of openings handy, and see what strikes your mood. It is also a good idea to keep the opening short, well under the five minute suggested maximum time allotment.

Your opening does not need to be a polished performance, nor should it present an unattainable standard of perfection. ("Here is a jar of my organic beet borscht. I grow and preserve all of my own food, and knit all my clothes from the sheep I raise.") A simple, authentic opening will best encourage the participants to share themselves.

- ***Explain the role of the facilitator.*** The facilitator keeps the discussion personal, focused, and balanced among the participants. Show them where to find the "Guidelines for the Weekly Facilitator," at the front of the course book. Encourage each person to review them before taking a turn at facilitation. It is recommended that you, as the Organizer, be the first facilitator so as to be a role model for others.
- ***Allow enough time.*** There is a lot to do in the first session; still you need to allow enough time for the group to get a feel for how the discussions will go.
- ***Watch the time,*** and stop the discussion five minutes before the class is scheduled to end.
- ***Make sure that the Class Registration Sheet is filled out.*** You will take this with you, and bring or mail it to G.A.L.A. (PO Box 2267 Wolfeboro, NH 03894)
- ***Make sure the Class Schedule is completed.*** Confirm the volunteers who signed up for the opening and facilitation for the next meeting. Make sure everyone has signed up for an opening, even if that means doubling up for some sessions.
- ***Confirm the time and place*** for the next meeting.
- ***Make a note of the date for the final session*** in your calendar so you can attend.
- ***Be sure to end the class on time.*** If the class is in a workplace, this shows respect for the employer and the work people do. In any event, it is important for people to know that their time commitment is predictable.

### 3. WEEK TWO AND ONWARD

- ***Invite the group to convene on time*** and quickly mention any housekeeping notes. Hand over to the opener and then take on your role as facilitator for this session, and introduce subsequent facilitators for on-going sessions.



- **Present the Circle Question.** After the opening, the first step is for each person to answer the Circle Question. The purpose of this question is to provide a focus for the day's discussion.
- **Keep it personal.** Remember that the goal of the courses is to consider matters from a personal perspective. The facilitator helps to maintain this individual focus. ("What is my relationship with the earth?" "How do I feel about that issue?" "Are my values threatened by the author's assertion?") The facilitator keeps the discussion from straying into what "everyone," or "this country," or "other people" should do. When the discussion starts to become general, bring it back to the personal. ("How do you feel about that?" "What can you do to make a difference in that area?")
- One way to keep the discussion personal is to use the suggested questions that are included in the guides in the course book. They are designed to elicit personal responses. Modeling use of the discussion questions shows that facilitation is accessible to anyone. ***You don't have to be an expert on the topic of a session in order to facilitate it.***
- **Keep it focused.** The facilitator may need to steer the discussion if it strays from the session's topic. This can be done by restating the last question or asking a new one. Don't be reluctant to be an active facilitator. In this way, you will be giving future facilitators license to do the same.
- **Involve everyone.** The facilitator strives to keep the discussion balanced among the participants. It may be appropriate to draw out quieter individuals, at least making sure they have the opportunity to speak. People will value the discussion more if they participate in it. Be aware of who has not spoken, and consider calling on them for an opinion. (This is where the seating chart you made earlier can really pay off.) Calling on quieter people can also be a useful technique to prevent a few vocal people from dominating the discussion.
- **Step back, be detached.** Except for providing gentle guidance as needed, the facilitator will mostly stay out of the discussion. This is a time for the participants to carry the agenda. It is OK to express an occasional opinion, but recognize that your ideas may cut off discussion, rather than encourage it. Sometimes a member of the group may have strong opinions, and express them frequently. It is not a good idea for the facilitator to engage this person in debate. Rather, seek to empower the group to deal with this person. ("Thank you, Bill, but let's get some other thoughts on this. Sharon, you look like you have an opinion.").
- **Let go.** Even with the best facilitating, some groups will follow a path that wanders from the one the facilitator had in mind. At such times, be prepared to let go of your preconceptions of what a class ought to be. There is not one right way for a group to conduct its class. Insight comes in unexpected ways. Facilitators need to be prepared to accept a variety of different class styles.
- **Bringing it to a close.** The Organizer should continue this role throughout the duration of the discussion group:



