

Family Covenant Groups

*By Susannah Krug, UU Community Church of Washington County, Hillsboro, Oregon
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For three years now, I've been the facilitator for the Family Covenant Group at UU Community Church of Washington County in Hillsboro, OR. Due to busy young families' schedules, we find it impossible to meet twice a month. Therefore, we meet eight times a year for three hours on a Saturday evening. We have childcare for the first two hours which serves as our session time. During the last hour we have a family potluck dinner and socialize with each other. Our kids and families have grown much closer with this format.

To maximize participation, we are more flexible with attendance than most groups. We find that husbands are often reluctant to commit to coming every time, while wives feel they are taking away valuable family time when they attend without their spouse. In general, if there is no representation from a family for more than two months, I gently advise them to rejoin in the future when they feel they can commit more fully to attendance.

At the first group meeting, I help everyone get to know each other, establish the covenant, and offer three or four topic themes for consideration. At the end of the first session, we vote on which theme we want to focus on for the year. Last year it was Sustainability and the year before it was Parenting Through UU Principles. The Family Covenant Group is very popular at UCCWC and remains one of the longest-running groups at our congregation.

-Taken from the Small Group Ministry Network
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