

The following are portions of the [“Un-official Welcome Pamphlet” \(UWP\) for Prospective Reformed Druids and Proto-Grove Planners](#)” by [Mike the Fool](#), revised for Saegoahs. Specifically focusing on creating your own group and solitary work.

## Starting a Group

### **Benefits of Group Formation**

The major benefit of group formation is probably a stronger sense of identity that often comes by slapping a label onto something. You are no longer “Joe’s friends who meet in Joe’s backyard” but you are suddenly “The Apple Grove that meets in Joe’s backyard” for example.

Like a corporation, a group is an entity that includes the members, but it also exists in a sense as a separate entity. In a group, there can be votes for President, Secretary, Treasurer and other matters; you advertise for recruiting, design logos and stationary, have members admitted in various formal ways, can apply for charity status, print letterhead stationery, buy group land in a forest, produce team T-shirts, and a dozen other nifty ways to build brand-loyalty. Mascots, secret hand-shakes and matching belt-buckles are, of course, all optional. Running a group can be a fun and exhilarating project, full of memorable events, conversations and interactions, but that is not always the case.

### **Costs of Group Formation**

On the flip side of the equation you also introduce the specter of small-group politics, group-think, power plays, and the misappropriation of funds. Many groups don’t outlive the departure of the owner of the meeting property, or another mainstay of the group, leading to a ‘group collapse.’ Many leaders or supporters may be in danger of eventually suffering from burn-out due to the inherent tendency of one or two heroic people doing all the logistic, financing or other gruntwork; without adequate compensation or praise from some less motivated members. It happens over and over again, although a few groups manage the transition and will last long longer than a decade.

When a group collapses, like other works of love and devotion, it can be a depressing series of wrenching events that can depress involved members for years to come. As with marriage, reproduction or other long-term commitments, you should also maturely consider the pros and cons of investing a lot of time and effort into producing a new group entity.

The very action of defining a group carries implied inclusive and exclusive components. By defining who is in your group, you are often in a subtle way also defining who is not in your group; which bothers some members who feel that some things are better left unclarified or undefined (what can be considered strategic ambiguity) as part of keeping it simple.

### **Group Hiving**

Group hiving often happens when a group gets too big or there is internal faction fighting, resulting in the group splitting its membership apart into two or three. This may also happen due to how your group forms in the first place. A group design may have a practical limit to the number of attendees; while others are more amenable oriented to mass-gatherings. The practical limit groups would then be more likely to hive.

Organizers can have differing views of direction and agendas that will cause conflict. Strong personalities may want to take hold to make changes themselves because they feel the group is stagnant or blind to the good that these changes may bring; or feel that the group is simply moving too slowly in their preferred direction, causing factions that may reside not too far from each other.

In a hiving situation, one group usually keeps the originally title and the other groups go off and establish new constitutions and elect new officers, although they may actually use the same meeting site, using it in turns like a timeshare arrangement. This is similar to a separation agreement in a marriage, hopefully on friendly terms, but often not so.

## Decision Making In Your Group

Groups can decide their own rules for group legislation. Most are democratic. Some have different rules on determining active membership based on attendance, payment of nominal membership fees, or other means. You can have votes open, secret or mail by pre-arrangement. You can hold annual elections, have seasonal or life-time appointments. You can create new offices, restrict one office to a person, or allow multiple offices. You may require a quorum of membership at one or multiple election meetings to pass. Some categories of referendums may require 51%, 2/3, or unanimity among voters. You can have speeches, debates, correspondence of other types of discussion.

It's all really up to your group what is the most practical and fair system. Choose wisely.

## Less is More

**Not a Religion** Ok, we're rather split on this one. Some say it's a religion. Some say it's a philosophy or outlook. Others ignore the question as unimportant and not tending towards edification.

**No Established Dogma** Ehoah's only established thing is the Three Basic Tenets. It is up to each individual to interpret what that means for them. This allows for each person to decide how they should go about achieving Ehoah, which could reveal many different approaches. This also allows for following people to be able to choose from these new approaches or go about it in their own way, having a variety of choice.

This absence of dogma ensures the capability of finding new ways and likely better ways of doing things.

**No Established Ritual** This can be discussed by the members of your group to determine if group ceremony(ies)/ritual(s) are something wanted by the group. Members of some Groups occasionally meet on the 8 festivals and the moons. Each group and each individual can determine this for themselves.

**No Priesthood** There is no established common seminary program. People can lead services of their own devising.

**No Membership Requirements** We're not exclusive; any background can join, if they respect the other members. There is no official excommunication or defrocking either. Inanimate objects are equally able to join, some even doing a better job than the mobile members.

**No Cross-Membership Restrictions** You can simultaneously belong to other groups or dimensions. Even if other groups don't like you being part of another group, we have no disagreement with you belonging to other groups.

**No National Organization** There just isn't one. It could be discussed as there may be many reasons for or against such an organization, and we can see from there.