- **Make sure that the Class Registration Sheet is filled out.** You will take this with you, and bring or mail it to G.A.L.A. (PO Box 2267 Wolfeboro, NH 03894)
- **Make sure the Class Schedule is completed.** Confirm the volunteers who signed up for the opening and facilitation for the next meeting. Make sure everyone has signed up for an opening, even if that means doubling up for some sessions.
- **Confirm the time and place** for the next meeting.
- **Make a note of the date for the final session** in your calendar so you can attend.
- **Be sure to end the class on time.** If the class is in a workplace, this shows respect for the employer and the work people do. In any event, it is important for people to know that their time commitment is predictable. Support each facilitator to ensure they stop the discussion five minute before the class is scheduled to end.

#### 4. THE FINAL SESSION & CELEBRATION

The final session is the most important one for the group experience. It is both the culmination for a course, and a new beginning for those who would like to continue on the Study Circle path. Specifically, the final session is an opportunity to:

- ◆ Celebrate the completion of the class
- ◆ Collect feedback on people's experience in the class
- ◆ Discuss opportunities for continuing to be involved

The model that GALA has found most popular over the years is to finish up the final session as a regular class and then later have a separate potluck celebration at a date mutually agreed upon by the participants – usually during the week following the final session.

If the final session includes the potluck celebration, there may be a period of eating and socializing before or after the “business meeting”, depending on the availability of the venue. This session is less structured than the first meeting. Be aware of the group's energy and intentions, and don't push the agenda too hard. If the final session is in a workplace, time may be short, so you may need to shorten the agenda.

Regardless of which model you chose to wrap up, the following actions should be included:

- **Identifying Future Organizers.** Please be on the lookout for participants who are particularly engaged, and seem excited about our work, and pass on their contact information to G.A.L.A.
- **Feedback.** Collect the written evaluations. Ask any who don't have them to complete them and hand them in to you. Oral evaluations are also quite valuable. A good way to elicit these is to ask people to complete the sentence, “If there was one thing I could change about the course . . . .” (**The Organizer should write down these comments, and send them to G.A.L.A. with the evaluations.**)



- **Gratitude Circle.** The most important element of the celebration is the closing gratitude circle. The group has spent several weeks together, sharing with each other at a personal level. Ask each participant to reflect on that experience, and to think of something that he or she will take away from it and is grateful for. It could be an experience, an interaction, an insight, or anything else that comes to mind. Sharing can proceed in a circle, or each person can speak as they feel called to do so.
  
- **Options for Follow-up.** Allow some time to discuss options for follow-up. The conversation will vary depending on whether the setting is a workplace, home, or center of faith, but the primary goal is to determine if the group, some part of the group, or one participant would like to take the lead in setting up another discussion course.
  - Would the group or part of the group like to consider taking another discussion course? The basic plan can be discussed and the lead person can be identified.
  
  - Would anyone in the group be interested in organizing a course in another setting? For example, at a workplace venue, a participant might decide to organize a *Sense of Place* group in her or his neighborhood.
  
- **New Contacts.** After the discussion of options, **circulate the new contacts sheet**. If a participant knows another person who might be interested in organizing a discussion group in a home, workplace, center of faith, or neighborhood, the participant can simply put *his or her own name and phone number* on the new contacts sheet. Then someone from G.A.L.A. can call the participant to get contact information for the friend(s) who might be interested. **Return the sheet to G.A.L.A. right away so someone can follow up.**
  
- **Graduation.** Create a small ceremony to acknowledge the work people have done in the course. Select a ceremony that is appropriate for this particular group. If you are in doubt, check out what you have in mind with the coordinator. The ceremony might be as simple as reading a poem or teaching the group a song. Be creative.
  
