



SMALL GROUP MINISTRIES

Ministry

[Ministry]... is a quality of presence we bring that is grounded in our liberal faith. Singing and preaching, teaching and leading, caring and justice work are all ministries. It is what we do when we gather in community. – *Rev. Mark Morrison-Reed from Canadian Unitarian, Fall 2002*

There is a vitality, a life force that is translated through you in action. And because there is only one of you in all time, this expression is unique, and if you block it, it will never exist through any other medium and be lost.
- *Martha Graham*

Chalice Lighting (2 min.)

It starts when you care to act,
it starts when you do it again after they said no,
it starts when you say We and know who you mean,
and each day you mean one more.
- *Marge Piercy*

Introduction to Small Group Ministries and Tonight's Gathering (5 min.)

Opening Words (2 min.)

Small Group Ministries Intentions

We gather together in Small Group Ministries

- To discover and honor the inherent worth in ourselves and each other;
- To listen deeply to one another, hold each other in compassion, and feel ourselves equally heard and held in care and love;
- To journey together in spiritual practice and intellectual exploration as we continue along our own spiritual paths;
- To create a place, safe from fear of judgment, where we encourage each other to seek meaning and speak our personal truths, as we grow to understand them;
- To experiment with building, for ourselves and each other, the community to which we want to belong;
- To share the welcome we have received, and to use our understanding and experience of community, compassion, and deep respect in service to our congregation and the wider world;
- To celebrate our part in the wide interconnected and interdependent web of all existence.

Quiet Reflection (2 min.)

Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people cannot tell the difference. - *David Oxberg*

Sharing/Check-In (35 min.)

Please take about two minutes to share your name, something about why you are joining Small Group Ministries this year, and how you are doing in this moment—spiritually, emotionally, physically, etc.

Quiet Reflection (2 min.)

Let's join together in a few moments of shared silence, holding what each of us has spoken, as well as what remains unspoken, within this circle of fellowship. Let's honor the feelings of nervousness, anticipation, fear and excitement that come with starting something new.

Agreements (10 min.)

We will start with a common set of Agreements, and will have a chance to modify these as a group during our fifth gathering. Are there any other agreements that you feel would help create a safe, caring space where all of us can share equally?

Topic Readings
(3 min.)

Fellowship is being present with one another in the wordless, the unspoken, the ineffable. Fellowship is where we speak and live the highest we know, living with the knowledge that it is never as deep, as wide, or as high as we wish. Fellowship happens when there is a quality of relationship between and among human beings that beckons forth hidden possibilities. - *Adapted from the Starr King Ministry Catalog*

No matter what we do, we can make it our ministry. No matter what form our job or activity takes, the content is the same as everyone else's: we are here to minister to human hearts. If we talk to anyone, or see anyone, or even think of anyone, then we have to opportunity to bring more love into this universe. – *Marianne Williamson, A Return to Love*

Unitarian Universalism at its best it a way of looking at religious questions without requiring that *the* answer be found for everybody... There's a humble acceptance that I am not God. I am not the arbiter of these things, that the best I can be is a window through which the person that I'm with can get a glimpse of something, and I can only do that by being as completely loving to them as I can be, whoever they are and wherever they are. – *Rev. Kate Braestrup, from "Presence in the Wild," (Speaking of Faith, June 26, 2008)*

Break (10 min.)

You see, one of the secrets of life is that we are all ministers. We all have the ability to bless one another. It's true. But it is not easy. – *Webster Kitchell Howell*

Ministry is the whole community teaching the whole community what it means to love. – *John C. Morgan, Awakening the Soul: A Book of Daily Devotions*

Sharing/Deep Listening
(25 min.)

Speak about this topic in any way that is comfortable to you. If you choose to use the questions, focus on just one or two, as this will allow you to explore the topic in more depth.

- What would a truly shared Ministry look like to you?
- How does fellowship—being part of a community that is “present with one another”—affect your ability to Minister and to be ministered to?
- How is ministry currently part of your life? If there was time in your life when ministry played a larger or smaller role, how did this affect you?
- What feelings, beliefs, or hopes do you hold as you start this process of forming a new Small Group? What would you like to give or get from this shared Ministry?

Discussion
(10 min.)

This is a time to supportively respond to something another person said or to relate additional thoughts that may have occurred as others shared.

Likes & Wishes
(10 min.)

*What did you like about this gathering?
What would you like to see change at future gatherings?*

Announcements (2 min.)

**Closing Reading/
Extinguish Chalice**
(2 min.)

Let us bless and keep one another.
Let kindness rule in our hearts
And compassions in our lives.

May the quality of our lives be our benediction,
and a blessing to all whom we touch.

- *First stanza: John Morgan, second stanza: Philip Randall Giles
(from UUA Worship Web)*