

Notes to the Leader for Session M145 – Creating A Small Group Ministry Covenant

About This Topic

“Some religious groups ask a creedal question, “What do we all believe in common?” In Unitarian Universalism we instead ask the questions:

- What hopes do we share?
- What promises are we willing to make to realize these hopes?
- How shall we treat each other on the way?

It is the answer to these questions that define what membership in this congregation means. It is these promises we make that define what our commitment is, both to each other and to our larger movement. These promises define our covenant; these promises define the foundation of why we come together each week.” -Rev. Margo McKenna

Materials Needed

Notes will need to be taken when people are responding to the questions in the Order of Worship’s *Creating A Small Group Ministry Covenant*. It would be ideal to write them on newsprint (one per question) so every body can see the responses. (Or ask someone to be the note taker and report back to the group when everyone’s finished.) Provide some silent time between questions so people can collect their thoughts. Let people respond to each question from a deep listening place without comment from group members. After the group has gone through all the questions invite them to merge them into one covenantal statement; deciding *democratically* what should/should not be included in the final statement.

Report Back to the Leadership Group

We encourage you to bring back to the leadership group your covenantal statements and any ideas, comments, or issues that came from your small group.

Session Attendance and Preparation—It’s Really Important

Please do whatever you can to encourage your members to attend the session and to read the preparation sheet. Please distribute the preparation sheet at the end of the prior session and make sure absent members receive a copy. Have extra copies available at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring their copies.

Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Also, remind members of the next meeting date. Get volunteers to light the chalice and make sure people have copies of the preparation sheet that includes the FAQ’s that will be read in round robin fashion around the group.

Discussion

When the group is ready to decide on their final SGM Covenant tell the group that the spirit of this covenant and their affirmation of it is more important than getting bogged down in wordsmithing. If someone wants to clean up the language then invite him or her to take it home and bring back a proposed revision for the next meeting.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track.

preliminaries	2 minutes	discussion	20 minutes
opening	3 minutes	singing	3 minutes
check-in	15 minutes	unison reading	1 minute
reading around the circle	5 minutes	closing	2 minutes
deep listening	60 minutes	<u>total</u>	<u>approx. 111 minutes</u>

Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation sheet for the next session.