- **Reporting back to G.A.L.A.** Information and materials gathered at the celebration **should be brought or mailed to G.A.L.A.** (PO Box 2267 Wolfeboro, NH 03894). This would include:
  - Information on whether the group, a portion of the group, or a participant would like to organize another discussion course.
  - Evaluation forms.
  - Your notes about evaluation comments made at the celebration.
  - New contacts sheet.
  - Your observations on any individual(s) who should be invited to be an Organizer.

**THANK YOU!**



## A. ILLUSTRATIVE ORGANIZER'S SCRIPT FOR FIRST CLASS

Note: This guide is illustrative only. **It is not intended to be used as a script.** Each Organizer should use her/his words so the message will fit the style and thoughts of the individual.

- **Arrive early.** Introduce yourself as class members arrive.
- **Start the class.** “My name is \_\_\_\_, a volunteer with G.A.L.A. (and mention any organization you are co-organizing with) offering Study Circle classes in this community. I have agreed to be the Organizer for your class. As such, I am a resource person to help your course be a success. I got involved after taking the course on \_\_\_\_\_.

Let me tell you a little about how the discussion courses work. The optimal size for a course is eight to twelve people. Groups normally meet once a week, usually for about an hour. Each person has a copy of the course book, like this one. The book is divided into sessions, or chapters, with several readings, about 60 minutes worth. The course books are on average 100 pages long, and contain everything needed for the course, including introductory materials, suggestions for further reading and practical applications. The cost is \$23 each for most books. Each person reads the week's materials individually, and then the group meets to discuss it. In these discussions, consensus is not the goal. The point is to discuss, maybe clarify values, but not to reach agreement.

Today, we will start with introductions. Then I will demonstrate an opening and explain the role of the facilitator. And then we will spend time planning for future sessions.

- **Introduction.** [two illustrative examples]

Discovering a Sense of Place. “To get started, why don't we go around the table. Tell us your name, and something about nature that has a special meaning to you. I will start. I'm \_\_\_\_\_. My office for 23 years was on the 25th floor of a fairly sterile building, and quite detached from the earth. About four years ago I was thrilled to see a peregrine falcon for the first time outside my window. It caused me to read “Wings for My Flight” by Marcy Houle. After learning more about the peregrine, I now feel deeply honored every time I am in its presence.” [Everyone has chance to speak.]

Voluntary Simplicity. “To get started, why don't we go around the table. Think of an experience or place, in your life, when you felt at peace and everything seemed to be in balance. I will start. I'm \_\_\_\_\_. I grew up in a family without a father. When I was small, my mother used to take my sister and me to a community on the Oregon coast, Taft, which is now the southern portion of Lincoln City. We spent several weeks there each summer. Even today, I don't feel right about life unless I have quiet time at the Oregon coast—at least two weeks - each summer. There I find peace in walking on the sand, sitting on the bluffs watching Cormorants and other seabirds, listening to the sounds of the sea, and watching the varied sunsets with an always fresh sense of awe.

[Everyone has a chance to speak.]



- **Success.** “I would like to share with you a few things that have been learned about these discussion classes. A class will be most successful if each person gives it a high priority - attends regularly, arrives on time, does the readings, and participates with enthusiasm. It is important to keep in mind that consensus in the discussions is not a goal and all opinions are treated with respect.”

- **Forms.** “You will find a **Course Evaluation** form in your readings. The courses are revised based largely on the comments of participants, so you are asked to take a minute after each session and complete these forms to assist the presenting organizations in their future planning of course content. I will plan to collect them from you each week, for the week prior, and any outstanding ones at your final session. Things you liked, things you disliked, any suggestions will be a great help to us.

“There is also a **Class Registration** form. Please fill in your name, mailing address, email address and phone # for our records. We never sell or give away our list but would like the opportunity to contact you in the future about our programs.” (Pass it around the table while continuing.)