**No Sanctified Buildings** When nature is so wonderful, why hide inside a building? Some folk may own property that they share. There is no known corporate ownership of facilities or funds.

**No Money or Fees** This is a good baseline as it doesn't restrict on the basis of income. Yet, this can be a matter of discussion in each group, especially if funding is needed for activities the group desires.

**No Proselytization** We're not about popularity or forcing people to be with us. This would go against the way of nature, being diverse. Lack of diversity makes anything in nature more susceptible to illness, less resilient, and more likely to die off. As such, we encourage diverse views, even if they do not agree with Ehoah. This is because they help challenge us and encourage making a stronger stance or force acknowledgment of required change.

**No Uniforms** Dress however you like! Your group can determine if everyone wants dress a certain way for differing events or even for every meeting. It is entirely up to your group.

**No Bad Stuff** We don't do such un-cool things like brainwashing (who wants a clean mind?), take money/property, or abuse our members (who'd want to be in such a group?). We treat our members with respect, and they freely come and go.

## Simple Rules for Starting a Group

### Somewhat-Necessary stuff

1. Collect 3 or more members, sentient or otherwise.
2. Choose roles, length of office, agree to basic tenets and whatever else is also important, delegate responsibilities (if any).
3. Hold elections for leadership role(s), i.e. a spokesperson and/or head organizer.
4. If there is a written agreement it's called a "constitution"
5. Go and do your thing.
6. Keep it simple
7. When the Group is not needed, break up.

### Not-so-necessary stuff

1. Contact other groups and share the good news. It could be the start of a beautiful friendship.
2. If you want to be listed and mapped on the official site, contact [rua.lupa@live.ca](mailto:rua.lupa@live.ca). Send your group's name, general location (city), rough membership estimate, contact address (internet is best), any homepages you've built; and a few paragraphs to describe your group.

The rest is entirely optional and your group may develop in odd and marvelous ways.

Your group can be cross-registered with other groups. It doesn't bother us.

Below is a template that will use 'Apple Grove' as the example

# Optional Constitution Format & Template

## SAEGOAH APPLE GROVE

21, December, 2012

Constitution of the Seekers of Ehoah at Saegoah Apple Grove

**Article I** The name of this organization shall be the Saegoah Apple Grove.

**Article II** Any (resident of/student at/etc.) \_\_\_\_\_ may become a member of this organization upon presenting a petition, which may be oral, stating that they agree with the Basic Tenets of Ehoah as set forth in this Constitution.

**Article III The Basic Tenets of Ehoah are these:**

- 1) Saegoahs agree that through Nature fulfillment can be found.
- 2) Saegoahs agree that Nature, being inseparable from humanity's existence, is important in human pursuits.
- 3) Saegoahs agree that as humans are a part of Nature, it is important to ensure our connections within it are harmonious.

**Article IV There shall be (#) officers:**

- 1) The (Title of Role) shall preside over all meetings.
- 2) The (Title of Role) shall assist in services, and shall be the principal officer in the secular arm of this organization.
- 3) (Further provisions may be made for other officers as needed.)

**Article V** Elections of officers shall be held annually, in (mensis/month). (Here may be the specified the method, i.e. voice vote, ballot, etc.) Only those qualified to hold the posts may be nominated for them.

**Article VI** This Constitution may be attended by a majority vote in two consecutive meetings of this organization. A quorum, which shall be (fraction) of the members, must be present at each meeting.

**I certify this to be a true and accurate copy of the Constitution of the Seekers of Ehoah at Saegoah Apple Grove, read and approved at two consecutive meetings.**

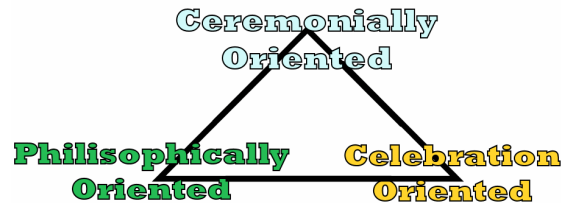
*/Signature/*

**John Doe (Title of Role)**

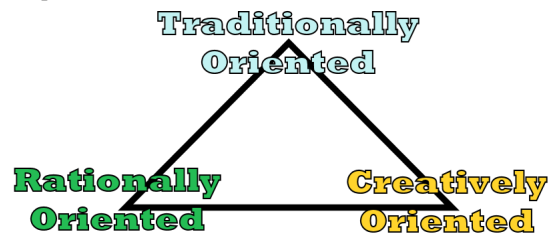
Feel free to change the language and make it applicable to your situation, and can simplify or add important points

## Oriented Differently

You might notice after a few months that not all groups or individuals have the same priorities, and are rather different. Sometimes the leaders and group have markedly different characteristics. This is the diversity of Ehoah. The following diagrams might be useful for understanding individual or group orientations and you can consider how they fall within the three points of this triangle system.



