



What are Unity SpiritGroups?

Unity SpiritGroups are multi-dimensional, multi-faceted small group ministries that fulfill many needs within your ministry, including, but not limited to:

Engages your current membership. The first rule of any organization is to do what you can to engage and support those who are already members.

An easy, free, and instant connection for your new members and visitors thinking about joining your ministry. Let's face it, very few ministries are growing right now. Many people are looking for community. The best way to give them that is by offering a small group within that community that feels safe and accepts them exactly as they are.

Provides leadership training for all members. Each member helps the group flow by accepting roles within the group and agreeing to heart agreements.

Helps each member achieve balance in their lives, which ultimately spills over into your ministry. This happens through setting personal intentions for spiritual growth in their lives and receiving support to accomplish those intentions. They connect with their experience of God, connect with others to grow in their awareness of God in their lives, and fill their cups with mutually fulfilling spiritual growth opportunities. When their cups are filled, they are more able to support your ministry in whatever way is needed.

Gets the members of your ministry outside your church walls and serving your community. Each group organizes and participates in a community service project at the end of each 10-week session.

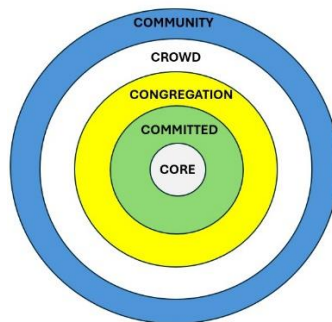
Offers membership engagement strategies for your leadership/admin teams and Unity SpiritGroup Hosts and Leaders. Unity SpiritGroups has an established, tried, and proven curriculum that teaches and supports your ministries leadership and admin team in identifying where each member of the ministry is in their spiritual growth, how to engage them where they are, and how encourage them to engage more.

Easily hands each group member meeting structure, shared roles and responsibilities, timelines, and shared goals. All these things are already established for each group. All they need to do is follow along. Additionally, a meeting with structure helps ensure that the group stays focused and gives each member security in knowing how it flows, and what comes next. Each person participates in the structure of the group, including developing the Heart Agreements and planning the social event and community service project.

How can they help my ministry?

It helps you reframe your membership growth from thinking from the inside out to the outside in.

1. Core - Committed to your ministry and signs up for everything you offer.
2. Committed - Tithes and attends regularly.
3. Congregation - Attends every 4-6 weeks.
4. Crowd - Attends on holidays.
5. Community - People that are not connected to your church.



Unity SpiritGroups moves each population one step in. The core may move into leadership roles within the ministry or even Unity, such as becoming an LUT or a minister. Committed moves into Core, Congregation moves into Committed, Crowd moves into Congregation, and Community moves into Crowd. This allows a new population to move into Community. Each session of Unity SpiritGroups has the potential to move these populations one step inward.

Unity SpiritGroups create a ministry OF small groups, not a ministry WITH small groups.

Notice the difference in how that feels. A ministry OF small groups elicits the feeling that everyone in the ministry has a small group to call family, to call home, to support them and accept them. It feels inclusive. A ministry WITH small groups elicits a feeling of separateness, that only those in the small groups are included, and those outside of those groups are excluded. What kind of ministry do you want to create?

If you want your ministry to grow and prosper through small groups, you do not want small groups to be one of many options; you want small groups to be THE option. Participation in groups is low because there are too many things happening. People are depleted and experiencing decision fatigue. By providing small groups and weekend services, you give your members just two things to commit to. You take away the decision fatigue that many people in our ministries have.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT UNITY SPIRITGROUPS:

What about all my already established groups?

You can still keep them. No groups have to be disbanded. Each group leader can be trained to be a Unity SpiritGroup Host and each group can move into the structure of a Unity SpiritGroup. This way, everyone is on the same page in supporting the mission of the ministry.

What is Mindy Audlin's role with Unity SpiritGroups?

Unity SpiritGroups Founder Mindy Audlin is still active with the Unity SpiritGroups Coordinator at Unity Worldwide Ministries. She mentored and coached the coordinator for three years upon acquisition of the program. She currently acts as Ambassador for the Unity SpiritGroups program, speaking about its benefits when she visits Unity ministries.

I had SpiritGroups before UWM acquired them. Has anything changed?

