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# Guide for Non-Affiliated Groups

## Study Groups and Seed Groups

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# Guide for Non-Affiliated Groups

## Purpose

Many people who read Unity® literature would like to meet with others who are interested in these teachings so that they can discuss the Unity principles with people of like mind and join with them in a consciousness of prayer. In a community where there is no Unity ministry, such meetings afford Unity students the opportunity to gather together, even though they do not have an authorized Unity leader in charge. These groups are usually started by someone interested in Unity who knows of others who would like to meet in this common desire. If there is a Unity ministry in a town nearby, the leader of that ministry may be able to help get the group started.

## Non-Affiliated Groups

These groups meet as independent groups for the purpose of studying and practicing Unity principles. They are not officially affiliated with the Association of Unity Churches International, Inc. and therefore cannot advertise such an affiliation. There are two types of non-affiliated groups:

➤ **Study Group**

A group that meets for the purpose of studying and practicing Unity principles.

➤ **Seed Group**

A group meeting to explore Unity principles with the intention of eventually becoming an approved Unity Ministry with a credentialed leader. They may be meeting on Sundays and using messages from other centers, but will be unable to advertise affiliation with Unity, operate as an NPO (non-profit organization), or provide their contributors tax deductions, unless they become affiliated with that center.

## Publicity

We ask that no publicity be used which would, either directly or indirectly, give the impression that the group is an authorized Unity ministry. If this were done, people may come expecting a credentialed Unity leader (Unity Minister or Licensed Teacher), and it is important not to mislead those who intend to participate.

We do recognize the need to get the word out to others who are interested in Unity teachings and who may be interested in joining your group. To attract the attention of these people you may put an ad in the Personal Column of a local newspaper which reads:

**DAILY WORD® READERS**

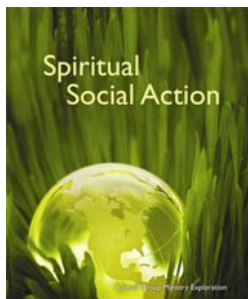
Anyone interested in meeting with others to study the Unity principles contact (list your name and phone number).

## Suggested Format for a Study Group

We suggest that each meeting be opened with a meditation of approximately five to ten minutes. It can be quite effective to provide each member of the group with a copy of *Daily Word* and to use the thought for that particular day as the theme for this meditation. We also recommend that each meeting be closed with a brief meditation. Silent Unity®'s monthly affirmation can be found in *Daily Word*, and this affirmation is an excellent way to close a meeting. It allows participants to briefly unite in thought and prayer prior to leaving and going forth with their busy lives.

For study purposes, you may use one of Unity's basic books or pamphlets. We recommend the identity booklet *Unity: A Path for Spiritual Living*, for a clear understanding of the Unity Movement, along with *The Keys to the Kingdom* or *Lessons in Truth*, for discussion of the Unity principles. We also recommend *Discover the Power Within You*, by Eric Butterworth and *The Quest* which provides a wonderful way to structure a group. Whatever material is used as the springboard for discussion, it is good to make Unity material your foundation. This insures that those involved with the group are learning basic Unity principles-principles which have proven transformative for many people.

### New Small Group Ministry Booklet!



*Spiritual Social Action* (BA1118) is the name of our newest 7-week small group study. It looks at social action from a spiritual perspective. Participants connect social action with Unity's basic teachings, consider the relevance of social action in their lives, contemplate how to be peacemakers, and examine how connections among diverse faith groups enhance the experience of giving.

These booklets may be ordered online in our Shop at [www.unity.org](http://www.unity.org) or call customer service at 800.669.0282 for individuals or 866.236.3571 for wholesale orders.

## Seed Groups

This group is working toward becoming an expansion ministry. You may begin in much the same way as a study group, but with ongoing plans to grow the group into a full ministry. You may also use services or Sunday messages from other communities as topics for discussion, or hold small services formatted like a scaled-down version of a traditional service.

## Keeping Records

At the very beginning, choose a secretary to keep a record of the names, addresses, email addresses, and telephone numbers of persons who attend. Usually, the group will meet in someone's home and the meeting place may change from time to time. It is important that the secretary be able to notify all members of any change in the group activities.

## Finances

It is a good idea to take an offering each time the group meets. This provides the opportunity for all members to work with divine law. Through these acts of sharing, they will be contributing not only to the growth and effectiveness of the group, but they will also be establishing the conditions whereby they will be blessed in return. It is important that good financial records are kept of the group income and expenses. The enclosed Monthly Statement of Income/Expense report is recommended for this purpose (found at the end of document). It is important to utilize spiritual principles in handling the offering. We recommend blessing the offering by having the group repeat the following statement together:

**"Divine love through me blesses and multiplies  
all that I give and all that I receive."**

The offerings may be held in a local bank and used for whatever purposes the group determines are necessary and beneficial. Often these funds are accumulated with a view toward developing the group into a full-time ministry. Any future plans for the group should be coordinated through the Ministry Expansion office of the Association of Unity Churches International.

