

## SGM Model and Myths

*By the UU Small Group Ministry Network Board of Directors*

### Small Group Ministry Model

1. Small Group Ministry (SGM) is intentional lay-led small groups (recommended maximum of 10 people) that focus on ministry.
2. These small groups build deep relationships (*intimacy*), foster spiritual exploration and search for meaning (*ultimacy*), and contribute to personal, congregational, and leadership growth.
3. Three agreements between the groups and the congregation provide the program's foundation: to abide by a set of relational ground rules called a *covenant*, to *welcome* new members into groups, and to engage in *service* to the congregation and the larger world.
4. Group leaders/facilitators are chosen and trained by the minister or coordinator and meet with the minister, coordinator, and other leaders for support and connection.
5. Groups use a standard format that includes opening words; personal check-in; reflection, sharing, and dialogue on a chosen topic; an ending check-out; and closing words.

These are the elements that are essential to small group ministry. Variations in how the basic elements may be implemented are outlined in the publication, *Implementing UU Small Group Ministry*, available on the Network website. The variations include program name, meeting place and frequency, group duration and composition, and session topic selection. *Variations are choices that individual congregations make in implementing the model, but they do not define small group ministry.*

### Myths of SGM

- Groups must dissolve after one church year.
- Only ministers can direct Small Group Ministry programs.
- Facilitators Meetings are covenant groups for the facilitators/Facilitators Meetings don't work.
- Groups grow larger than 10 members, then split.
- Groups meet once a month/Groups meet twice a month.
- Group meetings are cancelled when the facilitator is unable to attend.
- If you can't arrive on time, don't attend the SGM meeting
- If you don't have anything to say or share, you don't belong in SGM.
- No response to comments during topic sharing.
- Significant changes to the program cannot be made without a complete restart.
- Food is prohibited.
- A service project doesn't count if there is not 100% participation.

For details on these myths or for more information from the UUA please check:

[www.smallgroupministry.net](http://www.smallgroupministry.net).