

UU Peacemaking Congregational Study Action Program - Small Group Session Plans

Some Tips for Small Group Facilitators

- The Small Group Session Plans use the standard Covenant Group format. Feel free to adapt them as needed if you are not doing a Covenant Group. 'Check-ins' refers to a time to share very briefly how one is doing or feeling, or new developments in one's life, in an ongoing group -- or in a new group, it can be a time for sharing one's name and response to a question such as 'What brought you to this group?' 'Check-outs/Likes and Wishes' is a time to share briefly something about the meeting that was appreciated and any suggestions for improvement. The Discussion portion should be the bulk of the meeting.
- Following are some suggested ground rules for the group, which you might want to read aloud if it is a new group.
 - o Listen respectfully to each speaker without interruption
 - o Keep an open mind, be open to new insights
 - o If you disagree, share what you believe rather than criticizing the other viewpoint
- To keep the group moving forward, you might want to specify a time frame for each section, such as 10 minutes for the check-ins, 60 minutes for the discussion, 10 minutes for the check-outs (or more or less depending on how much total time you have).
- If one person speaks at great length or tends to dominate the group, you might say something like, "Let's hear some other perspectives on that," or "Would anyone else like to comment?" If people are reticent, you could say occasionally, "Would anyone who has not spoken like to comment on that?"
- Encourage people to listen nonjudgmentally, and to speak from their own experience rather than abstract generalizations. It's helpful to model respectful listening and sharing your own experiences and views in a way that's respectful of others'.

*Prepared by Judy Morgan and Barbara Bates of the Peacemaking CSAI Core Team,
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