The Association cannot authorize use of its Tax Exempt Umbrella for contributions to be tax-deductible until the group is formally organized and has credentialed Unity leadership (a Unity Minister or Licensed Teacher) or affiliation with a ministry.

## Subscription Lists Not Available

Since Unity's subscriber lists are strictly confidential, we cannot comply with these requests to provide names of Unity students in your area.

## Criteria for Formal Affiliation

As your group grows and prospers, it may be desirable to seek formal affiliation with the Association of Unity Churches International. A non-affiliated group that wishes to advance and be recognized as a functioning ministry, approved by the Association as a member ministry, must be led by a credentialed Unity leader (an ordained/licensed Unity Minister or a Licensed Unity Teacher) or they must affiliate with a full status Unity church in good standing that agrees to oversee their ministry. If your group is interested in seeking formal affiliation with the Association, contact Ministry Expansion for details and procedures at 816.434.6865.

## Oneness in Spirit

Please be assured that the Association of Unity Churches International is one with you in Spirit. Our prayers are with you, and we know that God is directing and blessing you in all your endeavors. We affirm with you that your group will fulfill its divine purpose and that all who attend will be blessed with spiritual growth and fulfillment.

## GOD IS OUR SOURCE

The Association of Unity Churches International is supported by God through the tithes and love offerings of member ministries and the expansion prayer and study groups that it serves. We appreciate your support!

If you have any questions, please contact us at:

Association of Unity Churches International, Inc.  
Attn: Ministry Expansion  
PO Box 610  
Lees Summit, MO 64063-0610 USA  
Telephone: 816.434.6865  
Fax: 816.525.4020  
Email: [expast2@unity.org](mailto:expast2@unity.org)

You may access this guide and many helpful forms on our website  
[www.unity.org/expansion](http://www.unity.org/expansion)

## What Does Unity Believe?

### God

God is Spirit, the loving source of all that is. God is the one power, all good, everywhere present, all wisdom. God is divine energy, continually creating, expressing and sustaining all creation. In God, we live and move and have our being. In Unity, some other ways we speak of God are Life, Light, Love, Substance, Principle, Law, and Universal Mind.

### Jesus

We believe that Jesus expressed his divine potential and sought to show humankind how to express ours as well. We see Jesus as a master teacher of universal truths and as our Way-Shower. In Unity, we use the term "Christ" to mean the divinity in humankind. Jesus is the great example of the Christ in expression.

### The Nature of Humankind

We are each individual, eternal expressions of God. Our essential nature is divine and therefore inherently good. Our purpose is to express our divine potential as realized and demonstrated by Jesus and other master teachers. The more we awaken to our divine nature, the more fully God expresses in and through our lives.

### The Bible

Unity cofounders Charles and Myrtle Fillmore studied the Bible as history and allegory, and interpreted it as a metaphysical representation of humankind's evolutionary journey toward spiritual awakening. In addition, Unity recognizes that the Bible is a complex collection of writings compiled over many centuries. We honor the writings as reflecting the understanding and inspiration of the writers at the time they were written. The Bible continues to be a valuable spiritual resource for us.

### Our Teachings

Unity teaches that each person is a unique expression of God created with sacred worth. Living from that awareness transforms our lives and the world. Unity emphasizes the creative power of thought in our life experience. We refer to this as the Law of Mind Action. When we take personal responsibility to choose life-affirming thoughts, words and actions, we experience a more fulfilling and abundant life. Unity emphasizes the importance of applying spiritual principles in our daily lives. Unity teachings continue to evolve as we identify, embrace and apply spiritual insights.

### Prayer and Meditation

Affirmative prayer is the highest form of creative thought. It includes the release of counterproductive, negative thoughts, as well as holding in mind statements of spiritual truth. Through meditation, we experience the presence of God. Prayer and meditation heighten our awareness and thereby transform our lives.

## Unity's Five-Step Method of Meditative Prayer (In process of entering the Silence)

Unity has developed a five-step method of prayer which has proved effective to many people. The following description of this prayer method was created by Unity Church of Overland Park, Kansas, as part of the training manual for their prayer team. They have generously allowed us to share this material with you.

