

Small Group Fellowships at BUC

Do you want to deepen and enrich your spiritual exploration and development? Do you want to get to know others in the congregation better than is possible in services or coffee hours?

If so, the Small Group Fellowship program is designed for you. Groups are open to members and friends of Birmingham Unitarian Church.

Small groups offer community, inspiration, intellectual stimulation, fellowship, sharing of values, and support on our spiritual journeys.

Small groups meet twice a month for two hours. Some meet at the church and some in people's homes. They are scheduled day or evening to meet members' availability. Each group develops a covenant describing the guidelines they agree to follow during their meetings.

Each group has a facilitator and five to nine members. They delve into topics such as getting to know one another, deep listening, living our principles, happiness vs. joy, our religious paths, tolerance, and many others.

What is my commitment?

Groups are ongoing and most meet twice a month. We ask that people, after attending a couple of meetings and choosing to continue, agree to participate for at least one year. There is typically no homework, although some groups opt to study texts and do some reading between sessions. For the groups to flourish, it is important that you be present and give those in your group the extra concern and energy you would to a special friend. Group meetings are a time for listening and speaking in a safe environment free of advice giving. You are not expected to be wise or well informed, a great speaker, or a leader. You are only expected to be yourself.



Who will be in my group?

The ideal group includes old members and newcomers; someone you already know and like and someone you never expected to meet. Some people join groups that have been in existence for some time, while others form new groups when the demand arises. Diversity in group membership often leads to broader discussions and deeper growth. Although some couples prefer to be in a group together, remember that it is a place for individual growth and not a place for working on relationships.

What is the group format?

Topics for discussion vary widely from group to group, but the basic format they all follow is below. Many groups have snacks and informal conversation before or after their meetings.

Lighting the Chalice

Opening Words

Personal Check-In

Topic or Activity

Discussion

Personal Check-Out

Closing Words

Extinguishing the Chalice

How do I join a group?

Joining is easy. Just sign up in the "Small Group Joining Book" located in the church office. The book is arranged by day and time. Once 8 people have signed up for a specific day and time, a new group will be established.

Can I join an existing group?

Listings for groups looking for new members are the "Looking for Members" section of the "Small Group Joining Book." In this section you will find contact information for existing groups that need new members. If the day, time and place suit your schedule, contact the person listed. If you have further questions, please contact

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Ten Great Things About Small Groups

1. *Feeling included and accepted*
2. *Getting to know people more intimately*
3. *Being open to new ideas*
4. *Experiencing genuine interest*
5. *Having an anchor twice a month*
6. *Participating in a covenant to remain faithful and to return to each session*
7. *Holding confidential anything said in the group*
8. *Developing spiritually and speaking authentically in a group*
9. *Searching together with others for deeper meaning*
10. *Being in the presence of the wonderful diversity and experiences of other Unitarian Universalists*

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Small Group Fellowship



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