

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene
Small Group Ministry Program

Building Community. Getting Acquainted. SGM Program and Covenant Review.

Lesson plan session January 2012

CHALICE OR CANDLE LIGHTING OR SOUND A CHIME (2 to 3 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

Welcome to this special time and place where we seek: to share openly and honestly; to be heard and understood; to listen with care, compassion, and understanding; to explore, learn, and grow; and to deepen our connections with ourselves and each other. May our time together be mutually enriching.

CHECK-IN (up to 20 to 30 minutes total with up to 2 to 3 minutes per person, without interruption: name, how long associated with UUCE and Unitarian Universalism, prior SGM experience, and how you are feeling at present)

WELCOME AND REVIEW OF THE SGM PROGRAM (25 minutes)

-Review structure and format of the groups (as described in the SGM pamphlet and training manual).

-Hand out and review the SGM Covenant of Right Relationship with Why a Covenant on the back.

Consider having each person read a line of the covenant and then ask for questions and comments at the end of each section. In particular, it is important to discuss confidentiality and what that means to people and to get agreement about this.

-Mention the service project.

BREAK-optional (5 minutes)

TOPIC AND SHARING (45 to 50 minutes including the reading, the questions, the sharing, and optional open discussion at the end if the group agrees)

READING

The overall theme for the SGM program this year is building community. We will be sharing about how we as individuals attempt to meet our own needs, and how well we meet the needs of others in our communities. We will also consider how our communities operate, and how well our communities and the individuals in them meet our needs. Additionally, we will look at how it may increase understanding to consider what needs people are trying to meet by different belief systems and practices.

Nonviolent (Compassionate) Communication (NVC), as written about by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D., and many others, has some basic assumptions that we will be using in our sessions.

1. All human beings have the same basic needs. The ways in which these needs are met vary widely.
2. All human actions are attempts to meet needs.
3. Feelings (emotions and bodily sensations) are the result of needs being met (satisfied: calm, confident, grateful, happy, loving, and many others), or needs not being met (unsatisfied: afraid, angry, confused, disappointed, unhappy, and many others).
4. People naturally enjoy contributing to others when they can do so willingly (“helper’s high”).

Needs also at times could be called values, priorities, or what is very important. There are many different lists of needs and ways of categorizing them. For descriptive purposes it is useful to separate needs into physical well-being needs and psychological/social well-being needs, although doing so is somewhat artificial and arbitrary because there is much overlap.

Examples of physical well-being needs include: air, water, food, shelter, clothing, protection, safety, sexual expression, touch, movement, exercise, rest, and others.

Examples of psychological/social well-being needs include the following.

- Autonomy: choice, individuality, space, and others.
- Connection: community, empathy, love, mutuality, and others.
- Honesty: authenticity, presence, trust, and others.
- Meaning: celebration, clarity, learning, purpose, service, and others.
- Peace: beauty, equality, hope, order, security, and others.
- Play: adventure, joy, and others.

Additional information about Nonviolent Communication is available from the Center for Nonviolent Communication, www.cnvc.org, and from the book, *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, by Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

QUESTIONS (Give a piece of paper and writing implement to each person and allow a few minutes for people to make notes before sharing)

1. What would you like to share about yourself with the group, including if you wish, where you are on your life journey and what communities you are part of?
2. What do you hope to gain from and offer to this SGM group?

SHARING (up to 3 to 6 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (service project, future meeting dates and topics, etc.) (5-10 minutes)

- Confirm future meeting dates, time, place, and topic.
- Ask people if they want the lesson plans for subsequent sessions, if available, sent to them ahead of time (electronically or by paper mail) for reflection. Ask those with e-mail access if they can open attachments or if they need all information sent in the body of the e-mail.
- Ask people to review the contact list for any corrections needed. If agreeable to group members arrange to provide a list of group members and their contact information to each person by handing out a list and/or sending it by e-mail or paper mail (today or at the next session).

LIKES (celebrations, gratitudes, appreciations for needs met) and WISHES (mournings, requests, acknowledgements of needs not met)/CHECK-OUT (a few words or phrases from each who wants to share, up to 5 minutes total)

CLOSING WORDS (2 minutes for this and closing listed below)

Thank you for risking sharing and for being present as we embark on our journey together.

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (option of some additional closing ritual per group agreement such as holding hands, group hug, bow to each other, hum or sing, or other ritual)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring: the SGM Facilitator Training Manual; a copy of the SGM pamphlet; copies of the SGM Covenant of Right Relationship with Why a Covenant on the back to give to each person; blank paper and writing implements for each person; a copy of the list of group members with contact information; and your calendar/date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Laura Adams; Dick Loescher, chair; Sandy Moses; Leora White), and Rev. Alicia Forsey. 11/17/11