

Notes to the Leader for Session G35 – Our Ministry in the Church Community

About This Topic

“We are not just ‘consumers’ of church; we must also be the builders.”
- Marie Houck

"In talking about ministry today, one never just means the professional clergy, but the mission and program of the church—its ministry... every task done, every group that meets, every committee that organizes, understands itself as a part of a ministry... Ministry is the heart and soul of [the] church for everyone."
- Barbara Wells, quoted in Salted With Fire: UU Strategies for Sharing Faith and Growing Congregations, edited by Scott W. Alexander.

This session, which follows G34 – The Need for Religious Community, focuses on what we as individuals can give back to the church community. The key idea is that every task done within the church, no matter how small, is a form of ministry. We not only worship together, we work together. Our consistent, sometimes *insistent*, encouragement of participation is what helps our church thrive.

If your group has new members or others who haven't participated in church life outside of regular worship or small groups, you can encourage them to think about their possible future “ministries.” They might want to query other group members about various programs and committees.

Report Back to the Leadership Group

We encourage you to take note during the session, as appropriate, and bring back to the leadership group any ideas, comments, or issues that came from your small group.

Session Attendance and Preparation—It's Really Important

Please do whatever you can to encourage your members to attend the session and to read the preparation sheet. Please distribute the preparation sheet at the end of the prior session and make sure absent members receive a copy. Have extra copies available at the gathering for people who have forgotten to bring their copies.

Preliminaries

Prior to beginning the session, take a few minutes to go over the announcements of church events given at the last leader meeting or from a recent church bulletin. Also, remind members of the next meeting date. Get volunteers to light the chalice, decide whether to sing or read the opening words, and lead the Responsive Reading (regular type, shown on the back cover).

Discussion

The discussion period is meant to allow group members to go deeper, share things they may have forgotten to share, and exchange ideas. It is important that people not comment on others' sharing except in a very supportive way.

Timekeeping

Use this timetable as an aid to keep the gathering on track.

preliminaries	2 minutes	deep listening	60 minutes
opening	3 minutes	discussion	15 minutes
check-in	15 minutes	singing	3 minute
responsive reading	5 minutes	closing	2 minutes
silence	5 minutes	<u>total</u>	<u>approx. 110 minutes</u>

Preparation for the Next Session

Make sure everyone gets a copy of the preparation sheet for the next session.