



Unitarian Universalists
for Jewish Awareness

Mussar Study Group Covenant

We value our time together as a group. We will start on time. We will end on time.

We are here to center and celebrate the wisdom that comes from the Jewish tradition. We are grateful for the religious pluralism that enriches our faith and for the space here to delve into the wisdom found in Judaism.

We are cooperative and creative. The UUJA is engaging with a Mussar Group (Jewish Values Study Group) online with a larger group breaking into smaller groups during the sessions. We will be learning together what works.

Respect confidentiality. When someone shares a personal story, please don't repeat the story without explicit permission. Also, please don't raise the story with that person in a public setting.

We will not use these circles as group therapy. While being in community is healing, we are not here in lieu of working with a psychological professional or signing up for a pastoral care appointment. We are not here to identify or fix one another's problems or give unwanted advice. We are here for mutual learning, sharing, and support.

We will practice compassionate and active listening. We speak from the heart and listen from the heart. We will engage mindfully with the questions raised, the readings offered, and the stories and insights shared.

We always have the right to pass.

Use "I" statements. Speak from your own personal experience rather than speaking of another's experience or generalizing about a group, whether that group is your own or another's.

Try on ideas. If someone expresses an idea, opinion, or point of view new to you or different from your own, try it on; try to see it from within the other person's perspective.

Practice "both/and" thinking. In the dominant culture, we often practice either/or thinking, believing that ideas, situations, plans, and so on can only be "this way" or "that way." What happens if both ideas—more than one plan or situation or perspective—can be meaningful, valuable, true?

Share airspace equitably. If you are often silent in group conversations, make an effort to share your experience and perspectives. If you are someone who often speaks in such conversations, hang back a bit to leave space for others.

Respect cultural ways of thinking and doing. Every cultural group has "norms" for how to talk and be in community with others. Often, such norms are created by those in power. Consider what can be gained when talking and sharing is experienced in a norm that's outside of your own cultural norm.