- **Opening.** “Now, I will demonstrate an opening. To start each class, a volunteer brings an opening. Lasting five minutes or less, the opening serves two purposes. First, it provides a transition from daily activities to the discussion for the day. Second, since the opening tells something personal about you, it allows others in the class to get to know you better.

“For the opening, you should bring something to class that expresses your deepest appreciation for nature. Today I have a short story I wrote about an early experience when I felt a deep connection with nature. For me, this was a spiritual awakening to the majesty of the moon; a great mountain, Eagle Cap; and Mirror Lake. Just after my 13th birthday ....”

- **Facilitation.** “OK, that completes the opening and now we move into the discussion. As facilitator for our first session, I will try to allow a free flow of ideas, yet provide some direction so we cover the important points in the reading materials. If anyone tends to dominate the discussion, I may have to direct the conversation to others. On the other hand, if someone is not participating, I may direct a question to that person.

“I want to call your attention to the page in your course book called ‘Guidelines for the Weekly Facilitator.’ You may want to review them when it’s your turn to facilitate a class.

“Now that you have an idea of what we mean by an opening and by facilitating the discussion, I will pass around a sheet for you to volunteer for those tasks during future classes. Go ahead and double up on the opening assignments, if necessary, so everyone has a chance to participate. ”

“After the opening, each session will start with a circle question. It will get the class into the topic of the day. The experience is for everyone to share a story and be listened to – it is not a time for response to someone’s story....”



- **Planning.** “If there are no questions on what I’ve mentioned so far, we can continue now to plan for future classes. If you haven't signed up yet to lead an opening and to be a facilitator, please do so. And we should confirm the dates for each of the future meetings.”

“I see that Gary has volunteered to bring the opening next week, but no one has signed up to facilitate the third week. Who would be willing to do that? Sharon? Great. Everyone be sure to complete the reading materials for next week and preview the questions. We will meet back here next Monday evening – same place, same time.”

“Also, did you all have a chance to put your name and address on the Class Registration Sheet? I would like to take that with me.

“At our final meeting I will collect your evaluations as well as any verbal feedback you have at that time. I will also present opportunities for you to continue meeting after the formal course is over. I think you will find the options to be very interesting.

“It looks like the class is off to a good start. Any questions?”



## B. FIRST SESSION CHECKLIST

- Take the following materials with you: 1) opening, 2) your copy of the course book, 3) Class Registration Form, 4) Class Schedule Form for openings and facilitators, and 5) this checklist.
- Arrive five minutes early. Greet each person as he or she arrives.
- Introduce yourself and explain your role.
- Introductions around the circle - name & something personal. Give your answer first. (Jot down a seating chart with the names of group members.)
- Suggest how group members can assure the success of the class. 1) Attend every meeting, and show up on time for the opening. 2) Prepare for each class by doing the readings. 3) Maintain respect for everyone's opinions. 4) Seek clarity, not consensus.
- Call attention to the **Course Evaluation Form** in the course book. Stress the value when participants make notes on this form each week.
- Circulate **Class Registration Form** (address, email & ph #). This information is not given to other groups. It is used only for G.A.L.A.'s records.
- Opening - explain what it is and its two purposes. Do one.
- Explain Role of Facilitator. Show them where to find the "Guidelines for the Weekly Facilitator," at the front of the course book.
- Circulate **Course Schedule Form** – Sign up for facilitator & opening.
- Confirm details for your group's ongoing classes: dates, times, venue
- Confirm details of your Celebration: decide whether it will be part of your last class, or a separate event, potluck, date, time, venue
- Keep an eye on the time
- Stop the discussion a few minutes before the class is scheduled to end.
- Make sure that the Class Registration Form is filled out. Take it with you.
- Make sure that the Course Schedule Form is filled out. Take it with you.
- Confirm the opening and facilitator for the next meeting.
- Confirm the time and place for the next meeting.
- Thank everyone for participating - end on time.



