

Creating a Covenant with Your Group

Source: <https://www.uua.org/re/tapestry/adults/river/workshop1/175608.shtml>

Our Unitarian Universalist tradition is covenantal. Walter Herz offers this definition of a covenant: "the common understandings, agreements, and promises made, one to another, that define our mutual obligations and commitments to each other as we try to live our faith and vision."

How to Create a Covenant

Invite participants to suggest guidelines for how they will be with each other during these workshops. Use these questions and record responses:

What is important to you when working with this group?

Are there triggers or behaviors you would like us to avoid?

What makes a group enjoyable for you?

What structural elements are important to you for our gatherings?

On a new sheet of newsprint, rewrite the covenant title and list the agreed-on items. Combine items that are similar. Keep only the items to which everyone agrees. Read the covenant aloud and ask for verbal assent from each participant.

Save the written covenant to post in future meetings.

Examples

I/We will:

- Listen actively
- Suspend judgment
- Assume good intentions
- Start meetings promptly
- Be respectful
- Speak for yourselves
- Stay focused
- Speak one-at-a-time
- Seek understanding
- Seek the truth in love
- Live in the Principles

We, the members of the Growth Working Group, covenant to work together to accomplish our mission with the following assumptions, behaviors and commitments:

I/We will:

- Take responsibility for sharing tasks, by supporting committee decisions and by respecting the agenda and time constraints for meetings;
- Presume good faith;
- Seek the truth in love by engaging in open, caring, truthful and inclusive discussion with sensitivity and mutual respect;
- Suspend judgment by asking questions rather than making attributions;
- Speak for self;
- Listen actively by staying focused and without interrupting;
- Support UUSMV committees and workgroups by providing information and support rather than doing the work of those committees and workgroups.