Nothing foundational has changed in any of the materials, including curriculum. We have changed how we train people. From the experience of both ministries and Unity SpiritGroups founder Mindy Audlin, training one person to be able to support 1-3 ministries with their small groups is a more efficient use of human power and time than training boards and ministry leaders.

We still hold weekly huddles for Program Leaders as support and provide access to all materials and curriculum. We have created Advanced Leadership Trainings to further support your Group Leaders. We have a small group of trained, successful Program Leaders who serve on an advisory team, helping UWM understand where we still have needs within the program, and guiding the coordinator in filling those needs.

All materials are now held on a share drive, rather than Patreon, and are only shared with trained Program Leaders, rather than entire boards or ministries. All weekly huddles are held on Teams, rather than social media.

What can I do about the resistance I am sure to encounter when I introduce these to my ministry?

Resistance to change is natural and normal. We all experience it daily, even within ourselves. Studies show that up to 10% of your population are early adopters. Start with them. Allow those who are still experiencing resistance time to see that there are no real threats to their habits and lifestyle.

Those who are participating in Unity SpiritGroups can share their experiences so those who are in a state of resistance can learn about them from a safe place. As minister or as the board, you can alleviate resistance by standing in your excitement about the growth and engagement possibilities that Unity SpiritGroups offers.

Isn't this part of mission-centric ministries? Doesn't that mean you are trying to get rid of the minister?

Mission-centric ministries have one word that indicates that ministers are still very much needed, and that word is MINISTRY. The purpose of a mission-centric ministry is to establish a ministry that

does not fold or become immobile when the minister leaves. Rather than the ministry being focused on the presence of the minister, they are focused on their dedication to a mission.

Let's face it, as ministers, we have all gone into ministries where lots of healing needs to happen because everyone's focus was on the minister. Wouldn't it be great to go into a ministry as leader where everyone has been working on their healing in small groups and where they are focusing on their mission and need you to be a leader instead of firefighter, counselor, healer, space-holder, problem-solver, etc., from the moment you walk in?

What if my ministry doesn't have a minister? Can we still have Unity SpiritGroups?

Absolutely. In fact, this is a great time to introduce them!

This program can help your current leadership team provide focus and support for your congregants and members, as you make decisions about your ministry, including hiring a minister, hiring an MOR, or becoming a study group. We can help you organize your groups, provide training for facilitators, and give you tools for running effective, powerful groups.

What is a Unity SpiritGroup Program Leader and what can they do for me?

A Certified Unity SpiritGroup Program Leader is someone who has successfully completed the intensive four-month training program. They learn to plan, organize, and support the membership and the membership growth for the ministry they serve, including how to lead a small group ministry, recruit and train new hosts, develop, plan organize, and plant new groups, support and grow established groups, determine and encourage team dynamics, and keep groups healthy, and discern the best course for fostering the alignment of the small group ministry and their ministry, and so much more! In other words, they are trained to be the Membership Director for your ministry.

They can do all the things above, as well as train your leadership and admin team in identifying and supporting leaders within your ministry, serve on the leadership team, deliver messages about Unity SpiritGroups, and help plan celebration events for your ministry.

What is UWM doing to support Unity SpiritGroups?

The UWM Unity SpiritGroups Coordinator trains all Program Leaders, provides weekly online calls to provide immediate coaching and support, and hosts a yearly Unity SpiritGroup Annual Leadership Summit. The coordinator meets with an advisory team made up of current Program Leaders on a regular basis and receives messages from the field about what is working well, what is working somewhat well, and what needs work. That coordinator then develops, creates, and launches whatever is needed to move what is working somewhat well and what needs work into the category of working well.

We have created 3 Advanced Leadership Trainings for our Program Leaders. These are presented quarterly and delivered to their Group Leaders to support their leadership growth.

Additionally, UWM provides a free GroupVitals membership to all Program Leaders and ministries who have Unity SpiritGroups. GroupVitals is an online group finder/attendance taking community utilized by ministries across the country who offer Unity SpiritGroups. This can cost ministries up to \$1000 a year, but UWM offers it to our ministries for free.

What is the cost?

It costs \$1500 for someone to go through the Unity SpiritGroups Program Leader Certification training, and needs-based scholarships are available.

If you cannot afford to send someone through, or if the ministry cannot find someone to go through the training, please contact UWM to learn more.

Who do I contact?

Please email spiritgroups@unity.org with all questions.