## C. ORGANIZER'S FINAL SESSION CHECKLIST

- G.A.L.A. Study Circles typically separate the final session from the Celebration which is usually an event held in one of the participant's home at a mutually agreeable date and time after the course has concluded.
- Bring the following with you to a final session: 1) handouts on follow-up options, 2) new contacts sheet, , and 3) this checklist.
- Conduct the final class as per previous sessions and aim to close earlier to complete the additional details set out below.
- Collect the evaluations.
- Verbal evaluations—"If you could change just one thing. . . ." Make a note of these to hand back to G.A.L.A.
- Ideas for follow-up:
  - **Another G.A.L.A. Study Circle (Our favorite option.)**
  - Other activities (hikes, field trips, joining a watershed group, or . . .)
- Discuss a time and place for Celebration
- Circulate new Contact Sheet to capture contact details of individuals who might be willing to be an Organizer for a future Study Circle in their workplace, church or home etc.
- Closing Gratitude Circle—ask participants to share something they are grateful for about the experience they have had in the course.



## D. STUDY CIRCLE CLASS REGISTRATION FORM

This information is for G.A.L.A. and NWEI use only, and is not shared with any other organization. The local organizer will circulate this sheet during the first regular class session. Thank you.

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

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NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
PHONE (H) \_\_\_\_\_ (W) \_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_



## A WORLD OF HEALTH: CONNECTING PEOPLE, PLACE, AND PLANET COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
Redefining Health	_____	_____	_____
Eating Well	_____	_____	_____
Cleaning House	_____	_____	_____
Building Healthy Communities_____	_____	_____	_____
Curing Consumption	_____	_____	_____
Healthy People, Healthy Planet_____	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration _____	_____	_____	_____
		(Planner)	(Planner)



## VOLUNTARY SIMPLICITY COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
The Meaning of Simplicity	_____	_____	_____
Living More with Less	_____	_____	_____
Your Money or Your Life	_____	_____	_____
Do You Have the Time?	_____	_____	_____
Living Simply and Sustainably	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	_____	_____
		(planner)	(planner)



## CHOICES FOR SUSTAINABLE LIVING COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
A Call to Sustainability	_____	_____	_____
Ecological Principles	_____	_____	_____
Communities	_____	_____	_____
Business & Economy	_____	_____	_____
Food	_____	_____	_____
Buying	_____	_____	_____
Home, Health, and Leisure	_____	_____	_____
Visions of Sustainability	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	_____	_____
		(planner)	(planner)



## DISCOVERING A SENSE OF PLACE COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
A Sense of Place	_____	_____	_____
Responsibility to Place	_____	_____	_____
Knowing Your Bioregion	_____	_____	_____
Living in Place	_____	_____	_____
Mapping Your Place	_____	_____	_____
Building Local Community	_____	_____	_____
Empowerment	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	(planner)	(planner)



## RECONNECTING WITH EARTH COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
Wild Nature	_____	_____	_____
Shifting Paradigms	_____	_____	_____
Nature & Spirit	_____	_____	_____
The Universe Story	_____	_____	_____
Ecopsychology	_____	_____	_____
Bringing It Down to Earth	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	_____	_____
		(planner)	(planner)



## CHANGE BY DEGREES: ADDRESSING THE CLIMATE CHALLENGE COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
Off Course	_____	_____	_____
Collision Course	_____	_____	_____
Changing Course	_____	_____	_____
Setting a New Course	_____	_____	_____
The Big Picture	_____	_____	_____
How to Plug In	_____	_____	_____
Final meeting - Celebration	_____	_____	_____
		(planner)	(planner)



## MENU FOR THE FUTURE COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
What's Eating America	_____	_____	_____
Anonymous Food	_____	_____	_____
Farming for the Future	_____	_____	_____
You Are What You Eat	_____	_____	_____
Towards a Just Food System	_____	_____	_____
Choices for Change	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	_____	_____
		(planner)	(planner)



## HUNGRY FOR CHANGE: FOOD, ETHICS, AND SUSTAINABILITY COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
The First Bite	_____	_____	_____
Politics of the Plate	_____	_____	_____
A Healthy Appetite	_____	_____	_____
Just Food	_____	_____	_____
Eating for Earth	_____	_____	_____
Hungry for Change	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	(planner)	(planner)



## SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS AT WORK COURSE SCHEDULE

This sheet should be filled out at the introductory session of the class. Two volunteers are needed for each future session: (1) someone to bring an opening and (2) the facilitator. The class Organizer should email this schedule to each participant after it is filled in.

