

Virtue – Silence

שְׁתִּיקָה

Shtee-kah / silence
noun / si•lence / 'sī-lən(t)s
a lack of sound or noise

Guide For Your Circle

1

ICE - BREAKER

Ask each person to introduce themselves, and to share with the group:

(a) their name; and

(b) a part of their day they would like to bring with them as they begin this conversation, and/or a part of their day they would like to leave behind

2

RECAP LAST MONTH'S VIRTUE

Ask the group to reflect on how they fared with their commitment from the last month

- Did you achieve your commitments around this virtue?
- What challenges did you face?
- What surprised you about the experience?
- Did your understanding of the virtue change over the month?

3

DISCUSS NEXT MONTH'S VIRTUE

Compare Ben Franklin's definition of the virtue with the passage from Pirkei Avot. Use the questions below to help guide the conversation.

4

MAKE YOUR COMMITMENT:

Before your meeting ends, set a goal for yourself for how you can better live that month's virtue. Share it with the group and plan to follow up on how you did at your next meeting.

Example: For silence, could you commit to spending 15 minutes in silent reflection every evening for one month?

Side-By-Side: Ben Franklin And Pirkei Avot

BEN FRANKLIN'S DEFINITION:

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself. Avoid trifling conversation.

PIRKEI AVOT

(PA 1:17)

Shimon his son said, "All my life I have grown up among the Sages, and I have found nothing better for a person but silence. And the expounding of the Law is not the most important thing but the practice of it; and whoever speaks excessively causes sin."

Questions To Ask The Group

- What are both Ben Franklin and Pirkei Avot suggesting about the value of silence?
- Does our culture value silence?
- Do you think silence is a Jewish virtue? Why?
- Do you make time for silence each day? How?
- Describe a moment when you wish you had been silent but weren't. What were the results?