### Step One: Relaxation

"To get still, the body must be relaxed and the mind quieted. Center the attention with: 'There is a quiet place within us all,' and by silently saying over and over, 'peace, be still,' we shall enter that quiet place and a great stillness will pervade our whole being." (*Jesus Christ Heals*, Charles Fillmore, p.80)

As we approach our time of communion with God, it is important that we choose a quiet, comfortable physical environment in which to meditate.

Once we are seated in a comfortable position, we can begin to relax our bodies and still our minds.

We may wish to begin by breathing deeply and speaking the words "peace be still" silently to our muscles and limbs.

It is important that we allow ourselves as much time as we need in order to relax and let go of physical tension. Remember, there is no need to rush.

As we continue to relax, we begin gently to release our hold on negative and disturbing thoughts and feelings that we have allowed to make a home in our consciousness. Charles Fillmore states:

"First we disentangle our thoughts from the flesh and lift our consciousness up to Spirit. We hold them steady in spiritual consciousness until they begin to get hold of Spirit essence, Spirit power, Spirit love." (*Teach Us to Pray*, Charles Fillmore, p. 139)

During the process of detaching ourselves from our everyday state of awareness, we seek to peel away limiting ideas about who and what we are until we realize our true nature as spiritual beings.

At this point we may wish to affirm the following statements to help remind us of our true identity:

"I have a body, but I am not my body. I am Spirit."

"I have thoughts, but I am not my thoughts. I am Spirit."

"I have feelings, but I am not my feelings. I am Spirit."

As we continue to acknowledge the truth about ourselves, we become aware of experiencing a greater sense of freedom and receptivity.

## Step Two: Meditation

"Continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything; realizing the reality of the absolute; a steady effort of the mind to know God." (*The Revealing Word*, Charles Fillmore p. 131)

During meditation, we focus our attention on the nature of God and the reality of Divine Ideas.

As we do so, we begin to deny our belief in error thought and affirm the presence and power of God, the Good.

"For example, if we are meditating on the idea of life, we may find it necessary to deny the unreality of illness, weakness, or death. We then begin to affirm the truth that God is life; that He is the Source of all life, and we are heirs to His life, which is eternal. Many other related thoughts may come to us during this meditation period; some we will probably discard, but others we will undoubtedly accept as we ponder their meanings." (*Foundations of Unity*, series two, vol. two/103)

In our process of using denials and affirmations, we find ourselves becoming more centered and focused on God. It is then that we become aware of moving into the next step of our process.

## Step Three: Concentration

"Whereas in meditation we have moved ideas in our mind, it is now our mind directly addressing God, as the first step in the divine dialogue." We are making ourselves open and receptive to what will follow 'in the silence' . . . we hold ourselves in singleness of mind or purpose without interference by mixed thinking. It is like holding up an empty cup so that God may fill it with His inspiration. (*Foundations of Unity*, series two, vol. two/104)

At this point in our process, we are placing the complete focus of our attention on God. No longer do we experience random thoughts moving through our minds. Instead, we find ourselves deeply and devotedly centered on a phrase or "sacred word" of Truth. For example, we might affirm, "The Father and I are one," "God is love," or any such Truth upon which we are guided to concentrate.

Remember, concentration is never forced or strained. It comes from a profound and grateful awareness of our indwelling presence of God.

Through our time of deep concentration, we become open and receptive to experiencing "the still small voice."

### **Step Four: Realization or The Silence**

"The purpose of the silence is to still the activity of the individual thought so that the still small voice of God may be heard. For in the silence Spirit speaks Truth to us and just the Truth of which we stand in need." (Teach Us to Pray/17)

The "still small voice" does not speak in language as we know it, but communicates in a much more profound way. Charles Fillmore states:

"Compared with audible language, communion in mind can be said to be without sound. It is the 'still small voice,' the voice that is not a voice, the voice using words that are not words. Yet its language is more definite and certain than that of words and sounds, because it has none of their limitations." (Jesus Christ Heals/33)

In the silence, our mind is open and receptive to Divine Ideas.

"God 'speaks' to us in the silence in various ways to suit our needs at the time. Sometimes His 'speaking' may be an inner harmonious feeling or a direct inner knowing; it may come as an idea or a definite statement or affirmation; perhaps the words of a beloved hymn or poem or Bible verse suffice to present His answer. There are times when we just have a sense of peace, of well-being. At the core of all these ways is some divine idea that God is revealing to us." (*Foundations of Unity*, series two, vol. two/104)

In the silence, we realize our oneness with God. Out of this realization comes a deep sense of joy and gratitude, which leads us to the final step of our process.

