

**Unitarian Universalist Small Group Ministry Network Website**  
**Small Group Ministry**  
**“Relationship with our families”**  
**Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, OR**

**Chalice or candle lighting or sound a chime** (2 minutes for this and silence and opening words)

**Moment of silence**

**Opening words**

We look forward to our time together to deepen our understanding, to kindle our compassion, to be strengthened, and to be open to new possibilities.

**Check-in** (up to 20 to 30 minutes, with 2 to 3 minutes each)

**Topic and sharing** (up to 70 minutes for reading, questions, a few minutes for reflection and making notes if desired, individual sharing, and optional discussion at the end, with an optional 5 minute break about midway in the session)

**Reading**

“Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in.”

-From Robert Frost’s poem “Death of the Hired Man”.

“The family. We were a strange little band of characters trudging through life sharing diseases and toothpaste, coveting one another's desserts, hiding shampoo, borrowing money, locking each other out of our rooms, inflicting pain and kissing to heal it in the same instant, loving, laughing, defending, and trying to figure out the common thread that bound us all together.”

-Erma Bombeck

Marsha Norman, in her 1983 play “Night, Mother,” wrote, “Family is just accident...They don’t mean to get on your nerves. They don’t even mean to be your family, they just are.” On the one hand we have the image of “family” in which blood is “thicker than water.” On the other we have the idea that “family is just accident” and that one’s “true family” is the people with whom our lives most intimately touch, whether they are related to us by birth or not.

-Adapted from Rev. Glenn H. Turner

**Questions**

1. What do you appreciate about your family of origin and what do you wish had been different? Why? How do those experiences affect you now?
2. What would you like to share about your current family?
3. Which needs are met with your biological family and which with your “chosen extended family”?
4. What family traditions are particularly meaningful to you? Why?
5. What has been your experience attempting to balance relationships and responsibilities within the family and those outside the family? What has worked well and not so well?
6. How does your family impact others and the world and how do others and the world impact your family?

**Sharing** (up to 6 to 8 minutes each, depending on the time available, with time at the end for comment and discussion if the group wishes)

**Administrative matters (service project, future meeting dates and topics, etc.)** (up to 5 to 10 minutes)

**Likes (celebrations, gratitudes, thank you, appreciation for needs met) and wishes (mournings, requests, please, acknowledgement of needs not met)/check-out** (up to 5 minutes total)

**Closing words** (2 minutes for words and closing)

We are grateful for this community, for the opportunity to listen and to learn, and for the making and deepening of friendships. May we support one another on our journeys.

**Extinguish the chalice or candle or sound a chime (and optional closing ritual)**

(Preparation for facilitator: bring the SGM facilitator training manual, paper and writing implements, the lesson plan, and your date book.)

Lesson plan prepared by the Small Group Ministry Steering Committee curriculum subcommittee (Rev. Steve Landale, Dick Loescher, Leora White) 2-11-09