

## Now It's Your Turn!!

- What are some non-congregational sites where you have led small groups?
- What were some of the unexpected benefits and positive outcomes of your experience?
- What challenges have you faced?
- How did you perhaps modify the core structure of a SGM session for these settings?
- How did you handle the service component of SGM for these settings?
- What is your counsel to facilitators considering small group in these settings?
- Describe your “best moment” in one of these groups.
- Describe your “most surprising moment” in one of these groups.
- What are your hopes for SGM in non-congregational settings?

## About the Network

The Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network is a grassroots organization of UU congregations, small group ministry or covenant groups, group leaders, and participants that coordinates information from many sources and encourages networking to enhance the development of Small Group Ministry, also called Covenant Groups, and known by various names in congregations. Our network is dedicated to creating healthy congregations and a vital Unitarian Universalist movement by supporting and promoting Small Group Ministry.

**Connect with us on our website**  
**<http://www.smallgroupministry.net>**

**Questions? Contact us at**  
**[office@smallgroupministry.net](mailto:office@smallgroupministry.net)**



## Bringing Small Group Ministry Out Into the World

UU SMALL GROUP  
MINISTRY NETWORK

[www.smallgroupministry.net](http://www.smallgroupministry.net)

## **Bringing SGM Out Into the World**

Small Group Ministry (SGM) changes individuals, transforms congregations, and moves our faith beyond congregational boundaries. Where in the world can SGM happen?

Possibilities include:

- Institutions where people may feel isolated and forgotten, and are underserved;
- Places where people with specific conditions or challenges gather;
- Other venues of connection around common issues and concerns

SGM is moving out into the world. We want to hear your story of making this happen. Are you moving SGM in a state psychiatric hospital, a retirement home, on a campus, in a prison, elsewhere?

We're bringing this powerful model out into the world! What is your story of the covenant group model in retirement settings, a state psychiatric hospital, campus ministry, prison and other settings?

## **From an article by the same title published Spring 2015 SGM Journal**

In our contemporary American society, many folks are profoundly hungry for an opportunity for community and deep spiritual conversations, yet they are not able to or are not interested in attending Sunday morning worship and are unlikely to step through the doors of our congregations. We can bring the opportunity for community and spiritual growth through small groups out into the community!

By offering these powerful groups in varied settings, we are reaching diverse demographic groups, including seniors in retirement homes, students on college campuses, folks labeled with mental illness, people in prisons or jails, and those attending trainings for cross-cultural understanding. The foundational components of small group ministry are focused on creating a respectful, non-coercive, welcoming environment for all participants. These foundational aspects of small groups include clear purpose, format, and ground rules or relational agreements.

Partnership is the essence of this endeavor. Imagine congregations partnering with new applications for covenant groups in the community.

Many of our congregations have had small group ministry for a decade or more and thus have cadres of seasoned, savvy facilitators. They love small group ministry and are eager for a new challenge, but they don't know what that might be. They respond with enthusiasm to the idea of building a relationship with an organization or institution outside of the congregation and beginning to offer a covenant group there. Many of our small group leaders are ready for this.

The goals of covenant groups are Intimacy and Ultimacy, or Friendship and Spiritual Growth. The fact that spirituality is at the heart of covenant groups is what makes them so powerful and compelling. People in institutions such as mental health facilities or prisons are often isolated, forgotten, and underserved. They have profound needs for friendship and spiritual exploration that are not being met. When we bring covenant groups to these diverse settings, we are making significant steps toward bringing a message of hope, love, and inclusion.

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