## Step Five: Thanksgiving

"The attitude of thankfulness opens the way for the fulfillment of our righteous desires, for thankfulness is the action of both faith and love-the faith that perceives that good is awaiting our claim, and the love that unifies us with the good we long to manifest in mind, body, and affairs." (*Foundations of Unity*, series two, vol. two/104)

When we give thanks in advance of our demonstration, we recognize God as the source of all our good. We continue to experience an expansion of consciousness as we open our minds and hearts to the manifestation of our desire.

"To sum it up: True thanksgiving is knowing the good, seeking the good, speaking only good, expecting only good, and the result of these attitudes is to bring the fulfillment of our righteous desires."  
(*Foundations of Unity*, series two, vol. two/104).

Let us always remember to conclude our time of meditative prayer with a heartfelt "Thank You God!"... and so it is.

## Partners in Prayer

1. I open my heart and mind in full surrender to the power of my indwelling God and align in love with my partners in prayer.
2. I believe that God is energy of pure love flowing through me. I am a channel of its expression.
3. I take responsibility for my life experience without guilt or judgment. I am ready to change my beliefs and attitudes at depth. My life is transformed.
4. I am willing to release all unforgiveness for any perceived mistakes or wrongdoings. I forgive by now giving unconditional love and acceptance to myself and others. I am a being of Light and Love.
5. In complete faith and trust, I speak into creation the desires of my heart. (State or visualize your desires.)
6. I joyously accept and give thanks that the desires of my heart are fulfilled. I move into life with confidence knowing that Divine Right Action is at work.
7. I now have a covenant in which it is agreed that, as a powerful being of God, my life is one of service to all humankind. My commitment is to live in a manner that sets the highest example for others to follow. I go forth with a spirit of enthusiasm, excitement and expectancy. **It is done!**

### One Heart - One Mind

We are one heart.  
We are one mind.  
And together, we will find  
When two or more are gathered,  
Spirit guides us to the answers.  
We are one heart, one mind.

## Partners in Prayer Support Group

**Purpose:** To create spiritual community. We come together to love and support each other in realizing our oneness with God.

**Promise:** I am a spiritual being, living in a spiritual universe governed by spiritual law. Healing is natural. Solutions are available.

**Logistics:** This support system is designed for six to ten people meeting every week or every two weeks for 1-1½ hour. You may want to commit for three months and then re-evaluate.

### Agreements:

1. Each meeting is sacred. A total commitment is required for optimal healing results. Meetings will begin and end on time.
2. Honor all feelings expressed, as all feelings are appropriate. Don't judge yourself or others. Create a safe place to be vulnerable.
3. It is the responsibility of the group to maintain the commitment to healing and to lovingly remind anyone that has become problem-focused that there is a solution.
4. Become a network of love and support between meetings.
5. Stay on purpose.
6. Maintain confidentiality.
7. Have fun!

## Support Group Format

1. Choose a leader for the meeting each week. Everyone should have the opportunity to lead the prayer experience.
2. Center energy in the group with a few minutes of relaxed breathing.
3. Prayer: Go through Partners in Prayer. On step five, each person verbalizes a request for support.
4. Following the prayer, each person (beginning with the leader) shares openly and honestly about his/her request for support or any other subject that he/she chooses to talk about. There should be no cross talk or advice. This group is not designed to fix each other's problems. Listen to each other. Provide loving support by giving your undivided attention rather than your words of wisdom. Limit sharing time to four to five minutes per person.
5. Go around the circle a second time with each person sharing one solution or action step to be taken that week.
6. Openly share success from previous week's requests.
7. Close meeting with a hug, a song, anything that inspires and nurtures the group.

**Note:** Creativity and flexibility with this format are encouraged.

## A Dynamic Growing Group

1. Prays for guidance at every step.
2. Celebrates God and life through all studies and activities.
3. Keeps everyone enthusiastically involved.
4. Cultivates a spirit of Unity, openness, sharing, and mutual encouragement.
5. Tailors studies and activities within the parameters of Unity and to the continually unfolding interests of members.
6. Reaches out a welcoming hand to all.
7. Keeps a clear vision of where it is headed, with specific goals to accomplish.
8. Never stops dreaming of possibilities.

**Trust Your Vision  
Knowing God Is In Charge**





*Contact/Update Information Sheet*  
*Non-affiliated Study Groups*  
Study Group and Seed Group

**Please fill out the sheet and mail, email or fax it at the addresses and number above.**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Group (Study/Seed): \_\_\_\_\_

Leader's name and address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Where are meetings held? \_\_\_\_\_

When are meetings held? \_\_\_\_\_

Average attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Is any attendee or leader a Unity Licensed Teacher or Minister?    Yes    No

If yes, name: \_\_\_\_\_

Any additional Comments/Information:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*One power, one presence in our lives and universe:  
God the Good Omnipotent*



