Small Group Ministry

Group Session Plan

**Relations and Aging**

**Opening Words**

As time passes, relationships will change.

Will the changes be in the number of friends or in the texture of the relationships?

Will I be going to people or will they be coming to me?

Will relationships be because of a position? Or because of who I am?

And how am I going to ‘be’ in relationships? How am I going to choose my relationships?

**Checking in** How are things for you this today?

**Topic/Activity** From *What are Old People For*? By William H. Thomas, p. 27-28

Lars Tornstam, the creator of the theory of gerotranscendence, interviewed Swedish men and women aged fifty-two to ninety-seven years of age. Consider his comments regarding relationships:

\*The character and importance of social contacts change as we age.

How have your relationships changed over the years? Do you select or maintain relationships for different reasons now than when you were younger?

Has your need to be with others or for solitude changed?

\*A deeper appreciation develops for the large gray area separating right and wrong. This is accompanied by an increasing reluctance to give advice to others.

Has there been a change in the content and tone of conversations over the years?

Have the topics changed?

\*There is newfound joy in transcending nonsensical social norms. This developmental trend is behind the popular declaration “When I get old I will wear purple.”

What are some of the social norms that are no longer important for you?

**Check-out/Likes and Wishes** How was this session for you?

**Closing words**

May our relationships be ever richer as we transition through life.

May we give and receive from our own being, forged by experience and life.

May we walk with others on this road of life, mindful of what we give to and receive from others.

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*Small Group Ministry With All Ages*, UU Small Group Ministry Network, June 2011, rev.