

Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website  
SMALL GROUP MINISTRY  
**On Family**

Main Line Unitarian Church, Devon, PA, March 2004

Opening Words & Chalice Lighting: From Jean Illsley Clarke

“What families have in common the world around is that they are the places where people learn who they are and how to be that way.”

Reflection/Personal Sharing/Prayer (approximately 30 minutes)

(The facilitator should briefly remind the group of confidentiality/anonymity, that this is not the time for cross conversation, etc.)

Focus Readings: From May Sarton

“Family Life! The United Nations is child’s play compared to the tugs and splits and need to understand and forgive in any family.”

From Lillian Breslow Rubin

“The family as an institution is both oppressive and protective and, depending on the issue, is experienced sometimes one way, sometimes the other—often in some mix of the two—by most people who live in families.”

From Chesterton

“The family is a good institution because it is uncongenial. The men and women who, for good reasons and bad, revolt against the family, are, for good reasons and bad, revolting against humankind. Aunt Elizabeth, is unreasonable, like humankind. Papa is excitable, like humankind. Our younger brother is mischievous, like humankind. Grandpapa is stupid, like the world; he is old, like the world.”

From George Bernard Shaw

“If you cannot get rid of the family skeleton, you may as well make it dance.”

Focus Questions:

What was your family like as you were growing up?

What did you dislike, like, about them?

What lessons did you learn from them? Positive ones? Negative ones?

How does your family of origin express itself through you now?

What does family mean to you?

How has your need for family changed over time?

Checkout/Likes and Wishes

(This is the time for facilitators to ask participants what they liked about this meeting and what they might wish for future meetings. This is also the time for any discussion of logistics.)

Closing Words & Extinguishing Chalice: From George Odell

“We need one another when we mourn and would be comforted.

We need one another when we are in trouble and afraid.

We need one another when we are in despair, in temptation, and need to be recalled to our best selves again.

We need one another when we would accomplish some great purpose, and cannot do it alone.

We need one another in the hour of success, when we look for someone to share our triumphs.

We need one another in the hour of defeat, when with encouragement we might endure, and stand again.

We need one another when we come to die, and would have gentle hands prepare us for the journey.

All our lives we are in need, and others are in need of us.”