



Frequently Asked Questions About Covenant Groups

Q1. What is the “covenant” in covenant groups?

A. As UU’s, the meaning of “covenant” is a verbal statement of *promise* between individuals who choose to bring a sense of community into their lives for the purpose of deepening their spiritual growth and their sense of connectedness within a circle of companions.

Q2. What do covenant groups do?

A. Covenant groups encourage people to talk, learn, work and play together over time. Members may tell their life stories, offer support, and engage in work to serve the larger community. Covenant groups offer expanded opportunities for growth, caring and connection within a congregation. The vast majority of small-group members also say their sense of the sacred has been profoundly influenced by their participation, and they have gained a deeper understanding of themselves. Covenant groups make churches stronger and more vibrant through these connections.

Q3. What happens at a covenant group?

A. The members, early in the group’s formation stage, create and agree to a set of covenants. During the body of the meeting, the group engages in experiencing, learning, discussion, planning, action, or reflection regarding whatever activity the group has agreed upon. Through the covenants, members *listen, listen and listen* and are *listened to* without judgment. Members are able to talk about deeply held beliefs in a setting in which everyone can express ideas freely.

Q4. What do people talk about?

A. Group practices vary; some decide together which topics to address, in some the facilitator leads each session; in others, that task is shared. Some of the topics may include: a call not taken, approval, failure, longing, pets, wilderness & wildness, fear and healing. Groups may choose their own order, direction and pace. There is also an expectation of relative privacy within the groups.

Q5. What is a covenant group like?

A. Six to ten people will gather to get to know each other more deeply and practice right relationships with each other and with the larger world. By coming to agreements (covenants) about how members will engage with each other, a sacred space is created. In that sacred space, we find reminders of the mystery, power and healing of that interconnected web in which we exist. Service projects are undertaken to extend the right relationship into the community as part of the work together. Success and struggles, ideas, feelings and beliefs will be shared and through these exchanges, closeness with others and a deeper spiritual sense often result.

Q6. Who is in the group?

A. The group will likely include some people you know and some you do not. It will include people with different ideas. It has ten or fewer members.

Q7. Who is welcome in covenant groups?

A. A covenant group may include members and friends of the church, as well as friends of theirs.

Q8. What is a covenant group NOT?

A. It is not a therapy group. While members often report feeling better connected and happier in their lives, covenant groups are not therapy groups. Covenant groups are not Bible study groups. Covenant groups offer connection, reflection, community and spiritual growth. They are not support groups, nor “cliques”—covenant groups are time limited, although members may wish to *rejoin* with others in a new group. Some covenant groups are designed to grow until they are full, then split into two groups that may continue the growth. In other groups, newcomers are welcomed until the group’s target size is reached.

Covenant Groups—
the best kept secret of our church!!!

