



# SMALL GROUP MINISTRY

meaningful connections...10 people at a time  
FALL 2009/WINTER 2010 at First Unitarian Church



## PURPOSE

*To bring people into right relationship with each other and with the larger world. Members come together to share, develop friendships, and serve the larger community.*

## WHAT IS IT?

Small relational groups made up of five to ten people who meet twice a month to establish and nurture themselves in this community.

## WHAT HAPPENS AT A MEETING?

- About five minutes of people getting situated
- Chalice lighting and a short reading or piece of music
- A check-in. 45 minutes of sharing what is happening in your life. An opportunity to share for up to four minutes, without interruption. This is followed by 15 to 20 minutes for follow-up conversation.
- A discussion topic intended to promote reflective adult conversation is introduced by the facilitator. The group then discusses the topic for about an hour. The topics will be related to life's everyday questions similar to those raised by a good Sunday service.
- A checkout. An opportunity for people to share what they liked about the meeting and what they wish it could have been.
- Closing words/music

## WHO LEADS THE GROUP?

A trained facilitator will make sure that the group meetings begin and end on time, and that the group establishes a covenant of behavior, but all group members share the privilege and responsibility for helping the group to function. Early on, an apprentice facilitator may be designated as well.

## WHERE WILL THE GROUPS MEET?

Some will meet in members' homes, some will meet at church, some will do both. It all depends on the desires of the group.

## WHEN WILL THE GROUPS MEET?

The groups will meet twice a month for no more than two hours at a time. When participants enroll, they will select a regular time slot from among several options, such as 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesdays (7-9 p.m.); 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays (11 a.m.-1 p.m.); 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Mondays (3-5 p.m.), etc...

## CAN PEOPLE JOIN GROUPS AFTER THE ENROLLMENT PERIOD?

Absolutely! A key component of this program is that every group is open to new members. Once a group reaches more than 10 members, it may split, with the apprentice facilitator leading the newly formed group.

## CAN COUPLES BE IN THE SAME GROUP?

That's up to the couple.

## WHAT'S THE COMMITMENT?

Groups will meet from October 2009 to March 2010, when there will be another opportunity for people to regroup, if they desire. Each group will covenant to perform at least one service project of their choice for the church or larger community during the six-month period.

## WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT SMALL GROUP MINISTRY?

Visit the church website, [www.ucdsm.org](http://www.ucdsm.org), and click on "Small Group Ministry." There you will find a link to Rev. Stringer's March 2002 sermon "Meaningful Connections..." where he lays out the history of our program and more details about what SGM is intended to do. Also, SGM has averaged 80 members and friends of our church for each of the 15 six-month sessions of SGM, so if you ask around, chances are good you will meet someone familiar with the program.

## WILL CHILD CARE BE AVAILABLE?

We will offer child care during some meeting times. They will be designated on the enrollment form.

## DATES TO REMEMBER:

**Sunday, September 6:** Enrollment for the next session begins. Visit the SGM table in the foyer on Saturdays and Sundays for answers to your questions and an opportunity to enroll (or re-enroll).

**September 12 & 13:** Enrollment continues.

**September 19 & 20:** Final weekend for enrollment.

**October 1:** A new session of SGM begins!