

Small Group Ministry Covenant of Right Relationship

Group Agreements and Guidelines to Meet Our Needs and Support Our Values

Within the group

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Begin and end on time.
- Have a strong commitment to attend every session.
- Let the facilitator know when you will not attend.
- Practice respectful listening and sharing of "air time" by listening to each person's check in and sharing of the topic without interruption or cross talk (silent empathy).
- The facilitator and group members will call the group back to the covenant when needed.
- Respect the right to pass. A person may choose to talk later, or to sit/share in silence.

Empathy and Understanding

- Speak from personal experience and use "I" statements.
- Refrain from giving advice or trying to fix problems (yours or someone else's).

Trust and Safety

- Confidentiality: keep what is shared in the group within the group. The facilitator is considered to be a "mandatory reporter" to appropriate authorities for suspected abuse or neglect of vulnerable people, or other risks for people's safety.
- Follow the meeting format. It provides a safe and predictable environment.

Learning and Contribution

- Remember we are all learners and teachers.

From the group to the church

Respect, Consideration, and Support

- Affirm and promote the principles of the Unitarian Universalist Association and the UUCE mission statement.
- Do a service project for the church or the larger community.

From the church to the group

Nurturance and Support

- Provide the organizational and logistical support to maintain the Small Group Ministry program.

Optional Meeting Strategies

- Use a "talking stick or object" to indicate who is talking and when the person is finished.
- Indicate when one is done talking with a gesture or a phrase such as "I am finished".
- For time management consider having a clock visible to the person speaking for self-monitoring of time, or have a timekeeper or use a timer to indicate when the allotted time for a person's sharing is reached.
- Save time for response and dialog after all have shared.

Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Small Group Ministry Program

[Revised by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee (Rev. Stephen A. Ames, Brian Lewis, Dick Loescher, Leora White) 9/23/09]