One dynamic you will see is that some people like to invoke lots of imagery, perform accurate rituals, and dedicate their actions to Nature or the greater cosmos. Other folks just love a party and are intimate with the changing seasons. Then there are those folks who dissect and discuss topics, but have trouble with liturgy or having a good time. As you might suspect, most people fall somewhere in between these three points or move about inside.



In a similar manner, there are three types based on how customs are approached. Some folks won't do anything that isn't documented in a book or are hesitant if it hasn't been done for generations and endorsed by prominent folk. Others love to brainstorm and research outside the box and experiment madly with things they've heard about. Finally, there are those who deduce the group's needs and analyze ideas solely by their positive or negative aspects, regardless of their beauty or long practice, and adopt and test them individually. Again, most people fall somewhere in the middle, or push towards a corner on certain issues.

By considering your group's dynamics and the orientations of your members, you are better able to anticipate which issues will bother certain folks and be embraced by others, and you can try to introduce a proper balance to meet your group's needs. It can sometimes feel as if you are an interpreter for people from different countries.

## Recruiting Advice

If you do want to start a group, with all the inherent headaches and bother, then how do you find folks to join you, without (you know) scaring them? Most people are quite wary about joining small movements after all.

Well the first question you should consider is how many people would be about right. Recruiting the world isn't really the idea. Maybe three, eight, thirteen, thirty, a hundred folk is comfortable for your resources? Pick something you can handle and then set a reasonable time-frame, and select a series of activities to find people. It is also important to decide what methods you will not use.

There is the classic way of asking folks you already know who seem interested in Nature and willing to explore different concepts. If they aren't interested in Ehoah, maybe they know somebody else who would be a good fit. Networking.

Advertising for more members is one option, using newspapers, magazines, web-lists, bulletin boards, and notice boards at public sites and stores (particularly related stores). Local folk societies, colleges, or environmental groups might be good places to join anyway for skill-building; and you might meet some Ehoah inclined folk there as an unexpected side-perk.

Yelling loudly on street corners, randomly calling people on phones, untargeted mailings and spam are not likely to be very useful and will likely just annoy people. Having a booth at a fair, related public event or convention might be a feasible route. You will also have a few less-than-supportive visitors in this manner. Don't be an apologist or play by their rules. Be honest, tactful and admit what you don't know yet. Likely questions you'll hear are "Is it actually real?", "Do I need to stop being a (insert religion)?", "Do you do magic?", and "are you (insert such'n'such belief)?"

Although you may be discreet, more than likely, everyone else probably knows that you're "different" in some manner, and you might have nick names like "nature boy", "green thumb", "Mr. Weird" or "the artist". People of like-mind will eventually find you, even if you aren't actively looking for them. This is the passive method; it takes one to know one. Besides, there is no need for a big hurry. A lot of groups start very small, and stay that way, fluctuating a bit, but growing larger over a long period until they reach some type of practical plateau or split (hive).

Don't try to find people just like you. It is nice to find people who complement you, even if they don't compliment you completely. A little diversity helps to shake things up and keep you out of a rut. Other groups are much more cautious and have a series of screening processes to separate crazy folks from the eccentric, and avoid certain types of people they are not comfortable with. This is indeed a gray area, where prejudices might sub-consciously operate, so review those procedures and their results occasionally.

In summary, you need to know the needs of your group, what attracts people to Ehoah, do a lot of trial and error, and properly utilize resources you may not even know you had.

## Solitary Practitioner

It is not necessary to found a Group, participate in a conference, or join an existing Group to be a Saegoah. You can go the solitary route. Even in a Group, most people probably spend more than 95% of their time away from others anyway. Many individuals devise their own solitary rites or customs to fit their extra needs. Most people choose a varying degree of "Groupness" and solitary activity. Some like to attend regular activities, others only big festivals, some just like to contribute to conferences, and some like to teach certain skills to members. Others just want to have nominal affiliation, but desire little to do with other Saegoahs on any regular basis. Sometimes people are like cicadas or mushrooms, go through periods of frantic Group participation and then withdraw into their private sphere for a long stretch of time before emerging again when conditions line up. Like the traveler who keeps walking, even the furthest journey will be completed on one's own with enough time, patience and diligence. Folks don't tend to have a firm final destination, but have a good idea which direction they need to go and this may be at odds with the interests of the nearby Groups. Some stages must be done on one's own. Sometimes a group's interaction will unearth buried ideas, but other times their voices may drown out quieter sources of creativity that need to be tapped and explored carefully. Think of the reclusive artist, sometimes they go to a class to pick up skills, other times they withdraw to perfect their talents and build up a repertoire on their own. Occasionally they later share the fruits of their study or teach their skills. Of course, some folks are solitary because they just aren't people-friendly. They prefer the company of other animals, plants, books or their own thoughts. So consider the option of being a solitary practitioner during some periods of your journey. Breaks are good. Finally, one is never really alone in Nature.