

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website
Small Group Ministry Program
Family Milestones
Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR

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

MOMENT OF SILENCE

OPENING WORDS

For none of us ever really walks in another's shoes or knows the innermost rooms of a person's heart. None of us truly knows the lonely places of another's journey or the causes of the lines around another's eyes. Therefore, let us be gentle with one another. Let us listen more than we speak and accept more than we judge. Let our open, outstretched hands reach and touch that we may walk along together for a little while in friendship and in trust.

-Elizabeth Tarbox

CHECK-IN (up to 20 to 30 minutes total with up to 2 to 3 minutes per person)

TOPIC AND SHARING (up to 70 minutes for readings, questions, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, optional open discussion at the end if the group agrees, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

READINGS

Families are about caring for people, about feeding and sheltering the young, the old and the needy. In addition to these roles, families have had two other major roles—to protect and to socialize. In today's families those two roles are often at odds with each other. To protect is not to socialize and vice versa. Parents must figure out how to protect their children from values that are harmful to their well-being, and they must help their children connect with a meaningful world outside the family.

...Families, whether biological or chosen, are what give most people's lives their shape. They produce enormous pain and joy and all the emotions in between for their members. Most of our happiest and most tragic experiences are somehow connected with family. Families are flawed, complex, intense organic units whose members often fail each other in important ways. But family affection is the glue that holds lives together.

-Mary Pipher, UU author

QUESTIONS (Please respond to whichever question or questions you feel moved to answer. It is not necessary to respond to all of the questions. You may also respond to any of the readings that you find to be particularly meaningful.)

1. What have been important milestones in your family of origin?
2. Share about your current family.
3. What insights have you gained from family experiences?

SHARING (up to 6 to 8 minutes each without interruption, depending on the time available, with optional open discussion at the end after all have shared)

ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS (up to 5-10 minutes). Alternatively, this agenda item can be done after the check-in, if the group decides to do that.

-Confirm next meeting date, time, location, and topic.

-Consider discussing the service project.

-Other

Page 2 Family Milestones

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 words, and closing)

Hold on to what we have created, and keep a picture in your mind's eye. Hold onto the connections we are developing, even if they seem invisible. Hold onto the promise that we will meet again in a valued space and time.

-Adapted from "Small Group Ministry For Youth", by Helen Zidowecki

EXTINGUISH THE CHALICE OR CANDLE OR SOUND A CHIME (and additional optional closing ritual if agreed to)

(Preparation for the facilitator. Please bring the SGM Facilitator Training Manual, paper and writing implements, the session plan, and your calendar/date book.)

Session plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry steering committee (Lyn Fischrup; Bonnie Koenig; Al Landy; Dick Loescher, chair).

October 19, 2013