Class Organizer / Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location for future meetings: \_\_\_\_\_

<u>CLASS SESSIONS</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>OPENING</u>	<u>FACILITATOR</u>
Seeing the Big Picture	_____	_____	_____
Taking a Closer Look	_____	_____	_____
Framing Sustainability	_____	_____	_____
Seeing it Through	_____	_____	_____
Focusing on Action	_____	_____	_____
Final Meeting – Celebration	_____	(planner)	(planner)





## G. NWEI COURSE OFFERINGS

**Hungry for Change: Food, Ethics and Sustainability:** A six-session discussion course that explores the interconnected nature of food systems and our relationship to them.

**A World of Health: Connecting People, Place, and Planet:** A six-session discussion course that explores "good health," the connections between human health and the environment, and how we can sustain both.

**Sustainable Systems at Work:** A five-session discussion course for the workplace, designed to further organizational sustainability initiatives.

**Change by Degrees: Addressing the Climate Challenge:** A six-session discussion course exploring the history and science of global warming, personal values, and habits as they relate to climate change, and personal actions to curb the effects of global warming.

**Choices for Sustainable Living:** A seven-session discussion course exploring the meaning of sustainable living and the ties between lifestyle choices and their impact on ecological systems.

**Menu for the Future:** A six-session discussion course exploring the connection between sustainability and our personal food choices.

**Voluntary Simplicity:** A five-session discussion course addressing the distractions of modern society that keep us from caring for ourselves, our relationships, and the environment.

**Discovering a Sense of Place:** A seven-session discussion course focusing on knowing and protecting our place.

**Reconnecting with Earth:** A six-session discussion course addressing core values and how they affect the way we view and treat the earth.



## STUDY CIRCLE – PRESS RELEASE SAMPLE



### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Contact:** Josh Arnold, 603-539-6460, [josh@galacommunity.org](mailto:josh@galacommunity.org)



After the excitement of the holidays, you may finally have some time for yourself, so come along and join in G.A.L.A.'s first Study Circle group for the new year. "*Hungry for Change*" explores the true meaning of the phrase "you are what you eat." In a six-session schedule, this discussion course challenges participants to examine their roles, not only as consumers of food, but also as creators — of food, of systems, and of the world we all share. Each session includes readings, short assignments and accompanying group discussion questions that address the impact of individual food choices on a range of issues, including ecosystem health, the treatment of factory and farm workers, and the global economy. *Hungry for Change* participants are also invited to commit to lasting change by developing and sharing personal action plans with each session.

Study Circles are a great way to come together with other community members in an informal, yet inquisitive, atmosphere to deeply explore issues of social and environmental concern. The discussion courses provide an enjoyable, supportive setting in which to examine personal values and habits, engage in stimulating conversation, create meaningful community, and consider ways to take action towards creating a more sustainable future. There is no outside presenter or teacher of these discussion courses. Rather, anyone can organize a group in their community with the role of facilitator rotating with each group meeting.

Be sure to reserve your spot in this Study Circle today as limited spaces fill fast. The group will meet 7:00 to 8.30pm on Thursdays at a meeting space above the Made on Earth shop on North Main Street in downtown Wolfeboro, January 5th through February 9th. Course books are \$25. **Contact Josh Arnold to reserve your spot by emailing [josh@galacommunity.org](mailto:josh@galacommunity.org) or calling 603-539-6460**