

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.
- Consider the option of having a time of silence, perhaps up to 30 seconds or so, after each person has shared to allow for reflection, and to allow people to think about comments or questions they may want to bring up during the open discussion after all have shared.

Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene

Small Group Ministry Program

Revised by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee (Laura Adams, Dick Loescher [chair], Sandy Moses, Leora White) 9/16/10