

UUFA Committee/Team Charter Template

1. **Name of Committee or Team: Small Group Ministry (SGM)**
2. **General Purpose:**

To provide a venue for groups of 8-12 people to gather to discuss a topic of interest to them; to gain connections with those people within the group, and thereby create a stronger connection to the UUFA as a whole.

3. **Membership:** Specify the size (number of members). How is the committee/group formed (e.g. elected or appointed, and if so, by whom?). What are the requirements for committee membership? What is length of a committee member's service (e.g., can members serve only a set number of years)? How are vacancies filled? Is the minister, or other staff, or other leaders, involved in the committee/group (e.g., as *ex officio* members)? Can non-members of UUFA be members of the committee/group? Is there a fixed and/or maximum number of committee members? What is the selection process if more people are interested than there are slots available?

Membership of SGM is limited only by the number of groups that are able to be formed; this will depend on the number of people willing to serve as facilitators (2 per group). If more people sign up than there are groups, then new facilitators for different times/ places are sought. This happens during the weeks prior to the beginning of the program year.

As this is not a "committee," there are no requirements to join, but facilitators should be people who have been members of an SGM group and are committed to carrying on the program. There is also no length of time one can be a member of a group, though it is recommended that folks change groups occasionally in order to form new connections with people they may not know. Non-members of the fellowship can join SGM; this program is seen as a way to interest people in becoming members. Vacancies are filled within groups by offering two registrations per program year; one is in the summer/early fall, a second one in December/January.

4. **Leadership:** What are the leadership roles in the committee/group? E.g., chair, secretary, others? How is/are the leader(s) chosen? What are the responsibilities of the leader(s)?

The leadership roles are the facilitators for each group, plus at least one coordinator of the program, all of whom are volunteers. The coordinator is a person who has served as a SGM facilitator and is willing to take on the role.

The facilitators are responsible for setting up and reserving a time/place for meetings for their groups, being sure that the group has a topic and a person responsible for facilitating that topic (shared leadership) and that all "housekeeping" is done (email reminders, etc.).

The coordinator is responsible for acquiring facilitators for each group, setting up the schedule of meeting days/times/places, registration twice each year, training new facilitators, and organizing/leading the 3 or 4 meetings for facilitators each program year, as well as "trouble-shooting" issues that may arise. After registration ends, the coordinator usually seeks help from other SGM leaders to set up the groups.

5. Meetings:

How often does the committee/group meet?

How, when and where are committee meetings announced and to whom, e.g., Board, Leadership Council, Congregation?

How are committee meetings run, insuring that they are effective, creative, and community-building? How are decisions made (e.g. majority vote or consensus)? Are committee meetings open?

Each SGM group has its own schedule of meetings, though most groups meet twice each month for a couple of hours. Some groups meet year-round, while others do not meet or choose to do more “fun stuff” once a month during the summer. There is one group at present that meets once a month during the program year. Participants in the meetings should be registered as part of that group. The facilitators’ meetings (the “committee”) meets 3 times a year at present. These meetings are put on the UUFA calendar, and the coordinator sends out reminder emails to the facilitators.

All SGM meetings, including the facilitators’ meetings, should follow an SGM format that was developed when the program started at UUFA. Each group creates its own covenant at the beginning of the year. There should be these elements within each meeting:

- Chalice Lighting/Opening Words or reading
- Check-in/Sharing
- Topic/Dialogue
- Closing words
- Likes/Wishes/Housekeeping

During the check-in and at least a portion of the dialogue, others listen to the speaker without interruption, thus ensuring that folks who wish to be heard, are. This creates a feeling of trust, and most groups create a sense of community by following the format.

6. List the specific duties and responsibilities of the committee/group:

See #4 above.

7. Annual Goals, Objectives: (State how and when the committee will develop a set of goals for itself. Will the committee annually review its functions and duties?)

These are the goals that were developed in 2007, at the beginning of the program at UUFA. To my knowledge, they have not been updated.

GOALS: To develop a network of small groups that:

- a. Establish and build deep connections with one another;
- b. Cultivate intimate connections and form relationships;
- c. Provide an avenue for individuals’ spiritual growth and discovery;
- d. Discover a place providing meaning, intimacy, ultimacy;
- e. Expand our understanding of the Unitarian Universalist Principles;
- f. Draw the fellowship into a shared ministry;
- g. Challenge us to action;
- h. Help members identify their own gifts in expression of lay ministry to selves and others;
- i. Encourage community involvement;
- j. Cultivate leadership.

8. Accountability: (To whom is the committee or group accountable or answerable? The congregation, the Board, another committee, or perhaps the committee's/group's members only?)

SGM is accountable to the Lifespan Exploration lay minister, the Ministry Council, and the SGM members.

9. Reporting requirements (e.g., To whom does the committee/group provide reports? How often does it report?):

At present, the coordinator reports to the Lay Minister for Lifespan Development each month.

10. Relationship to professional staff and other committees/groups of UUFA: (State the explicit relationship of the committee/group to each member of the professional staff, and to any other committees/groups with which it has an important relationship.)

The SGM coordinator requests the administrator send the dues to the UU SGM network; the minister attends some of the facilitators' meetings, if requested; the coordinator sends a report each month to the lay minister.

11. Communications: List in what ways the committee/group communicates regularly with other committees/groups, the congregation, and the wider Athens community. State what presence the committee/group has or would like to have on the Fellowship's web site.

The coordinator is responsible for a monthly report to the Lifespan Exploration lay minister about issues, news, and events. In August, at two services, SGM members speak to those gathered about the program. There is no presence in the wider community. There is an SGM page on the fellowship's website at present; announcements concerning registration are made there and in other media.

12. What decision-making authority does the committee/group have? (e.g., communicate with groups outside UUFA, represent UUFA outside, create policies, etc.)

None, other than to create procedures for the groups.

13. Spending authorities: Does the committee/group have to request approval for any expenditures within its budget? Who will be authorized to sign for committee/group expenditures against the budget?

There is usually a line-item in the UUFA budget of \$100 for SGM, to be spent on dues for the UU SGM Network. The coordinator requests of the administrator the sending of the dues. The facilitators, coordinator, and members spend their own money for copies, food, etc.

Proposed charter submitted by (name and title):

Date: