Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module

Leader's Guide

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About the Authors

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Acknowledgments

"Role of the Parish Minister in Youth Ministry" from the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Summary Report (UUA, 2007).

"Basic Approaches to Chaplaincy" and "Understanding Human Needs" from the Unitarian Universalist Association Chaplain Manual (2006).

"Boundaries and Confidentiality" by Rebecca Edmiston-Lange from *The Safe Congregation Handbook* edited by Patricia Hoertdoerfer and Frederic Muir (Boston: UUA, 2005).

"Creating Policies with Youth Groups" by Sarah Gibb Millspaugh from *The Safe Congregation Handbook* edited by Patricia Hoertdoerfer and Frederic Muir (Boston: UUA, 2005).

"Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together" from *The Congregational Handbook: How to Develop a Healthy and Vital Unitarian Universalist Congregation* (UUA, 2005).

"Mission Workshop for an Empowered Congregational Youth Group" by Jan Taddeo (2006).

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Introduction

Every year thousands of youth attend Unitarian Universalist congregations. Ministry with these youth is a ministry of the whole congregation, with religious educators, ministers, and youth advisors playing key roles. One of the central outcomes of the UUA's Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth was to re-imagine youth ministry not as an isolated program within the congregation, but as a ministry that is integrated throughout our faith communities. The Youth Ministry Renaissance Module gives religious educators and other religious professionals who work with youth the tools to design and implement vibrant, congregationally-integrated youth ministries.

Creating multigenerational communities with youth in a central role is critical for the formation of healthy congregations. It is often said that youth are the future of our faith. While there is truth in this statement, there is another even more important truth—youth are also the present of our faith. Our most vibrant, dynamic and growing congregations also have vibrant, dynamic and growing youth ministries. This work is important not just for youth. People of all ages benefit from the intergenerational relationships that are possible when youth ministry is integrated into the life of the congregation.

As a leader of the Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module, you have a valuable role in supporting the development of strong congregational youth ministries. The work you are doing over the fifteen hours of this module helps build a strong present and a bright future for our faith by equipping our leaders to support the faith formation of young Unitarian Universalists.

Module Goals:
- Provide tools for participants to create and support youth ministry that is balanced in terms of shared youth-adult leadership, types of programming, and developmental appropriateness
- Explore the physical, cognitive, social, identity, moral, and faith development of youth, and build greater understanding of the unique experiences of different generations of youth in congregations and how they impact youth ministry
- Help participants imagine and create youth ministry that goes beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and offers many pathways for youth involvement in congregations
- Equip participants to be adaptive in developing youth ministries appropriate to their congregation's size and youth needs and interests
- Address the unique role of religious educators in youth ministry, including administration, creating safe congregations, working with parents, and the recruitment, training, and support of youth advisors.

SESSION 1: Opening (60 minutes)

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Outline the goals of the module

- Lead the group through a covenant-building process

- Set expectations and provide space for sharing expectations

- Introduce the participants and leaders.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel prepared to engage fully in the module

- Know what content to expect in the module

- Establish a group covenant.

ACTIVITY 1: Gathering Worship (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chalice, candle, and matches or LED battery-operated light

- Altar/Centering table - small table, a cloth, and other objects to place on the table

- Index cards of two different colors, one of each color for each participant

- Markers

- Leader Resource 1-1, Prayer for Two Voices

- Singing the Living Tradition, one for every two participants

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Locate a small table or bench to use as an altar or centering table. Decorate it with an attractive cloth, chalice, candle and matches. You may also want to decorate it with objects that represent youth and/or youth ministry.

- Practice the chalice lighting words in Leader Resource 1-1, Prayer for Two Voices,, with your co-leader.
- Place one copy of *Singing the Living Tradition,* on every other chair.
- Place two index cards (one of each color) and one marker on each chair.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This worship on "Joys and Questions" serves to gather the group, set the tone for the module, and gives participants an opportunity to share their joys and questions regarding youth ministry. After the gathering worship, you should review the participants' hopes and questions and discuss how they are or could be addressed in the module.

Invite a participant to light the chalice as you and your co-leader read from Leader Resource 1-1, Prayer for Two Voices. The plain text is voice one, italicized text is voice two, and the bold text is for both voices.

Read the following:

> We have come together for this module because of our dedication to growing souls, ministering with youth, and building transformative Unitarian Universalist religious education programs. Here, over the course of this module, we will build a learning and growing community together.

Invite participants to rise in body or in spirit to sing "Gathered Here," Hymn 389, in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Read the following:

> Youth bring joy to our religious communities—they are joyful, passionate, creative, energetic, and committed to community. Youth also bring questions to our religious communities—they are seekers, forming their own identities and trying to find their role in our living tradition. As adults working with youth, we, too, have joys and questions. Close your eyes for a moment and reflect on what you love about ministry with youth. What brings you joy as you minister with youth? Also, reflect on what questions you have about ministry with youth. What questions led you to attend this module? What question could this gathered group help you answer?

Give participants about 30 seconds to reflect silently.

Then ask participants pick up their index cards and marker. On the <insert color name> card, instruct them to write one thing about ministry with youth that brings them joy. On the <insert other color name> card, instruct them to write one thing they hope to learn or one question they would like answered in the module.

Invite participants to come up to the altar/centering table one by one, share briefly what they wrote, and place their cards on the table..

When everyone has shared, remind participants that these will be in the space throughout the module to remind them of what brings them joy and what questions they have. Hopefully many of the questions will be answered over the course of their time together.

Invite participants to rise in body or in spirit to sing "Gather the Spirit," Hymn #347 in *Singing the Living Tradition*.

Close with these words, written by a group of Unitarian Universalist youth:
We are never complete. We are never finished. We are always yet to be. May we always allow others to be, and help and enable each other to grow toward all that we are capable of becoming. Amen!

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION
If using a platform like Blackboard or Moodle, it is difficult to do group worship. You could share the same "prompt" for joys and questions and have participants share them in a discussion board format. If meeting via webinar, you could do essentially the same worship service, but without the active chalice lighting or placing the index cards on the table. You would also need to provide the music in some other format, or use easy songs that you could teach participants.

ACTIVITY 2: Introductions (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Brown paper lunch bags
- Stapler

- Index cards, one for each participant
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Write the following prompts for group introductions on newsprint: Name, Congregation, Role in Congregation, Why You Are Here, Something You Are Leaving Behind. Post this somewhere visible to all.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Share a brief introduction including your name, where you are from, what involvement you have in youth ministry, and why you are enthusiastic about leading this module.

Distribute one index card to each person. Instruct participants to write their names on one side of the card. On the other side of the card, what they are leaving behind to be totally present at this module. What they are leaving behind may be professional or personal.

Go around the circle and have everyone introduce themselves by responding to the prompts you have listed on newsprint. You should begin in order to model the length of time and depth of disclosure. If participants would rather not share what they are leaving behind publicly, they can pass. As they introduce themselves, invite them to drop their index card in the brown paper bag. Explain that they will have the opportunity to retrieve their card at the end of the module as they prepare to return home.

Place the bag somewhere in the meeting space that is not in a highly visible place—e.g. under the resource table—to be retrieved at the end of the module.

ACTIVITY 3: Goals and Shared Understandings (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 1-2, Ministry With Youth Module Goals

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Write the goals listed in Leader Resource 1-2, Ministry With Youth Module Goals, on newsprint and post it for the remainder of the module.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

The first part of this activity clarifies the goals of the Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module.

Explain that the purpose of this module is to give participants a greater understanding of youth and their role and responsibilities as religious educators in youth ministry. Direct their attention to the goals posted. Read through them aloud, or invite participants to read them aloud. Ask for questions. If their questions are very specific about the content of the training, remind them that they will go through the agenda shortly.

The next exercise builds a common understanding among participants of what is meant by "ministry with youth."

Write the word MINISTRY on newsprint (leaving room to write WITH and YOUTH after it). Lead a two minute discussion on what the word MINISTRY means. The word ministry implies that what we are about is of the utmost importance, that it deserves care, thought, and prayer or reflection. Each of us who interacts with youth has a ministry, even if we are not an ordained minister.

Write the word WITH after the word MINISTRY. Lead a two minute discussion on what the word WITH means. This word expresses the view that youth ministry is a mutual ministry, that we do with youth. It is not a one-way ministry. We are ministered to even as we minister. The phrase MINISTRY WITH implies a particular theology of power relations.

Write the word YOUTH after the word WITH. Explain that in Unitarian Universalism when individuals, congregations, and districts talk about "youth" they may have different understandings of what ages this encompasses. Explain that for the purpose of this module, we will focus primarily on ministry with high school-age youth (ages 14-18). When looking at adolescent development, the scope will be a bit broader (ages 12-20) and broken down into stages. Lead a short 1-2 minute brainstorm of all the words used to refer to the "youth" age group, writing those words on the newsprint around the words MINISTRY WITH YOUTH.

Especially if the word "kids" is mentioned, explain that "youth" is usually the word of choice for the people we are talking about. "Youth" signifies that they are no longer children, but that they are coming of age and becoming young adults.

ACTIVITY 4: Agenda and Logistics (5 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Write the agenda on newsprint and post it for the remainder of the module. Including times is optional. Some participants may get caught up on times if something is running a bit off-schedule, so an agenda with no times is preferable because it still gives participant an idea of what to expect and when.
- Write "Bike Rack" or "Parking Lot" at the top of a sheet of newsprint, and post where it can remain for the duration of the module.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
Explain that with these goals and a common understanding of "ministry with youth," the group will now review the agenda. Direct participants' attention to the posted agenda, and read through it. Invite questions.

Now direct participants' attention to the Bike Rack/Parking Lot. Explain that this is a space where participants can post questions or issues they would like to address in the module. Do your best to address these questions throughout the training, or provide resource suggestions for participants to explore on their own.

Introduce participants to the host, registrar, cook, and anyone else who is involved in the logistics of the module. Invite these people to share any relevant information about bathrooms, sleeping arrangements, meals, registration, site rules, etc.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

As with an in-person training, when in an e-learning environment it is important to go over the plan/agenda and expectations with the group.

ACTIVITY 5: Covenant (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 1-1, Covenant

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Copies of Handout 1-1, Covenant, for all participants and leaders.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Most participants will have created a covenant before. Ask them to explain what a covenant is, and why to create a covenant at the beginning of this module. If they do not say it, mention that a covenant is an agreement about how participants and leaders will be together and create a safe environment for learning and exploration. It is promises each person makes to themselves and to one another, and to which they will hold each other accountable. A covenant is a living document, so it can be revisited throughout the module as a reminder or to revise it.

Distribute Handout 1-1, Covenant. Tell participants that this covenant is a place to start, and invite them to add to it. As they suggest items to add to the covenant, ask them to write them in the space on their handout. When finished, ask the group if they can all agree to this covenant. When the group is in agreement, invite everyone to read the Unison Affirmation at the bottom of Handout 1-1, Covenant.

Close this activity by telling participants that covenanting is something youth communities often do. Encourage them to bring this resource home and use the process for groups of youth or youth and adults in their congregations.

Handout 1-1: Covenant

ATTRIBUTION

"Covenant for Our Time Together," by the Rev. Helen Zidowecki; used with permission.

INSTRUCTIONS

Write the additions of the group in the blank space.

TEXT

The covenant provides guidelines for a safe learning environment. To that end, let us covenant together.

CONFIDENTIALITY: We need safety with the group. We need to know that what we say in the group discussions and with each other will be held in confidence.

RESPECT: We need to feel that we can share our deep concerns, mistakes, and fears as well as our joys and triumphs. It is important to be able to speak without anyone in the group judging and/or criticizing what was said or done. We need this acceptance.

PRIVACY: It is important that we be able to "pass" and not speak within the group. When we choose to pass, no explanation is asked for or needs to be given. A simple statement of "I pass" or "I am not ready to speak" is sufficient. There are times when some understanding or truth or feeling is not ready to be spoken aloud.

BOUNDARIES help to create safety and freedom for us to work successfully. Attention to time boundaries includes an agreement among us to start on time and remain present until the agreed upon ending time, and to let one of the leaders know if we have to leave for any reason.

We also acknowledge and honor our differing needs, ways of relating, and ways of learning.

UNISON AFFIRMATION: To this end we covenant with one another for our time together. Blessed Be.

Leader Resource 1-1: Prayer for Two Voices

ATTRIBUTION

By Tandi Rogers, used with permission.

INSTRUCTIONS

Plain text = voice one

Italicized text = voice two

Bold text = both voices

TEXT

Spirit of Life and love known by many names and *worshipped in a* **rainbow** of ways

Infinite Mystery,

Spark of Ah-ha *and Ahhh* and **Awe**

Conspiring energy of *interdependent* **co-arising**

Be with us now.

Surround us.

Push us forward.

Pull us together.

We give thanks this day *for the* **opportunity** to be together, to laugh, to learn, *to play, and* **to build a vision**.   May this time bind us *and set us free*. May we know **deep in our bones** that we are **not alone.**

We call in our elders. *The pioneers* and pilgrims **whose shoulders we stand on**. *We call you in not to rest* and bask in your glow *of bygone days*. *But to be held* **accountable** to the struggles *and challenges* and sacrifices *you offered with* **love**. May we love you enough, *love us enough*, love those yet to come enough, to *keep raising the bar of expectations* and dreams **and possibilities**. Give us the courage *and conviction* to put aside *our egos* and attachments so **universal grace** may stream in.

We call in the congregations **we serve** *who deserve* our very best. *May we* **partner** with them to lay foundations *under their* **cloud** -surrounded dreams.

We call in our *silent*, wise **voice within**. <insert dramatic pause> May we leave space to **deeply hear** *what is spoken* and unspoken.

Spirit of Life *and Love*, **be with us today**. Give us the vision **to dream**, *beyond ourselves*. *Give us the humility* to see our short-comings **as a place to begin** *and grow*. Send us the compassion *to create a safe place for us* to explore **possibilities**. Give us the confidence **to ask** for what we **need** *and want*. *Give us the* **courage** to take risks *beyond here* and now and **us**.

Salaam. *Shalom*. **Amen**!

Leader Resource 1-2: Ministry With Youth Module Goals

INSTRUCTIONS

Write the goals on newsprint and post where it can remain for the duration of the module.

TEXT

Goals:

- Provide tools for participants to create and support youth ministry that is balanced in terms of shared youth-adult leadership, types of programming, and developmental appropriateness

- Explore the physical, cognitive, social, racial, sexual, moral, and faith development of youth, and build greater understanding of the unique experiences of different generations of youth in congregations and how they impact youth ministry.

- Help participants imagine and create youth ministry that goes beyond a one-size-fits-all approach and offers many pathways for youth involvement in congregations

- Equip religious educators to be adaptive in developing youth ministries appropriate to their congregation's size and youth needs and interests

- Address the unique role of religious educators in youth ministry, including administration, creating safe congregations, working with parents, and the recruitment, training, and support of youth advisors.

SESSION 2: Ice Breakers (25 minutes)

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Set a fun tone for the training
- Help participants get to know each other
- Encourage movement and interaction.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Know each other better
- Start building community and trust.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

Depending on how much time you have, and how large a group of participants, choose one or two ice breakers.

- The first option is an active game that should not be used if there are participants with limited mobility. You can make it more accessible to some by doing it in slow motion, e.g. pretending you are stuck in a giant vat of peanut butter.
- The second option is a stationary game, and appropriate for groups of at least six.
- The third option is easy for an online or distance learning format when participants are not physically in the same space.

ACTIVITY OPTION 1: Spill the Basket (20-25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Chairs, enough for all participants minus one

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Arrange chairs in a circle, with nothing in the middle to obstruct movement.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Have the group sit in a circle of chairs. Invite someone to be "It." That person, who does not have a chair, goes to the center and picks something about themselves they might have in common with other participants. It is a good idea for the leader to be "it" first so they can model. They say, "Hi, my name is _____." Everyone responds by saying "Hi _____!" Then "It" says "I like people who _____ (e.g. run a successful Coming of Age program, or have been a religious educator for less than one year)." Everyone to whom this applies must jump out of their chairs and find another chair (not either of the chairs next to them), as in musical chairs. The person remaining after all the chairs are taken makes the next statement, "I like people who... are _____ (e.g. at their first Renaissance Module)."

Variation: Choose a category and everyone to whom it applies comes to the center of the circle, holds hands, and gives themselves a cheer before they rush to find another seat.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

If using Persony, the leader could call on participants one by one, and when the "It" participant makes a statement in the dialogue box on the lower right, everyone to whom it applies can "raise their hand."

If using an online distance learning platform, the leader can ask each participant to start a message board thread with a question similar to what might be offered as a characteristic/category in Spill the Basket, preferably with a one-word or short response. Participants answer each of the other participants' questions by responding to the original message board post.

ACTIVITY OPTION 2: Jeopardy (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Paper, at least three sheets per participant. Scratch paper optional, as long as it is blank on one side
- Markers (one for each participant)
- Bells, buzzers, whistles, or other noisemakers (one for each team)

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This modified Jeopardy game introduces participants to one another by having them guess who is described by each "clue." It is best for groups of at least six people, so that they can divide into two teams of three people each.

Give each participant three sheets of paper and a marker. Tell them to write "I statements" about themselves on each sheet, e.g. "I have two kids" or "I am a new religious educator." On the opposite side of the paper, they should write their name in small letters so that the leaders have an answer key.

Collect and shuffle the papers. Then break the participants into teams of at least three people, and give each team a noisemaker. As on Jeopardy, the leader will read one "clue" at a time, and the teams will quickly confer before sounding the noisemaker to give their answer. Answers must be in the form of "Who is [insert name]."

If the team answers correctly, they get two points. If the team answers incorrectly, they lose two points. If neither team gets the right answer, then the team with the person who the statement referred to gets four points. This is an incentive for this person not to blurt out the answer when their "clue" comes up.

Continue until all of the "clues" have been read, or until one team reaches a predetermined points goal.

ACTIVITY OPTION 3: Ten Words (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- If in-person: paper and pen/pencil for each participant
- If e-learning: computer with Internet

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity is simple and usable for e-learning formats.

Tell each person to create two lists of ten words each. The first list of words should describe them as a youth, and the second list of words should describe them now.

After five minutes of writing, invite participants to share their lists. The leader can suggest themes and make connections.

SESSION 3: Philosophy & Theology of Youth Ministry (45 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the philosophy and theology of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry
- Explore the multigenerational nature of youth ministry.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the philosophical and theological underpinnings of youth ministry
- See how youth ministry fits into the ministries of the larger congregation.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

This session explores the philosophical and theological grounding of youth ministry. A video of Rebecca Parker introduces the topic. Set up the video before the training. Test the technology ahead of time.

It is very important that participants read ahead of time Reader 3-1, Youth Empowerment: Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles and Reader 3-2, Looking to Our Past to Find Our Future: Foundations of Unitarian Universalist Youth Ministry.

ACTIVITY 1: Personal Philosophy of Youth Ministry (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Notepad and pen/pencil for each participant
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

Write the following question on newsprint: "In one or two sentences, what is your philosophy of youth ministry?"

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Remind participants that everyone comes to this module with unique backgrounds, assumptions, beliefs and philosophies about youth ministry. This is an opportunity for participants to think critically about their philosophies as well as to deepen and expand their philosophies.

Ask participants to take out their notebooks and a pen or pencil. Invite them to spend a few minutes thinking about their background, assumptions, beliefs and philosophy about youth ministry, reflect on the question you have written on newsprint, then write their personal philosophy of youth ministry in as concise a statement as they can.

After five or six minutes, invite participants to share their philosophies with the group.

ACTIVITY 2: Philosophical and Theological Center (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Computer
- LCD Projector / Screen
- Video: Rebecca Parker's Introduction to the LREDA Fall Conference "Building Multigenerational Faith Community"
- Reader 3-2, Looking to Our Past to Find Our Future: Foundations of Unitarian Universalist Youth Ministry (to be read before the session)
- Reader 3-1, Youth Empowerment: Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles (to be read before the session)

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Write the following on newsprint:
  - Three Pillars of Youth Ministry:
    - Multigenerational Congregations
    - Youth Empowerment
    - Covenant
  - Youth Empowerment:
    - Freedom with responsibility
    - Leadership development

- The free and responsible search for truth and meaning
  - o "Multigenerational Ministry is about creating and sustaining congregations through which we collectively embody wholeness." – Rev. Rebecca Parker

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Tell participants they will view the opening remarks of Rev. Rebecca Parker to the 2008 LREDA Fall Conference on the theme of "Building Multigenerational Faith Community." (You might ask if any participants attended that conference.) Then play the video. When the video is over, ask them to take five minutes to review Reader 3-1 and Reader 3-2 which they should already have read in preparation for this session.

Then summarize the following:

Effective and theologically grounded youth ministry is built on three pillars: Multigenerational Congregations, Youth Empowerment and Covenant. These three pillars are represented in Rebecca Parker video clip, Tera Little's essay, and the Consultation on Youth Ministry's definition of Youth Empowerment. Together these sources succinctly define the three pillars.

Rebecca Parker tells us that Multigenerational Ministry "is about creating and sustaining congregations through which we collectively embody wholeness." She points out that wholeness cannot be created alone, but instead comes from creative interactions among diverse people where "all are welcome, all contribute, all give and all receive."

We include Rebecca Parker's definition of Multigenerational Ministry because youth are a very important part of the "all" that she talks about. Effective and grounded youth ministry locates youth in a mosaic of different age groups in the congregation where they are connected with, and support and are supported by, people of many ages.

Over the years the idea of Youth Empowerment in Unitarian Universalism has drifted into the notion that youth should be allowed to govern themselves completely and that adults should only step in if someone is going to get hurt. Tera Little writes that Youth Empowerment that is authentically grounded in our religious tradition has three essential elements: "freedom with responsibility, leadership development, and the free and responsible search for truth and meaning." She builds on Channing and Emerson's theologies of self culture and self reliance, defining youth empowerment as youth having the power and responsibility to develop and grow themselves. UU communities are a place

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where youth can take on roles that enable them to grow and in a supportive multigenerational community.

Finally, the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth spent a lot of time wrestling with the idea of Youth Empowerment and the relationship between youth and adults. In the document "Youth Empowerment: Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles" the idea of covenant helps knit together the idea of multigenerational community with youth empowerment by defining the relationship among the age groups in covenantal terms. Covenant is about relationship and community, and Unitarian Universalism affirms the value of relationship, community, and interdependence. Youth ministry as a covenantal practice means that youth are in accountable relationship with one another and with the larger UU community

Together, these three pillars aim for the wholeness that Rebecca Parker describes. Youth develop and grow themselves, are empowered to share their gifts in multigenerational community, and make promises to one another to walk their faith journey together.

Lead a discussion using the following discussion questions, capturing important ideas on newsprint:

- In your experience, how have you seen Rebecca Parker's idea of

  "congregational whole" work or not work?

- What do you think of these three pillars of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry:

  multigenerational congregations, youth empowerment, and covenant?

- How do you see these pillars working or not working in your congregation?

- What would you add?

Reader 3-1: Youth Empowerment: Unitarian Universalist Guiding Principles

ATTRIBUTION

From the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Summary Report (UUA, 2007).

TEXT

Youth empowerment is both a goal and a practice that has intrinsic merit for each of us in our ethical and spiritual lives. The practice of fostering youth empowerment varies by context. In congregations, youth empowerment practice depends on the geography, culture, history, and structure of the congregation. Youth empowerment and youth leadership development reinforce one another – calling for our personal and community commitment to right relationship between youth and adults. Across diverse contexts, the principles of youth empowerment remain the same, but the details of its practice must address the particular needs of each community.

The task of youth empowerment is not to make our congregations safe for youth or to determine authority within Unitarian Universalist institutions. These are the responsibility of our shared faith community. If covenant is the backbone of our faith, youth empowerment is one vertebra among many. In order for individuals, groups, and communities to determine the structural barriers to youth empowerment and enact the practices in which youth empowerment might be fully realized, we must first define a philosophy of youth empowerment grounded in our Unitarian Universalist principles.

Youth empowerment is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized, and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. This covenantal practice is based on the following set of guiding principles:

- Love and trust between youth and adults, between youth and youth, and between adults and adults,
- Mentoring relationships among children, youth, and adults, which draw from direct experience and wisdom,

- The development of youth confidence and self-identity through building community, learning to use their voices effectively, and realizing a more robust expression of themselves,
- Encouragement for all to grow together in accountability,
- Youth defining their issues and participating in the decisions that affect their lives and impact their communities,
- Youth and adults having access to information through direct and honest communication expressed with grace, humility, and respect,
- Trust in the competence of youth skills and insights,
- Appreciation of the prophetic wisdom and energy of youth to be agents of social change, justice, and service,
- The recognition that youth ministry is an integral Unitarian Universalist ministry and part of our collective past, present, and future.

Reader 3-2: Looking to Our Past to Find Our Future: Foundations of Unitarian Universalist Youth Ministry

ATTRIBUTION

By Tera Little (2005); used with permission.

TEXT

"Youth empowerment is … about building the courage to announce to the world what is right and what is wrong." Anonymous youth (UUA Youth Office, 2001)

"Youth empowerment is … providing youth a chance to participate in the discussions that impact their own experiences." Anonymous youth (UUA Youth Office, 2001)

Our Unitarian Universalist youth group meeting rooms are filled with it. So are district and continental youth conferences, events and meetings. Youth Empowerment is the foundational philosophy of our youth ministries for ages 14-20. But if you ask ten or twenty or one hundred people the definition of youth empowerment, you are just as likely to receive that many differing answers. Considering the theological diversity in our congregations, that may not be surprising, but it is necessary for our adult and youth leaders to have a similar grounding in the foundation of the reason we do youth ministry the way we do it if they are to effectively minister to and with one another and pass along the torch of our faith. There are three essential elements within youth empowerment: freedom with responsibility, leadership development, and the free and responsible search for truth and meaning. This is not to say that other fundamentals are not existent in our youth ministry programs, things like deepening spirituality and caring for one another, and obviously those are crucial within any ministry; however, they exist in ministries that do not also claim youth empowerment as a building block. This paper will trace some of the theological beliefs from early Unitarians in order to see the solid ground on which our theology of youth empowerment stands so that we might better look ahead to our future.

Since its birth in 1982 with Common Ground, a continental-wide two-year process that examined the then-current structure of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry, Liberal Religious Youth, Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU) have heralded youth empowerment as fundamental to youth ministry and that belief is at the core of continental and district trainings in leadership, spirituality, and social action. It is important to note that youth empowerment does not equal adult abandonment or adult disempowerment. As its simplest, youth empowerment means youth and adults working together in partnership, within established boundaries, to accomplish mutually agreed upon goals. As of this date, there is no published definition within our movement about what youth empowerment means to us or how to effectively live it out within our churches; hence, the confusion that often abounds when it comes to doing youth work. However, a goal of the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth, a major initiative of President Bill Sinkford and the UUA Board of Trustees, is to come away with a definition as part of the two-year process of re-examining and re-visioning youth ministry services to our congregations.

So, how did we get to youth empowerment? One can look to William Ellery Channing and find direct links to our current belief system. When he publicly gave his sermon "Self-Culture" in 1838 as part of the Franklin Lectures in Boston, Channing used this as an opportunity to speak directly to trades people, regular folk who might not otherwise be in a place to hear his ideas (Channing, 1838). Even this simple act of preparing words meant for manual laborers is relevant in the exploration of youth ministry; never will you hear of someone stating that our youth ministry programs are too complex or intellectual for some youth too attend. The goal is a creation of a youth program that garners the maximum participation of every person, regardless of intellectual or economic background.

In "Self-Culture," Channing is arguing that people do have the power to shape themselves, and a belief in God demands that each person takes the time for self-betterment. This was among the more radical ideas of his time and was in direct opposition to the Calvinistic view of pre-determination. It required personal responsibility (the freedom with responsibility in youth empowerment) and assumed that each person has the right to a free and responsible search for truth and meaning (again, a tenant of youth empowerment). Channing states, "One of the chief arts of self-culture is to unite the childlike teachableness, which gratefully welcomes light from every human being who can give it…" (Channing, 1838). In our youth ministry programs, each young

person is seen as having wisdom and truth, and with youth empowerment each person's voice is drawn into the collective in order to achieve a greater understanding of the topic at hand, whether it is local politics, world religions, human sexuality, spirituality, or the myriad of topics in between. There can be no greater learning at times than the simple truths spoken by our young people. When they are in a safe space, in which they know their opinions and viewpoints are honored and celebrated, they are able to reach great depths on complex topics and their lights shine on each other.

The use of the democratic process also figured heavily into the realization of Channing's self-culture. He notes that self-culture is found "in our free government, in our political relations and duties … they do much to awaken and keep in action a nation's mind, … (and) a republic is a powerful means of educating the multitude (Channing, 1838). Freedom with responsibility and leadership development in youth ministry programs connect here with his thought. While there are parameters set by adult advisors, youth are given the amazing challenge of making decisions and creating programming for each other. In order to accomplish this they must learn appropriate skills such as meeting facilitation, decision-making processes, avenues toward building community, and use of rituals. In 1997, a young man from our youth group who was 16 years old, traveled east to Washington D.C. to participate in a national Social Justice Youth Conference. The whole congregation was excited about his participation, and they had given money and encouragement for his trip. Upon his return, the young man, Gavin, exclaimed, "I feel like I can move mountains now!" (Gavin Smith, personal communication, March 1997). He had experienced the power of being part of the political process, of having his voice heard, of understanding how our governmental structures function and the ways in which citizens can voice their opinion and organize for social change. In our churches, our youth are given a microcosm of that experience when they are encouraged to become members of the congregation, hold a seat on the Board or religious education or some other committee, when they actively engage in church meetings, and when they are given control of their own monetary budgets. The words of Channing ring out clearly from the pages of our hymnal, "The great end of religious education … is not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own" (Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993). Our philosophy of youth empowerment demands that youth do just that, and the job of the adult advisors is to give them the tools and support necessary to do that, while maintaining the appropriate boundaries and giving redirection as needed.

There has been commentary in recent years that congregations "ghettoize" their youth groups when the youth do not participate in adult worship services. There is great value in the entire church community - children, youth, young adults, families, singles, and elders - worshipping and touching the divine together. It is also important to worship together within peer groups, which helps gives shape to what Channing called "free spiritual powers" of human beings, that ability to nurture and bring forth the sacred from within to touch the holy (Channing, 1838). Each age group is at a different stage along the path in faith development, and as such worship experiences will hold a different meaning and vitality depending upon the age group and worship style. An area that needs to be strengthened in many youth groups is the worship element, and more time and training needs to be given to this because it is through worship that some of the most powerful searches for truth and meaning can take place. Through the quiet of meditation, or through joyful expressions of dance in youth worship, young people can connect with the divine and with each other in ways that bring out the power from within and create personal transformation. Without giving form and substance to the spiritual self then a full realization of one's self culture cannot take place.

The inner light continued to shine brightly when Emerson wrote these words in his famous essay, Self Reliance: "Nothing is sacred except the integrity of your own mind" (Emerson, 1841). Again, here we see the early identification of our building blocks of freedom with responsibility and our search for truth and meaning. If the most sacred is the integrity of individual minds, then it stands to reason we would put much effort and importance in developing the minds of our young people and entrusting in them decisions crucial to their programs, in accordance to where the young people are developmentally. With a younger youth group, more direction is needed on the part of the adult advisors, and as the youth group grows older and has more experience in leading programs, the advisors can step back into more supportive roles. Learning leadership skills and practicing them on a weekly basis is great exercise for the mind, and the leadership skills learned in our youth groups have a lifelong impact. Marissa Gutierrez, a former Pacific Southwest District youth leader and current employee of the Unitarian Universalist Association, shared that she took the skills she learned in youth group into a volunteer coordinator position at the University of Southern California. While there, she worked with an adult advisor who exemplified, in her eyes, an adult modeling youth empowerment. On one of their projects together, he would affirm what she was doing right, and gently redirect her in areas that needed more attention. Afterwards,

Marissa realized she was able to head up a complicated project and carry it out to the end, and if she could do it there she could do it anywhere, throughout her life (Marissa Gutierrez, personal communication, December 2005). Those are the sacred skills that get continual playback in one's lifetime. In Gavin's words, it is the realization that mountains can be moved (Smith, 1997).

Clearly, our current model of youth ministry is built on a firm theological foundation, a gift from Channing and Emerson that lives on. What, if anything, does this say about our future? Does it mean our youth ministry is static or unchanging? It means that with our solid ground, we are free to explore deeper meanings and iterations of youth empowerment. We must be diligent and ensure our youth ministry programs are places where dialogue and learning take place, they cannot only be a comfortable room in which to hang out during the church service. It means that to realize the self culture and self reliance encouraged by Channing and Emerson, respectively, the adults and youth leaders take on roles of pushing the comfort areas of the youth enabling them to grow and expand. Jesse Jaeger, UUA Youth Programs Director, tells of two young women in leadership positions, both of whom did not come into the position with strong facilitation skills. By the end of their first year, through direction and experience, these two came to be the co-facilitators for one of the most complicated national youth discussions in recent years, whether or not to instigate a Common Ground III. These young women, in the midst of a passionate, potentially explosive, conversation among forty-plus youth leaders, as Jesse put it "centered the volcano of emotion." (Jesse Jaeger, personal communication, December 2005). They moved a mountain, not just for them, but for a whole continent of Unitarian Universalist youth.

The future of our youth movement demands a cadre of well-trained, committed youth advisors who can do more than just open the door for youth on Sunday mornings, but who can be the stable partners in this ministry, who can help them reach Channing's goals of self-culture and Emerson's hope of self reliance by honoring each voice in the group, encouraging the free and responsible search for truth and meaning, giving freedom with responsibility, and teaching leadership skills and then stepping back and letting the youth use them. The future of this movement also depends upon religious professionals who can understand the unique characteristics of a vibrant youth ministry and who can

nurture the process rather than stand in its way. It is necessary if we are to completely honor the foundations of our youth ministry.

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SESSION 4: Adolescent Development & Identity (2 hours and 5 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore different models of adolescent development that include physical, cognitive, social, racial, sexual, moral, spiritual, and faith dimensions
- Explore how UU identity development relates to overall youth development.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the developmental tasks and needs of youth, and identify ways of supporting youth's needs
- Know where to find more information about adolescent developmental issues.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

This session presents different models of adolescent development. It is important to note that models tell us about the experience of adolescents in general, but cannot tell us the actual experience of individuals. While individuals are more complex than these models can describe, models are helpful in thinking about how we can support youth. Examining patterns of behavior helps us anticipate how we might support youth as they navigate these complex developmental times in their lives. It is important to remind participants about the limits of models while acknowledging they can be useful. It is critical that you read and understand the information presented in the reader on these topics.

ACTIVITY 1: Development Gallery Walk (80 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Print outs of developmental levels for early, middle, late adolescents; for faith development; for racial identity and white identity

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- On newsprint write: "How do you best support youth at this developmental stage?"

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Ask group to count off by 6s to create six small groups. Each group receives one of the printouts. Participants will spend one hour together while eating lunch, preparing a presentation of their developmental level for the entire group. They will also answer the question "How do you best support youth at this developmental stage?"

The objective is to allow each group opportunity for a deeper understanding of one level of development and the opportunity to present to the rest of the group. They should be urged to be succinct, but also encouraged to share illustrative stories, especially with each other while preparing for the group presentation.

After one hour the participants gather again. Each group has 3-5 minutes to present. Ask one person from each group to summarize the discussion to email to all participants.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

If you are using a bulletin board e-learning platform create a discussion board for each stage of development. Then ask participants to reflect on the question posed in the activity and write their reflections on the comment section of the discussion board.

ACTIVITY 2: Development Stories (45 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Handout 4-1, Adolescent Development
- Handout 4-2, Stages of Faith Development

- Handout 4-3, Four Stages of Identity Formation Model
- Leader Resource 4-1, Identity Stories
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPERATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Make copies of the testimonials in Leader Resource 4-2, Identity Stories. Make sure that every participant has a copy of their group's testimonial.
- Write the reflection questions on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants apply what they learned in the Development Gallery Walk to the real stories of young people who grew up in our faith.

Ask participants to stay in the same groups that they were in for the gallery walk. Hand each group one of the testimonials from Leader Resource 4-1, Identity Stories. Ask one participant to read the testimonial aloud while the others follow along with their copy. When they have read their testimonial invite them to discuss the following questions:

- What developmental issues are present in the life of the person whose story you just read? Can you identity key markers in their developmental growth?
- What needs does this young person have from their faith community?
- What specific actions could have supported this young person?

Give the groups 15 minutes for discussion and then invite them back to the large group. Ask each small group to report. They should not reread the whole story to the whole group. Ask them to report back the key identities held by the person in their testimonial, the specific needs that individual might have from their faith community, and what they could have done to support them (3 minutes per group).

Once each group has shared, lead a wrap up discussion with the following:

- What have you learned from this session?
- What other resources or trainings might you need to better support young people in your faith community?

Handout 4-1: Adolescent Development

ATTRIBUTION

From the Chrysalis Advanced Advisor Training.

TEXT

Area of Development	Early Adolescence (ages 12-15)	Middle Adolescence (ages 15-18)	Late Adolescence (ages 18-22)
Physical Growth	• Peak time of physical growth—puberty • Transitions towards adult body • Eats and sleeps more • Demonstrates or does not demonstrate behaviors that may indicate risk for eating disorders or depression • Seeks support for self-esteem and body image	• Develops sexuality more fully • Negotiates feelings of gendered attraction and sexual orientation • Navigates greater risks relating to alcohol, drug use, sexual activity • Peak physical growth stage for male youth	• Achieves full physical development • Gains more assurance about body image • Engages in sexual activity; more likely to be partnered • Learns to manage stress and maintain health
Cognitive, Intellectual Development	• Moves from only concrete thinking to more abstract thinking, including hypothetical thinking • Concentrates on self and other's perceptions of self • Engages an "imaginary audience," a mental idea of others watching • Particular intelligence strengths become evident (linguistic, mathematical, interpersonal, musical)	• Has the ability to think deductively, inductively, conceptually, hypothetically • Able to synthesize and use information efficiently • May engage in celebrating new mindfulness about self (journal writing, re-reading emails, etc.) • Becomes more interested in and critical of the wider world	• Particularly open to learning; a time ripe for formal/informal education • Expresses ideas with more linguistic skill • May see many points of view and may claim multiple realities as the truth (relativism) • May claim self as a "producer" of knowledge (not just a consumer)
Social, Affective Development	• Social relationships with peers are very important • Acceptance with peers is often important—may seek "similar" peers as a means of affirming self (e.g., same race peers, or similarly athletic peers, etc.) • Explores racial, ethnic, gender, and sexual identities • May enact racial/ethnic/gender stereotypes as part of the process of	• Tries to claim identities, both independently and in relationships with others • Needs to belong and have a sense of self-worth • May start to conform less to peer groups • Needs engagement with diversity of peers to broaden notions of racial and ethnic identity • May claim boldly racial identity—	• Increases self-reliance • Develops sense of identity and intimacy • Expresses interest in vocational and personal life choices • Brings to realization sexual identity of self • Makes choices (either explicitly or not) to claim sexual identity • While relationships with peers are still important, they do not define the

	developing their own identity • May have heightened consciousness about race (e.g., multi-racial youth may feel pressure to "fit in" with one racial group) • Learns social scripts (embedded in the contexts of race, ethnicity, and class) about what it means to be a sexual person • Expresses criticism of self and others	may seek same-race peers to affirm identity • Youth in mostly mono-racial environments may just be starting to realize salience of their racial identity (particularly White youth) • Struggles with gender and sexual identity—often a time of increased stress for GLBTQQ youth • Tries to reconcile scripts about "normative" sexuality with feelings that may or may not be similar	self • May feel pressures to claim racial/ethnic identity in different spheres • May reject alliances based solely on race • Negotiates more knowledgably racism as a system of privilege and oppression • Needs involvement with diverse peers to continue healthy racial and ethnic identity development
Moral Development	• Demonstrates interest in ethics of care and justice • Respects social order, although sometimes challenges it as well • Learns how to put ethics of justice into action through community service	• Thinks conceptually and enjoys moral reasoning • Engages in "principled morality"—principles are more important than laws • Often has increased social awareness and activism	• Wrestles with personal morality and life choices • Expresses interest in moral and philosophical thinking, for self and wider world
Spiritual, Religious, Faith Development	• Enjoys presence or absence of religious creed • Expresses interest in religion that embodies one's values • Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning	• Conceptualizes religion as an outside authority that can be questioned • Questions faith, leading to deeper ownership or disenfranchising • Deepens religious spiritual identity • May use faith as sustaining presence	• Claims authority around issues of faith • Further develops spirituality as an important part of self • Engages in "faith" beyond traditional organized religion • Considers the role of faith in identity

Handout 4-2: Stages of Faith Development

ATTRIBUTION

From A Place of Wholeness, a Tapestry of Faith curriculum by Jesse Jaeger and Beth Dana.

TEXT

Stages of Faith Development

Pre-Stage: Undifferentiated Faith
Generally children from birth through about 2 years of age. Have the potential for faith but lack the ability to act on that potential. Through loving care from parents and other adults in their life young children start to build a lived experience of trust, courage, hope and love. At this stage, children experience faith as a connection between themselves and their caregiver.
Stage 1: Intuitive-projective Faith
Generally pre-school aged children. The cognitive development of children of this age is such that they are unable to think abstractly and are generally unable to see the world from anyone else's perspective. As Robert Keeley writes: "These children cannot think like a scientist, consider logical arguments, or think through complex ideas." Faith is not a thought-out set of ideas, but instead a set of impressions that are largely gained from their parents or other significant adults in their lives. In this way children become involved with the rituals of their religious community by experiencing them and learning from those around them.
Stage 2: Mythic-literal Faith
Generally ages 6 to 12. Children at this age are able to start to work out the difference between verified facts and things that might be more fantasy or speculation.

At this age children's source of religious authority starts to expand past parents and trusted adults to others in their community like teachers and friends.

Like the previous stage, faith is something to be experienced. At this stage it is because children think in concrete and literal ways. Faith becomes the stories told and the rituals practiced.

Later in this stage children begin to have the capacity to understand that others might have different beliefs than them.

Stage 3: Synthetic-conventional Faith

Generally starts about the age of 13 and goes until around 18. However, some people stay at this stage for their entire life.

Unlike previous stages, people at this stage are able to think abstractly. What were once simple unrelated stories and rituals can now be seen as a more cohesive narrative about values and morals. With abstract thinking comes the ability to see layers of meaning in the stories, rituals and symbols of their faith.

At this stage people start to have the ability to see things from someone else's perspective. This means that they can also imagine what others think about them and their faith.

People at this stage claim their faith as their own instead of just being what their family does. However, the faith that is claimed is usually still the faith of their family.

Issues of religious authority are important to people at this stage. For younger adolescents, that authority still resides mostly with their parents and important adults. For older adolescents and adults in this stage, authority resides with friends and religious community. For all people in this stage, religious authority resides mostly outside of them personally.

Stage 4: Individuative-reflective Faith

This stage usually starts in late adolescence (18 to 22 years old). However Robert Keeley points out that "people of many generations experience the kind of dissonance that comes with the real questions of faith that one begins to address at this stage of development."

People in this stage start to question their own assumptions around the faith tradition.
Along with questioning their own assumptions about their faith, people at this stage start to question the authority structures of their faith.
This is often the time that someone will leave their religious community if the answers to the questions they are asking are not to their liking.
Greater maturity is gained by rejecting some parts of their faith while affirming other parts. In the end, the person starts to take greater ownership of their own faith journey.

Stage 5: Conjunctive Faith

People do not usually get to this stage until their early thirties.
This stage is when the struggles and questioning of stage four give way to a more comfortable place. Some answers have been found and the person at this stage is comfortable knowing that all the answers might not be easily found.
In this stage, the strong need for individual self-reflection gives way to a sense of the importance of community in faith development.
People at this stage are also much more open to other people's faith perspectives. This is not because they are moving away from their faith but because they have a realization that other people's faiths might inform and deepen their own.

Stage 6: Universalizing Faith

It is a rare person who reaches this stage of faith.
James Fowler describes people at this stage as having "a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us."
People at this stage can become important religious teachers because they have the ability to relate to anyone at any stage and from any faith. They are able to relate without condescension but at the same time are able to challenge the assumptions that those of other stages might have.
People at this stage cherish life but also do not hold on to life too tightly. They

put their faith in action, challenging the status quo and working to create justice in the world.

Robert Keeley points to people like Gandhi and Mother Teresa as examples of people who have reached this stage.

Handout 4-3: Four Stages of Identity Formation Model

ATTRIBUTION

By Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings; used with permission.

TEXT

The following stages are meant to be guidelines; they are not stagnant, but fluid. A person can remain at one stage or move between stages during a lifetime. The value of having the following model as a guideline is that it provides valuable information for people who identify as persons of color or a member of an ethnic minority, and those working with them, to better understand identity formation. The limitations of such a model and guideline are that they may obscure the fact that human beings are different, constantly evolving and changing; and that the model could be used to label or stereotype the populations who are the focus of the model.

People of Color:

1. Assimilation Stage.

   - This stage is characterized in terms of a person being educated or indoctrinated to believe that the standard of excellence and all that is good is synonymous with the dominant culture.
   - Indoctrination of this message from an early age becomes internalized for many persons who learn to think that the dominant culture is better than their own ethnic/racial culture. Consequently, many may prefer teachers, doctors, lawyers, schools, etc. from the dominant culture, while denying the value of professionals of their own cultural group.
   - Self-hatred is possible during this stage, as is lack of awareness or an integrated approach to assessing the merit or value of the dominant culture.

- At this stage biracial/transracially adopted children are just becoming aware of their particular racial or ethnic identity.

- Children who are raised in homogenous environments and assume they are part of the dominant culture may experience this stage differently than other people of color and ethnic minorities, because "they just assumed they were like everyone else.

- Until they experienced some form of racial prejudice or discrimination from schoolmates, strangers, or even relatives of their adopted family."[1]

2. <u>Questioning or Awareness Stage</u>.

- This stage is usually initiated by a crisis (personal, political or social) or comment that causes the person to question their beliefs about self, by comparing what they have been taught with what they actually experience.

- Through questioning, awareness begins to take root and the person notices comments, behaviors and even facial expressions directed toward him or her that are offensive or hurtful.

- A person going through this stage begins to reflect on their life experiences and usually grows angry with self and society for a lifetime of indoctrination and unequal treatment.

- For biracial and transracially adopted persons, this stage may be experienced slightly differently. At this stage a biracial person may question/become aware that society and possibly family members are forcing them to choose one ethnic/racial group identity.

- For persons who are transracially adopted by people of European descent, there maybe awareness that although their adoptive parents may want to live in a colorblind world, the people they interact with on a daily basis do not live in such a world.

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[1] C.N. Le, "Adopted Asian Americans" *Asian-Nation: Asian American History, Demographics, and Issues,* 2001-2007; accessed 8 July 2007; available from http://www.asian-nation.org/adopted.shtml.

- Experiences of racism in their communities, schools, churches and sometimes their adoptive families can trigger feelings of isolation and dejection.

3. Rejection-Disengagement Stage.

- This stage is characterized by withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion in one's own culture. For Hispanics, it may mean taking pride in speaking Spanish and not wanting to speak English. For Asians, it may manifest as wanting to learn more about the culture and history of their country of origin.

- Persons in this stage develop and project a strong connection with their own cultural/ethnic identity.

- This stage is also marked by anger/rage as the person begins to address a lifetime of shame and guilt projected onto them by the dominant culture.

- For many biracial persons, this stage helps to explain the feelings of guilt over the possibility of having to reject one parent's culture and ethnicity.

- Biracial persons may experience self-hatred because of having to reject a part of one's self.

- Transracially adopted persons may experience this stage in two ways. They may disengage from their ethnicity of birth and only identify with their adoptive parent's identity. Or they may disengage from their adoptive parent's identity and take pride in their ethnicity of birth.

- For both biracial and transracially adopted persons this stage is difficult because it usually involves having to reject either a part of self or a part of their family.

4. Integration-Reengagement.

- Persons in this stage, having learned from and moved back and forth through the previous stages, have gone through tremendous personal growth.

- Their sense of self is more positive and their connection/attachment to the world is more secure.
- They have discovered that being human is flexible and fluid and they have learned to embrace the many paradoxes of everyday living.
- They are able to accept the healthy and reject the harmful elements of the dominant culture.
- They are also willing to be critical of their own culture. In other words, they have integrated the cultures that impact their daily lives, and their outlook and attitude toward life is holistic and hopeful.

White People:

1. Pre-Awareness.
   - This stage is characterized by white people being unaware of the privileges of white skin. Like fish not knowing they are in water, white people in the U.S. are indoctrinated not to notice the advantages and privileges of whiteness.
   - It is also characterized by believing the stereotypes about ethnic minorities. Not seeing race / ethnicity is a symptom of this stage.

2. Awareness / Guilt.
   - This stage is initiated with a personal encounter (with a person of color, media, etc.) that brings an awareness of racism.
   - Feelings of guilt based on historical oppression of ethnic minorities often surfaces causing internal discomfort.
   - Loyalty to whiteness is often questioned which can cause conflict with friends and family.

3. Rejection – Disengagement.

- The internal conflict that surfaces in the previous stage is manifested in some white people believing that if they avoid contact with ethnic minorities they feel better.
- Internal discomfort causes other white people to engage with ethnic minorities out of guilt and / or the need to feel good about themselves.
- And, in yet others, that discomfort causes some white people to distance themselves from whiteness.

4. Integration – Reengagement.
- In this stage a healthy white identity is emerging as is a willingness to be critical of white / dominate culture without guilt.
- Resistance and transformation of white privilege and systemic racism in collaboration with other whites and ethnic minorities is done with respect and accountability.
- There is also an awareness that moving back and forth between stages is normal.

Leader Resource 4-1: Identity Stories

ATTRIBUTION

Each story is written for this training by Ellen Carvill-Ziemer, Megan Dowdell, Bart Frost, and India McKnight.

INSTRUCTIONS

Print each story separately to distribute to the small groups.

TEXT

Ellen Carvill-Ziemer

My name is Ellen Carvill-Ziemer and I also go by Evan. My family has been UU since I was 5 in 1983. I'm white and grew up middle-class with the expectation of college. My sexual identity is queer—I'm mostly attracted to women, but lesbians are women and I'm not. My gender identity is genderqueer. I'm female bodied, have no current intention of seeking surgery or hormones, and don't often use gender neutral pronouns, but I've never felt like a woman. As a kid, I was comfortable as a tomboy, but I didn't think I'd grow up to be a woman. So I decided I must be intersex and would discover I was a boy at puberty. Instead I felt betrayed by my body!

But the worst year for me was 8th grade: the bullying at school became worse and even friends started wondering when I was going to start dating boys and shaving my legs. Inspired by About Your Sexuality, I came out to myself—but, after a series of anti-gay jokes that teachers laughed at, I decided I was wrong, developed a crush on a boy, began shaving, and tried to be the "right" kind of girl—though I wasn't very good at it! When I finally came out to myself right before senior year, the word lesbian felt wrong, so I thought I must be bisexual. I only told one friend until freshmen year of college when I came out to everybody. Then I began opening up the Pandora's box of gender. That journey took longer and has been far stranger. If I were a youth now, with the information on the internet, I probably wouldn't have been in denial for so long!

I'm really grateful I grew up UU, and in a Welcoming Congregation, even though we only had one out lesbian. I'm also grateful for the youth group and the chances to do annual

youth services. I knew that church was home and adults cared about me and were proud of me.

The best thing my church did was to offer About Your Sexuality! The comprehensive information and emphasis on figuring out one's own values helped me avoid the kind of sex many queer youth have to prove their heterosexuality. It also helped me stand up to the anti-gay rhetoric at school. And it gave me enough LGBT supportive messages to help me wrestle with the ways I absorbed society's messages that there's something wrong with me.

It was also fantastic when the Welcoming Congregation committee invited youth to help start a monthly youth friendly movie night. I didn't come out to anyone, but knowing truly supportive adults, watching those movies, and participating in the discussions helped me get ready. (But maybe no one should have invited my parents to PFLAG before I came out!)

The religious educator in my church didn't interact with the youth much at all—except for helping us start a Sunday morning RE program when we felt bereft. I was closest to one of the ministers who served as a youth advisor. I am very grateful for that safer space, but I also see missed opportunities. We didn't do the 5 steps of community building and with more intentional building capacity for deeper sharing I might have come out. I was uncomfortable with the crushes boys had on me and got teasing from the adults instead of support for not wanting that kind of attention. And, some of the youth called me "Ellen-girl", which I hated, but no one would stop. Actually, the minister called me that too and said it was because he was fond of me.

I was too much of a social introvert to enjoy youth cons with all their social pressures, but I wish someone had helped me find GA youth caucus or another way to connect with the wider UU movement because I might have found more commonality and connection.

Megan Dowdell

My name is Megan Dowdell and I identify as a white queer, over-educated young adult who grew up north of Boston in Massachusetts. As a young Unitarian Universalist

leader, people often ask when I became a Unitarian Universalist or if I was born a UU. My response is: "Both." Here is what I mean:

When I was 11 years old, I was a member of a children's choir that included fourth and fifth-grade girls from my elementary school as well as three Beverly churches, the Methodists down the street, the American Baptists next door and First Parish Church Unitarian Universalist. We would sing at one of the churches each Sunday and after singing, I would wait for a ride home from a choir member's parent or my mother. Soon after joining, I began to have strange feelings about coming in and singing in other peoples' churches. I wanted to try out going to the whole service and the religious education programs. I started at First Parish UU, a small congregation with a female minister at the time, and I didn't leave. It wasn't two or three Sundays before I asked my mother if I could go every week. Today, I continue to thank God that she said: "Yes."

The congregation welcomed me as a young elementary school girl wanting to attend church, and, at least initially, without a parent present. A family "adopted" me to attend Ferry Beach church retreat weekends, gave me a function to serve at church events, and continued to give me rides home after church. They kept me physically safe and let me speak my mind (as if I would have had it any other way). I have come to believe that the congregation had a trust in something great and deep beyond the typical family structures that helped me confirm that I belonged.

Not long after my enrollment in the First Parish Sunday School, the director of religious education called my house and left a message that they wanted me to perform in the children's story during a Sunday service. That moment, I realized not only did I belong at church; I could be a leader even at 11 years old. I can still remember listening to the recording and having my heart open up. It wasn't just that *I* wanted to be at church every weekend; they wanted me there, too.

Between middle school and high school, I do remember some of my peers in the Sunday School program feeling perplexed, and even expressing anger at my presence in the church community. While the friendships formed at church seemed to be oriented by parents, I seemed to belong to everyone as opposed to one particular family whose heads of household served on one committee or another. I sometimes felt "behind" in the First Parish Unitarian Universalist childhood, having started going to the church school at 11 rather than from preschool, having my mother *join me* at church rather than the other way around. I recall difficult times when something would get broken and it

was easiest to wonder if the girl without any parents at church had broken it. I was well liked and occasionally reminded that I was still vulnerable.

My arrival in the First Parish community came at just the right time. From infancy, my father was abusing me physically and emotionally. My days at home were accompanied by intense fear and anxiety. At an early age, I learned to dread the weekend, when I would have to spend the most time at home with him present. The church community became an instant home-away-from-home, an escape from fear and violence. My church family, in particular the religious education program and then, the youth group, truly meant my survival. I do not believe that without their embrace or the programming and leadership opportunities that I would have made it through high school, or at least fared as well as I did.

When my brother died on Christmas Day in 1999, church community members came to his funeral and helped my mother and me to find a way to recognize Christmas again. When my mother and I finally received a restraining order from my father at age seventeen, it was the youth group advisor who picked me up and brought me to church. In different ways, they taught both my mother and me to have fun again; they stayed a faithful constant during an almost unbearably difficult divorce as we built a life that looked quite different from the one before. The support I received in difficult times was matched by an overwhelming trust in youth leadership at First Parish. While I was in high school, I was a co-chair of the Welcoming Congregation task force. The church supported our youth group in bringing high school rock bands to perform shows in the sanctuary in order to raise money for social justice projects – not just one time with some chagrin, but several years in a row!

When I returned to preach at First Parish last year and recounted my story to a changing membership under new (and young!) ministerial direction, I was introduced to a young man who was about fifteen and playing the organ during the service. Just as I had, he arrived at First Parish on his own and quickly sought out leadership opportunities. While I was thrilled and not quite surprised that my home congregation had yet again supported a solo young person who wanted church, my stomach dropped a little. I am so grateful for the congregation's role in my life, and at the same time, I wonder what might have happened had someone at church noticed the early signs of child abuse I presented or probed more deeply into the question, "why is Megan always the first to arrive and the last to leave?"

Bart Frost

My name is Bart Frost. I identify as a white, straight, lower-middle class male and as a

3rd Generation Unitarian Universalist Young Adult. I am a DRE's kid, and a minister's grandkid. I currently serve our faith as a paid Sunday School teacher, and on the General Assembly Planning Committee. If you were to ask me how to define my faith, the first sentence from my mouth would be "Love is this doctrine of this church and service is its prayer."

I spent my pre-adolescent and early adolescent years at my mother's first Director of Religious Education job in Massachusetts. Before high school, we moved to Raleigh, North Carolina where my mother served as an interim DRE for 2 and a half years.

My congregational faith communities were disappointing. As the kid of a DRE, I was more like a staff person's kid than a member of my congregation. I attended youth group and high school RE, but while the other kids knew each other from growing up in a RE program, I had to start from scratch. And my mom was the "help".

Growing up in a faith as troubled with classism as ours is, this dichotomy of my mother's job and my wish to be involved put me in a troubling place. On one hand, I was expected to participate by my mother and other adults in the congregation. On the other, I was not supposed to participate too much or cross any lines. As an adolescent, this left me not only confused and frustrated, but angry as well. If I couldn't be the person I wanted to be in my church, then there was nowhere else for me to be that person.

It got more complicated after my mother's interim position was over and a new DRE was hired. I was asked to pledge money in order to be a part of the community. I was told that I couldn't hold the positions I had held and the youth program was re-structured in such a way that I felt excluded. Furthermore, my home life was a struggle with my parents' divorce, but I didn't have anyone I could talk to at the church because the minister was my mother's former employer and the new DRE was the new DRE.

The experience was not all negative though. The congregation, and individual members, supported me financially so that I could participate in both district leadership roles and national ones. I did OWL, Coming of Age, and other staples. Because I could not share

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my whole self in my congregation, I found myself immersed in district and Association youth communities. I could be myself in those places because I was no longer "Pam's son" but rather just "Bart". My first UU friends were the children of other DREs because we shared a bond of common circumstance.

Briefly, I need to point out the adult leadership that helped me along my path. At the congregational level, I had two superb youth group advisers who saw potential in me, helped foster it, and held my secrets. When I served on the Thomas Jefferson District Youth Steering Committee, there was no adult leadership. We were on our own, and it was one of my most painful leadership experiences. At the national level, I found adult leaders and teachers who actively wanted me to succeed. There were also mentorships formed with older youth or young adults who have left a permanent imprint on my life. These adults and young adults taught me almost everything I know and instilled this horrible need for me to stay involved in my faith!

All in all, my faith communities allowed me to make mistakes, learn from them, and move on. My faith communities gave me independence and taught me to be a leader by listening. They let me grow.

What could my faith communities have done different to support me more?
They could have listened.
They could have mentored.
They could have acknowledged my struggles.
They could have reached out.

It would have been nice to be treated like a member, and not as a special case.

And although the previous statement is true, it did kind of work out for me in the end. I did find communities where I could be myself.
Where I could be angry, or sad, or ecstatic.
Where I had a voice.
Where I was taught to lead and to be.

It could have been worse, I suppose, but it also could have been a whole lot easier as well.

India McKnight

I am a Universalist Black chick; somewhere between a little red girl with "good hair" and a ruddy brown skin woman that tells no lies, at least not any longer. The lens of which I view the world is through the great hope that liberation is possible. Sometimes I think about reversing the unnatural order of systemic hierarchical oppression. Yet if destiny handed me that cat o'nine, I'd suggest that it be put in the National History Museum. Perhaps then folks could conceive of such pain, visible and unseen. My faith traditions are the hands that have shaped me; the nurturing ground in which my commitment to transform and be transformed blossoms.

When I was 17, I started attending the Unitarian Universalist Congregation of Silver Spring, MD. A friend and I were taking a comparative religion class in 11th grade when our teacher suggested that my friend visit the local UU congregation as he grew interested in cultural expressions of Christianity, without having to forsake his Jewish ancestry and upbringing. He asked me to come along the next Sunday morning. This was a ritual I was used to but had given up the Baptist church at 12 when I realized that hell didn't exist. This realization allowed me to feel liberated from fear and sent me on a journey to encounter an intimate connection to the divine through Wicca, Buddhism and Catholicism's Virgin Mary.

When we attended the congregation I was very surprised by two experiences. The youth group was not required to attend the service and had an entirely separate space not only from the sanctuary but from the building. We met in a wooden cabin decorated exclusively by the youth in the yard behind the church. Sitting in a circle I watched in amazement as the youth spoke and led the group with support from their adult advisors. This group of youth was actually being listened to by adults and by one another. In my former youth group our primary relationship was to the teacher instructing us in the process of becoming more devout adherents to Jesus Christ, Our Lord and Savior. With such a tight agenda there really wasn't space for questions, doubt and deviation. As an adult I realize that all people, especially youth, want to and need to be listened to as a part of their spiritual development. "Encouraging spiritual growth in our congregations" means developing relationships with people of all ages, to ask "what's good?" and then listen to what isn't so good and also what is somewhere in between.

Part of being listened to is having those around you believe you and if possible mirror your experiences. While coming out as a lesbian at 18 I felt completely supported by my growing Unitarian Universalist community and by our theology. However I didn't feel supported as a young Black woman. In the beginning of the 20th century Dr. WEB Dubois described the struggle of being Black in America as having a double consciousness or feeling a two-ness. To see yourself one way and to have society treat you negatively based on another set of perceptions in which you begin to internalize oppression. Even though my Nana, godmother, great aunts, cousins, friends and loved ones told me little black girls could grow up to be anything, I stopped believing. I thought/think that being a member and successful leader in my religious community meant/means being white. I didn't want to be special, but I did. I didn't want to be black, but I did. I didn't want to "code switch", twisting my tongue into proper English in the presence of white people, but I did. There were over 100 words I no longer used: Ebonics – Black English Vernacular. I agonized over diction and the pronunciation of words before speaking; ashamed and embarrassed when people couldn't understand my elaborate metaphors and colloquialisms.

Internalized oppression is a life long struggle for People of Color living in the United States. As Unitarian Universalists we have to move beyond a theology of inclusion to one of transformation in which we are invited and supported in being who we are. By being and becoming ourselves we are constantly changing. During this change we need to see, hear, and touch beautiful reflections of others like ourselves. Most recently author Alice Walker writes in her poem, The World Has Changed, "The world has changed; it did not change without your prayers, without your faith, without your determination to believe in liberation and kindness... The world has changed; this doesn't mean you were never hurt." My prayer is that through the intensity of our personal and collective transformation we pause in the midst of this amazing work to look lovingly and compassionately at one another smiling that familiar smile in recognition of eternal life spirit.

Reader 4-1: Supporting Adolescent Development

ATTRIBUTION

By Tracey Hurd, published in *Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook* (Boston, MA: UUA, 2005).

TEXT

The Young Adolescent
Ages Twelve through Fifteen

> "When I found out that my parents were getting a divorce, I picked up the phone and called my three best friends. I had to let them know; they are the ones who are really important."

Physical Development

Early adolescence is a peak time of growth and physical development. Marked by the onset of puberty, the adolescent's body changes dramatically. Hormonal changes usher in physical, sexual, and psychological growth. This period is characterized by an increased need for food and sleep. The early-rising child now sleeps late. By age fourteen many girls have reached full physical maturity, while most boys are still growing rapidly. Caring for an evolving body and body image are critical tasks of early adolescence. Self-conscious, the early adolescent routinely compares herself to others. She is sensitive to media images of strength and beauty and can be at risk for eating disorders. While bulimia (binging and purging) and anorexia (severe appetite loss) are most often diagnosed in female youth, their prevalence in males is increasing.

Sometimes moody, the adolescent negotiates dramatic changes in his physical appearance, strength, coordination, and athletic abilities. At times it can be difficult to determine if adolescent moodiness is typical or indicative of any developing mental illness. Dramatic, sustained depression can indeed be cause for concern. If a youth withdraws from family and friends, he may benefit from intervention to bolster and support his developing sense of self. Early adolescence can also be a time when youth are exposed to drugs and alcohol. Honest conversation and guidance about addictive substances support youth in current and future decision making. Research demonstrates that youth want to talk with their caregivers about these issues.

Young adolescents engaged in extracurricular activities are less likely to engage in early risk behaviors. All adolescents have the capacity to meet challenges and passionately engage in a multifaceted life; providing opportunities to do so is the task of supporting adults.

The early adolescent also needs support for his physical development and provisions for his developing body. He needs privacy and sustained, enduring love, despite any difficult or oppositional behavior. Food, regular exercise, involvement in

various activities, and social belonging bolster his self-esteem. Like everyone, he needs respect and care.

Cognitive Development

The early adolescent's thinking is no longer tied only to the concrete world; she is beginning to engage in abstract and hypothetical thinking. Developmental psychologist Jean Piaget calls this the start of formal operations, marked by an ability to think about thinking. With logical reasoning skills in place, the young adolescent can now ponder cause and effect. She enjoys mental problems that involve balancing more than one idea. With mental operations ready to help her classify, store, and remember information, the early adolescent is a facile learner who can both take in and make her own sense of large amounts of information. Practicing thinking skills, she engages in argument, even sarcasm, based on deductive reasoning.

New intellectual acuity combines with preoccupation with the self, resulting in increased adolescent concern about what others might be thinking about him. According to psychologist David Elkind, the adolescent lives as if he has an imaginary audience. He is highly conscious of himself and feels like no one could ever quite understand him. He uses his intellectual skills to challenge assumptions he notices in the adult world; he can be brazen in these challenges.

During these years particular intellectual strengths, or intelligences, may become evident. Psychologist Howard Gardner argues that there are nine intelligences: linguistic (word-smart), logical-mathematical (number-smart), spatial (design-smart), bodily kinesthetic (body/movement-smart), musical (music-smart), interpersonal (people-smart), intrapersonal (self-smart), naturalist (nature-smart), and existential ("big questions"-smart). Adolescents are ready to understand their own and others' intellectual strengths, and multiple intelligence theory often affirms what they already know. "That girl is a biology whiz, but she totally blew that oral report because she's so bad at talking about it," comments an adolescent.

Social and Affective Development

During early adolescence, social relationships with peers are of great importance. The adolescent spends increased time with her friends and begins to build her identity through what she shares with them. Interested in sports or music or skateboarding, the young adolescent actively engages with others; this becomes a currency of friendship. Mutual self-disclosure, reflecting, and sharing thoughts creates new intimacy for friends. In his psychological research, Henry Stack Sullivan found that the close same-sex "chumships" of early adolescence provide foundational skills for later intimate friendships. During early adolescence, girls' social networks of friendship usually increase in size, while boys' networks decrease.

According to psychologist Willard Hartup, the amount of time spent with friends is greatest during middle childhood and early adolescence. He estimates that teens spend almost a third of their time with friends. Friendships and peers provide both support and stress for the young adolescent. Able to observe and critically evaluate, he constantly compares himself with others. While he has a much deeper capacity for compassion

than he did when he was younger, he also has the capacity to use social information for both inclusion and exclusion. Peer pressures emerge. In the pursuit of acceptance, the early adolescent may change his appearance or engage in new behaviors. He may work hard to reconcile his inner self with his outer, social self. He needs role models to nurture his ethic of care, for himself and for others. He needs to learn how to engage in responsible social decision making.

The young adolescent is continually exploring his identities. Gender identity and the beginnings of sexual attractions are central, as are racial and ethnic identities. Youth learn to express emotions in ways congruent with their identities, sometimes resulting in differences between what they feel and what they express. Psychologist Stephanie Shields notes that by adolescence, boys and girls know there are expectations for them to show and hide anger, respectively. Expressing emotions is part of expressing identity.

Scripts for socially correct emotional expression are also embedded in race and ethnicity. This can be a particularly sensitive time for transracially adopted, multiracial, or multiethnic adolescents. Navigating multiple identities, they may feel the need to choose with whom they will identify. They are often called on to be much more intentional than monoracial or monoethnic peers, for whom the choice of role models seems preset.

Youth learn social scripts—embedded in contexts of race, ethnicity, and class— about what it means to be a sexual person. Two youth of the same ethnicity may be socialized with very different cultural messages about maleness, femaleness, and sexuality, based on where they are raised (urban, suburban, or rural environments), their caregivers' backgrounds, their economic context, and other variables. The young adolescent negotiates messages about how to express sexuality from family, peers, culture, and the community.

Sexuality is linked with power in much of the media that surrounds American youth. Sexuality researcher Deborah Tolman asserts that girls often get the mixed message that it is powerful to be a sexual object but unacceptable to have their own sexual desires. Such messages don't serve any gender well. Additionally, most dominant sexual scripts assume heterosexuality. Youth may feel pressured to claim heterosexuality before they have sexual stirrings or in opposition to their bodily impulses. Alternative social messages from family and church communities can affirm broader, more accepting perspectives on sexuality. Parental support, communication, and monitoring are consistently correlated with reduced at-risk sexual behavior in youth. As adolescents search for their identities, family members remain primary influences.

Racial and ethnic identity development are similarly influenced by the many contexts in which youth move and function. Psychologist Beverly Daniel Tatum explains that youth of color think about themselves in terms of race because that is how the rest of the world thinks of them. They may even enact racial stereotypes in the process of coming to racial identity. All youth absorb racist messages. Although such messages do not support healthy identity development, they may influence behaviors. Early adolescence is the time when youth seek to be with others who seem like themselves, a challenge for youth who are under-represented in many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Identifying with others is critical, and the process may seem frenetic in youth. This is part of the path to later, more individuated identity.

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Researcher Donna Jackson Nakazawa finds that in the process of identifying who they are, multiethnic and multiracial adolescents are likely to reject all that they are not. Multiracial youth often report feeling that they must choose one racial identity in order to fit in somewhere. Sometimes this puts adolescents at odds with their siblings or families. When multiracial and multiethnic youth actively discuss racial and ethnic identities with their families, they are better equipped to negotiate these complexities with peers. They develop descriptive language that can counteract the limited labeling that dominates discussions of race and ethnicity. In addition, multiracial and multiethnic youth benefit deeply from communities rich in a diversity of races and ethnicities.

White adolescents who have not lived with racial diversity may enter adolescence without even considering their racial identity or white privilege. They may need to learn that "seeing color" is a step toward claiming their racial identity and becoming antiracist. Youth need to have white privilege named and explored. Reflecting with white adolescents about what their racial identity means (for example, "When I go to the mall, I am not followed by clerks or security guards, though my peers of color are") is an essential task. They need to encounter their whiteness as new. By exploring ethnic backgrounds, white youth learn more deeply about individual differences that are not always apparent.

All adolescents are best supported in their racial identity development by knowing diverse people in multiple contexts and engaging in sustained friendships and alliances across races and ethnicities, in addition to having strong role models to whom they can relate. Youth construct their identities based on their experiences. Although racial and ethnic identity may be a central organizing force in defining who the adolescent is at the moment, adolescence is a time of increasing complexity. Meaningful engagement with others nurtures appreciation of our inherent human diversity.

Engaging in multiple activities (sports teams, clubs, church activities, etc.) with different groups of peers serves as a buffer to stress associated with the adolescent's emerging identity. Having several realms in which he can achieve broadens the adolescent's self-critical lens. With increased cognitive capabilities, he develops an evaluative eye as well as a sense of humor and sarcasm. He finds his parents embarrassing and goofy as he imagines outsiders' perspectives. Recent research has shown that adolescents still wish for parental attention and appreciation; they need to feel valued and taken seriously. Their emotions are fluid; they first say, "I can't stand my family," and then ask their families for advice or reassurance. The older adolescent works at reconciling conflicting feelings and identities.

Moral Development
The adolescent's ability to take the perspective of others deeply influences her moral and ethical perspectives. She is able to consider multiple perspectives on a situation, and she makes decisions accordingly. She navigates what she thinks based partly on her perception of what she imagines others will think. Her personal concern about social approval provides a basis for respecting social order. The early adolescent can often have a law-and-order perspective that lends itself to the development of great respect for systems and agreements between people. In her personal realm, she may challenge

authority, particularly her parents'. Yet when thinking through moral issues, the early adolescent can be enormously generous.

Through experiences of mutuality and increased connection to others, the early adolescent develops a large capacity for care and altruism. The adolescent is able to put his thinking about fairness into action. Encouraging (and even mandating) his community participation will help him create and hold the identity of a moral thinker and doer. He develops a sense of purpose to further his sense of being a part of community. This paves the way for commitment to moral and ethical ideals in later adolescence and complements his emerging interest in issues of justice in the wider world.

Faith Development

Valuing connection to others and understanding multiple perspectives, the young adolescent may find new meaning in religious and faith communities. A sense of belonging is critical to the adolescent, and she now has the cognitive abilities to understand the moral underpinnings of a faith community. She may be drawn to the authority of a religion, particularly if it embodies her values. The creed, or lack of creed, of a religion may comfort or challenge the early adolescent who enjoys the neatness of moral order.

Faith researcher James Fowler believes the adolescent is ready to accept conventional notions of faith. The young adolescent wants to synthesize his values and faith can provide a framework for doing so. According to Fowler, adolescents yearn for coherence amid the complexity of their lives. Faith can offer a philosophical organizing rubric. In the Fowler's synthetic-conventional stage of faith development, the adolescent's spiritual growth may be nurtured by sustained involvement in a faith community that allows him to wrestle with religious questions and ideas. Working within a faith community deepens his spirituality and helps him find a larger narrative for his life. If the community allows for questioning, the adolescent will have the opportunity to move toward his own reasoning about faith and spirituality. Seeking love, understanding, loyalty, and support, the developing adolescent can both serve and be served by a faith community.

Characteristics of This Age
- Transitions to an adult body
- Eats and sleeps more
- May demonstrate behaviors indicating risk of eating disorders or depression
- Seeks support for self-esteem and body image
- Engages in formal operational thinking, including abstract and hypothetical thinking
- Concentrates on the self and other's perceptions of the self
- Engages an imaginary audience, a mental representation of others watching
- Develops domain-specific intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, bodily kinesthetic, musical, intrapersonal, interpersonal, naturalist, and existential
- Engages actively with peers and social relationships
- Participates in same-sex friendships, which are a foundation for later intimate relationships

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- Takes on others' perspectives and understands that sharing perspectives doesn't necessarily mean agreement
- Demonstrates altruism and compassion
- Tries to reconcile the inner self with the outer self
- Explores gender, racial, and ethnic identities through affiliations
- Negotiates messages about sexuality from peers, communities, and family
- Achieves in several realms as a way to buffer stress
- Expresses criticism of self and others
- Shows concern with social approval
- Respects social order but sometimes challenges it as well
- Demonstrates interest in ethics of care and justice
- Seeks belonging and membership
- Expresses interest in religion that embodies values
- Enjoys presence or absence of religious creed
- Wants to develop a personal, although perhaps temporary, credo
- Sustains faith development by engaging with a community that allows questioning
- Enters Fowler's synthetic-conventional stage of faith development
- Seeks love, understanding, loyalty, and support

Ways to Offer Support
- Provide for physical needs, including nutrition, body-care products, privacy, and affection.
- Support a critical perspective on media images of beauty and adulthood.
- Carefully monitor signs of depression or eating disorders.
- Promote healthy body image and self-esteem.
- Affirm and support the adolescent's many physical, emotional, and cognitive changes.
- Be flexible and responsive.
- Model respect.
- Provide opportunities for complex thinking and the pondering of big questions.
- Respect and take seriously the adolescent's self-consciousness.
- Recognize that challenging authority provides an outlet for new cognitive skills for the adolescent.
- Respect the adolescent's interest in peers.
- Maintain clear expectations so adolescents can make independent decisions.
- Afford autonomy within limits of safety.
- Be a sounding board for youth's exploration of ideas.
- Keep some routines or rituals that provide continuity from childhood to adulthood.
- Encourage involvement in multiple settings.
- Actively support the adolescent's exploration of racial and ethnic identity.
- Provide repeated, sustained opportunities for engagement with ethnically and racially diverse peers.
- Engage in honest, supportive talk about sexuality.
- Provide information and resources about healthy sexuality that affirm a range of sexualities and gender identities.

- Encourage participation in a faith or religious community.
- Provide outlets for questioning faith, religion, and creed.
- Facilitate youth's work in community.
- Celebrate the adolescent's change and continuity.
- Understand that vulnerabilities may be displayed in multiple ways, including anger and resistance.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Welcome each adolescent.

The Middle Adolescent
Ages Fifteen through Eighteen

"I was thinking about what Omari might be thinking about what Mary thinks about what Nina did, and I'm not sure what to think."

Physical Development

Middle adolescence can be a time of continuing dramatic physical growth, particularly for males, for whom this can be a peak developmental period. Female adolescents usually complete physical growth within two years of reaching menarche, often between the ages of eleven and fifteen. All middle adolescents, however, grapple with the newness of their developing bodies and fully developing sexuality.

Learning about sexuality is a critical part of adolescence; feelings of gendered attraction and sexual orientation are often central to the adolescent. Conforming to societal ideals can be a pressure for youth, and those whose sexual orientation is conflicted or who are gay are at increased risk for psychological distress. All adolescents benefit from environments that accept sexuality as a healthy part of life and from adults who can offer guidance about safe, caring, and moral sexual behavior for youth.

Middle adolescence is also a time of increased exposure to alcohol and other drugs. Research has found correlations between early alcohol use and later alcoholism and between alcohol use and early sexual intercourse. Youth need honest conversation and clear guidelines about drug and alcohol use that emphasize health and personal responsibility.

Adolescence is a time of increased risk taking in all realms. This is an outgrowth of increased autonomy and the cognitive ability to reason and to consider possibilities. Often youth create what psychologist David Elkind describes as a "personal fable": They see the possible risks associated with various behaviors and decide that because they are aware of those risks, they are immune to them. In this personal fable, the adolescent is the star who knows that "it will never happen to me." Continued dialogue with and support from trusted adults can attenuate the personal fable. The responsible adult understands that risk taking can be part of adolescent behavior and accepts the challenge of providing guidance and limits to assure physical, social, and emotional health and safety.

Cognitive Development

The middle adolescent has the ability to think deductively, inductively, conceptually, and hypothetically. According to developmental psychologist Jean Piaget, the adolescent has the capacity for formal operations—the ability to think through possibilities, to construct contrary-to-fact ideas, and to play with concepts and reasoning skills; she can now think about thinking. Psychologist and researcher David Elkind notes that the advent of formal operations can result in overthinking. Combining disparate facts to paint a picture, an adolescent argues, "Well the chance of being injured while driving a car is way higher than the chance of being hurt while skiing, and that's much higher than the chance of being hurt skateboarding, so it's actually safer for me to skateboard—even without a helmet—than to drive myself to school or go skiing with the family. It's the safest thing I could do this weekend."

During this period some middle adolescents engage in practices like keeping a diary or rereading emails that celebrate their new mindfulness about self. The middle adolescent also brings an analytical lens to his studies. He is able to consider possibilities and weigh information. His learning extends beyond knowing to reasoning. He can uncover themes and identify underlying principles. He becomes more interested in the broader world, often including politics and systems. Some middle adolescents become goal-directed and concerned about planning the future. Others become critical of aspects of the world around them, including their families. These are initiatives borne out of cognitive competence.

Social and Affective Development

In middle adolescence the youth embarks on the task of claiming and defining identity. According to psychologist Erik Erikson, she tries to consolidate her identity before entering into the intimate relationships of early adulthood. Identity forms through relationships and through individual growth. In contrast, psychiatrist Jean Baker Miller asserts that the identity of being-in-relationship can be as important as individual identity; she contests Erikson's notion that identity must be completely formed before intimacy can develop. The process of coming to identity is inherently social, and it is usually not resolved until early adulthood. During this time, youth are often highly engaged with peers and more distant from their caregivers. Friendships are of primary importance as youth try to form close, durable relationships outside the home. Psychologist Willard Hartup notes that in middle adolescence, girls' social networks often become larger and boys' become smaller. For all youth, there is a psychological tension between wanting to be independent and wanting to belong. For some girls, the intensity of best friendships that were rewarding in earlier adolescence may come to feel too confining. Shifting friendships are often part of middle adolescence.

In an important report, the Carnegie Council of Adolescent Development identifies several key tasks of middle adolescence, including finding a valued place in a constructive group (like a sports team or peer group); cultivating problem-solving skills; acquiring support systems and knowing how to use them; learning conflict resolution skills; finding ways to be useful to others; and feeling a sense of basic self-worth. These tasks are fulfilled when youth are engaged in activities and structures that support their

development and augment their natural peer groupings. Belonging and contributing are powerful experiences for youth; the adolescent has the opportunity to see herself through multiple positive lenses by virtue of her involvements.

Middle adolescents wrestle with their gender, racial, and ethnic identities. Psychologist Beverly Daniels Tatum explains that the parts of our identity that capture our attention are those that other people notice and reflect back to us. Racial identity is key to youth of color, since their race is salient to others. During middle adolescence, youth of color often find strength in affiliation with other youth of color. Sitting at the same table in the cafeteria and creating a culture together can help youth of color claim racial identity in the face of marginalization. When confronted with limited role models, youth of color often rely on media images to shape how they go about adopting a racial identity. This can result in behaviors or attitudes that feel oppositional. The behavior emerges as part of a developmental trajectory; oppositional behavior is more likely to be motivated by wanting to belong to a group than wanting to be outside of other groups. Some youth of color assimilate into majority culture, subsuming their racial identity and emphasizing other identities (derived from academics, sports, or other talents). Racial identity development is a lifelong process during which an individual may try many ways of realizing herself.

For white youth, middle adolescence can also be a time of beginning to claim a racial identity; often, however, it is not. Living in a society of white privilege affords many white youth the option of not thinking about race. They are far less likely than their peers of color to be perceived by others according to race. Racial identity researcher Janet Helms proposes a model of white racial identity development in which the first two stages are contact and disintegration. When white youth start to have meaningful contact with people of color, they can start to see the implications of race. Noticing that she is followed around in a drugstore when shopping with a Latino friend but not when she is shopping with a white friend, the adolescent cannot remain color-blind. These experiences push youth toward starting to think about race and racism; previous beliefs that race does not matter disintegrate and they are ready for new understandings.

White youth who have sustained multicultural involvements are more likely to progress in their own racial-identity development. If not, they may not even confront their race or ethnicity as they shape their beginning adult identity. Psychologist Peony Fhagen-Smith finds that youth of mixed racial and ethnic ancestry need meaningful opportunities to explore the facets of their racial or ethnic identities. Youth of all colors are supported in their racial-identity development by exposure to and personal experience with a diversity of people. All youth need to see a range of models of how people can enact racial identities. This is critical in an age of racial stereotypes in the media; youth need support in their quest for models of how to enact racial identity and resist negative images.

During middle adolescence, youth also struggle with gender and sexual identities. As youth claim these powerful identities, they may experiment with different appearances that signal their developing sexuality. In a culture of highly charged heterosexual images, youth feel pressure to conform to those images. Gay, lesbian,

bisexual, and questioning youth often struggle silently with their sexuality. Adolescents therefore need direct, honest information and conversation about sexuality.

Youth benefit from knowing that sexuality is a normal, healthy part of individual development and that it is frequently expressed within relationships. Dominant cultural scripts often present sexuality as either nonrelational or dysfunctionally relational, emphasizing power over others. Adults can foster youth's positive development by affirming sexuality as part of life and defining it as a continuum of behavior—not just intercourse. This can help youth recognize that there are many ways to explore and express sexuality.

Middle adolescence is often a time of sexual activity. While statistics vary, most studies have found that approximately 50 percent of middle-adolescent youth engage in sexual intercourse. They therefore need guidance about healthy sexuality and contraception. They also need and want to know what their parents' values are about sexual intimacy and relationships. Unitarian Universalists can offer youth principles to support sexual behavior that is respectful of themselves and others.

Aware of their own feelings and those of others, youth may be much more vulnerable than they appear. Research demonstrates that youth want to have adults to talk with as they struggle to claim their identities. The middle adolescent's advanced cognitive skills enable her to understand adult perspectives and appreciate the motivations of love and care that guide adult support.

Moral Development

Although he concentrates deeply on himself, the youth of this age holds a broad interest in the world around him. Less egocentric than when he was younger, he has an increased interest and investment in abstract values and moral principles. His ability to think conceptually readies him to engage intellectually in moral reasoning. The ability to truly understand multiple perspectives can lead to moral relativism. The middle adolescent is much more likely to place his moral decisions in context. His increasingly empathic perspective often leads to greater interest in moral dilemmas.

During middle adolescence, the youth may begin to have "principled morality," in which she regards the moral principles that guide laws as more important than the laws themselves. In family life, the middle adolescent sometimes claims a moral perspective that accords primacy to the rationale of rules and limits as a way of countering them. For example, a youth may argue that since her parents' rationale for a curfew is to ensure her safety, then the curfew should be different based on the different potential risks or dangers of the evening. This demonstrates the middle adolescent's ability to think beyond what is presented, to examine conceptual and moral underpinnings.

This can be a time of increased social awareness and activism. Charged with his understanding of a larger societal vision, the middle-adolescent youth can be energized to engage in projects that serve his local and wider community. He is drawn to engaging in work that supports justice and is motivated by the ethic of care. The middle adolescent's moral vision is not limited to what is sanctioned as correct; he often seeks his own truths. His moral development is enhanced by adult support and guidance for

his moral impulse. Encouragement to care, work against injustice, and contribute more broadly to society empowers the adolescent to seize an identity with moral agency.

Faith Development

In middle adolescence youth may become more involved with or less interested in faith and religion. The cognitive capacity for abstract and conceptual thinking can both support and attenuate youth's interest in the spiritual. Faith researcher James Fowler asserts that most adolescents are in the synthetic-conventional stage of faith development; they are searching for faith that offers coherence. They need conventions that delineate paths for structuring their lives. Even if such paths are not right for them, the model of faith as a life-organizing tool can be useful.

Faith is most meaningful at this stage when it offers youth a base from which to synthesize values and balance complexities. Adolescents can draw deeply on faith in their process of identity development. Although able to think critically about religion, the middle adolescent still perceives religion as an outside authority. During these years, as he confronts broader conceptual issues, the adolescent may scrutinize the authority of religion. As he wrestles with tensions between what is relative and what is absolute, faith can offer guidance. Fowler claims that the middle adolescent's questioning of faith and religion can lead him to a greater commitment and ownership of his faith; it can also lead to abandonment. Leaving home—often the final transition of middle adolescence—can mark the end of this stage of faith.

The Unitarian Universalist faith tradition capitalizes on youth interest in and commitment to broader moral and social ideals. Opportunities to engage in social action can funnel youth's energy toward faith. By engaging in faith communities, youth are led toward deeper spiritual development. Any disconnect between youth's interest in questioning and moral searching and the tenets or activities of their faith communities makes them less likely to move toward the next stages of faith development.

Adults can support the faith development of middle adolescents by acting out and acting on faith in families and communities. Youth need to see that doing right is an integral part of having faith. Adults can support youth participation in meaningful faith-based activities and ensure that youth are truly welcomed in their religious communities. Through the process of becoming involved in a faith community, the adolescent's sense of spiritual agency grows. She becomes able to see how she contributes to and creates her faith with others. This helps grow her soul and deepen her sense of spiritual or religious identity. In addition, she may learn how faith can be a sustaining force during times of sadness or fear, as large as world conflict or as personal as the breakup of a friendship.

Characteristics of This Age
- Grows based on an individual trajectory (boys often grow rapidly at this age while girls are more likely to stop growing)
- Develops sexuality more fully
- Navigates greater risks relating to alcohol, drug use, and unsafe sexual activity
- Sustains the personal fable that "it couldn't happen to me!"

- Practices increased cognitive skills such as deductive and inductive reasoning and conceptual and hypothetical thinking
- Engages in over-thinking
- Becomes less egocentric and more interested in the larger society
- Tries to claim an identity
- Considers friendship and peers important, with some shifting of alliances
- Needs to belong and have a sense of self-worth
- Continues to develop a racial or ethnic identity
- Participates in social groupings as a way to navigate race and racism (youth of color often claim alliance by race and/or oppositional behavior or do not claim racial identity as important)
- Recognizes privilege as white youth and challenges the colorblind perspective or does not consider racism and racial identity important
- Struggles with gender and sexual identities (gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning youth often experiences increased stress)
- Explores sexuality
- Expresses growing interest in abstract values and moral principles
- Thinks conceptually and enjoys moral reasoning
- Engages in moral relativism
- Demonstrates increased empathy
- Favors principles over laws
- Enters Fowler's synthetic-conventional stage of faith development
- Conceptualizes religion as an outside authority that can be questioned
- Questions faith, sometimes leading to deeper ownership of personal faith or disillusionment
- Develops a sense of spiritual agency through faith-based contributions
- Deepens or attenuates religious or spiritual identity

Ways to Offer Support
- Provide for physical needs, including nutrition, body-care products, privacy, affection, and love.
- Affirm sexuality as a healthy part of human development.
- Remain open to talking about sex and sexuality.
- Support a critical perspective on media images of sexuality, gender roles, and body image.
- Provide information about safe sex and contraception.
- Offer values for discerning sexual behavior that is respectful and affirming of self and others.
- Monitor signs of eating disorders or depression.
- Promote a healthy self-image.
- Be present, flexible, and responsive.
- Model respect.
- Be available for conversation, be a sounding board.
- Offer fair and grounded support around risk taking; provide limits for safety.

- Enjoy the adolescent's new ability to think critically, hypothetically, and conceptually.
- Ask large questions that fully engage new thinking skills.
- Encourage practices that celebrate new adolescent mindfulness (such as journaling or writing editorial letters).
- Understand that new thinking skills may result in new criticisms
- Respect the intensity of interest in peers.
- Understand that some adolescents need psychological distance from caregivers as they create their own identities.
- Encourage involvement in multiple realms of activity or achievement (like sports, music, faith, or community groups).
- Support exploration of racial and ethnic identity.
- Talk about racism, learn and support youth's realities, and share struggles.
- Strongly encourage sustained engagement with ethnically and racially diverse peers and seek role models for youth of color who lack them.
- Recognize that adolescent vulnerability can be expressed as withdrawal, anger, or sadness and offer support.
- Encourage growing interest in the broader world.
- Welcome the adolescent's skill at thinking about principles underlying rules and laws.
- Engage openly in conversations about moral reasoning.
- Encourage participation in a faith or religious community.
- Provide outlets for questioning and talking about faith.
- Encourage faith-based work and experiences that deepen spirituality.
- Provide opportunities for leadership within and beyond the faith community.
- Welcome each adolescent.
- Have a sense of humor.
- Provide unconditional love.

The Older Adolescent and Young Adult
Ages Eighteen through Twenty-Two

"It was Communion Sunday, and as I went up there, all of a sudden, I heard the words anew, and I was like, 'I can't do this, I don't believe this.' And I sat back down."

Physical Development
Most women have completed their physical growth by age seventeen, but many men are still developing muscle, bone mass, and strength. During late adolescence, physical growth slows. Caring for the new adult body through good nutrition, exercise, and healthy sexuality is a key task of the newly independent late adolescent. Late adolescents and young adults are very interested in sexuality and are likely to engage in partnered sexual activity, so they need information about protection against sexually transmitted diseases and birth control.

Late adolescence can bring new stresses. Managing stress through exercise, social support, and individual practices (such as meditation, psychological support, or spiritual practices) is essential. For many, late adolescence and young adulthood mark a transition period during which the care and keeping of one's own body becomes her independent, singular responsibility.

Cognitive Development

Late adolescence/young adulthood is a time of cognitive competence. Formal operations—the ability to think abstractly and hypothetically—are no longer new. Thinking skills developed in adolescence are honed, including memory retrieval, abstract thinking, and complex problem-solving skills. The late adolescent can be passionate about knowing; this is a time ripe for formal and informal education that builds on the adolescent's excellent memory skills and development. According to scientists Raymond Cattell and John Horn, an individual has two kinds of intelligence: fluid intelligence, which refers to functional intelligence and thinking skills, and crystallized intelligence, which refers to learned content. The late adolescent's fluid intelligence is sharp from schooling and practice. He is ready to learn and retain information.

Open to learning, the late adolescent may be relativistic in her thinking. She sees many points of view and may claim multiple realities as the truth. William Perry, a developmental psychologist, proposes that ways of knowing become relativist as the adolescent/ young adult comes to understand competing perspectives. This doesn't mean that she lacks an intellectual or moral compass; it is simply a reflection of her increased cognitive competence. Over time relativism diminishes, but the skills gained through practicing it remain. Her knowing is both objective and subjective; the late adolescent/young adult becomes more aware of her role as a producer of knowledge.

The late adolescent/young adult's thinking skills are augmented by his increased skills of expression. Translating thought into words, he deepens his understanding of phenomena while engaging others. His improved language skills both reflect and support increased cognitive functioning. Unlike in earlier periods, the late adolescent/young adult is better able to reason and come to his own decisions. While he continues to learn through engagement with others, he has become more self-reliant in his thinking.

Social and Affective Development

Socially, late adolescence/young adulthood is a time of intimacy and identity development. Psychologist Erik Erikson asserts that the late adolescent first develops identity and then establishes intimacy. Others, including psychiatrist Jean Baker Miller, believe the reverse, that identity develops through the process of intimacy and relationship. The spiral of intimacy involves being in relationship with others and also developing a self that remains apart from relationship. Newly independent and often separated from the family who nurtured her, the late adolescent/young adult wonders, "Who am I?" and "Who should I become?" She explores intimacy and learns about mutuality, love, and isolation.

Sexuality is central to her identity, and claiming a sexual orientation is an important part of late adolescence. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and transsexual youth are more at risk during this period as they navigate sexuality in a predominantly heterosexual culture. Everyone learns the dominant social scripts about sexuality, and homosexual youth may hold learned aversions to homosexuality. This puts them at odds with themselves and places them at greater risk emotionally. It is critical for young adults to have peer, family, and community contexts in which a diversity of sexual identities are affirmed. Unitarian Universalism offers principles that affirm and promote respect for all persons.

Peers and friendships remain important in this stage of life, but their primary purpose shifts from defining to supporting the individual. He cares deeply about the company he keeps but makes his own decisions. Intimate relationships with one partner may become central and can affect the individual's relationship with larger peer groups. These social balances are part of claiming a central identity.

Vocational and personal life choices become new identity issues at this time. Freud says that there are two tasks for the healthy adult: to work and to love. Finding the path to the life vocations of love and work is important to youth approaching full adulthood. For some, this is a period of new work habits and an increased drive to achieve. Making school and work choices, the individual seeks possibilities for her future. The expectations of her family and community shape her identity development. Recent research shows that high expectations, caring relationships, and opportunities to contribute meaningfully to a group or society are the three factors that facilitate resiliency. Developing resilient patterns of successfully coping with the pressures and promise of entering adulthood positively shapes the late adolescent's identity development. It gives her self-confidence as she transitions from a focus on external authority to claiming her own authority and perspectives. Psychologist Robert Kegan calls this the shift to self-authorship.

Racial and ethnic identity development continues to be an integral part of peoples' lives in late adolescence and young adulthood. All adolescents are either tacitly or overtly encouraged to make claims about their ethnic and racial affiliation. Studies of multiracial youth reveal how monocultural racial and ethnic affiliations are widely assumed. Psychologists Karen Suyemoto and Juanita Dimas find that multiracial and multiethnic youth feel constant pressure to claim or refute racial and ethnic identities. They must answer the question, "What are you?" repeatedly. And they must reconcile their answers with their understandings of social expectations. When youth identify differently from their families, they may feel conflicted or uneasily independent. Sometimes multiracial or multiethnic youth conform to monocultural expectations and claim single identities. Youth may make context-specific decisions, such as claiming one identity in one setting and another in a different setting, as they explore the meaning and consequences of different approaches for their self-concept and social relationships.

Psychologist Jean Phinney suggests that racial and ethnic identity development for adolescents of color goes through three stages: unexamined racial or ethnic identity, active identity search, and achieved ethnic identity. For ethnic minority adolescents with monoracial or monoethnic backgrounds, the search for identity includes dealing with

negative ethnic stereotypes, resisting those stereotypes, and coming to their own identity. Biracial adolescents often go through this trajectory for both ethnic groups with which they identify. This can result in claiming one racial or ethnic identity over the other.

As they mature, late adolescents and young adults often claim their own unique ethnic identity. Social environments that welcome textured racial and ethnic identities can provide critical support in this period. Racially or ethnically stratified contexts may be differently useful to the late adolescent. For some, according to psychologist Beverly Daniels Tatum, new maturity makes them reject alliances based solely on race. For others, same-race peer groups perform an essential grounding function in a society replete with racism.

Embedded in multiple social contexts, late adolescents and young adults may be likely to notice discrimination and privilege based on race and ethnicity. Peggy McIntosh, a psychologist studying racism, says that many white adolescents know about racism as a system of disadvantage based on skin color but often do not know about racism as a system of white privilege. It is only through direct consideration of the issues of white privilege that youth move toward greater awareness of the structural aspects of racism. Understanding white privilege provides an explanation for the persistence of racism. Youth who are knowledgeable about social structures larger than their own experiences are better equipped to engage sensitively with others on these issues. As white youth develop a fuller understanding of the nature and meaning of race and ethnicity, they realize that there is diversity within race. Learning about his own ethnic background leads the white youth toward healthy racial identity development.

Understanding their own and others' racial and ethnic identities as embedded in cultural expectations may shift behaviors at this age. Increased exposure to and interaction with a diversity of people enriches the experiential knowledge base of the late adolescent. Learning about the uniqueness of each person counteracts stereotypical thinking and systemic oppression. This is an essential step for all youth in becoming actively antiracist. As the late adolescent/young adult searches for identity, he couples his personal experiences of race and ethnicity with his emerging understandings of institutions and society.

Moral Development
This can be a time of passionate moral idealism and philosophical thinking. Strong cognitive skills, increased awareness of the wider world, and the beginnings of personal authority prepare the late adolescent for moral decision making. He is able to comprehend multiple perspectives and is conscious of social order. This can be a period of social activism, when the late adolescent recognizes structural social problems and works to change them. Newly apparent tensions between individual rights and societal needs force him to negotiate the ethics of care and justice.

Life trajectory choices are imbued with the late adolescent's personal morality. She faces her own moral questions: "What defines achievement for me?" "Whom should I keep company with?" "How can I live a life according to my moral and spiritual values and still support myself economically?" Like the younger adolescent, the late adolescent/young adult's impulse toward care is supported through engagement in

community work and giving. Her identity as a person of faith is nurtured through meaningful engagement with people of diverse backgrounds and ethnicities.

Faith Development

The late adolescent/young adult, supported by strong cognitive skills, is drawn to existential thinking. He is sorting out his thoughts about his own morality and may draw on religion or spirituality for guidance. He feels able to come to his own convictions about religion and faith. He is claiming his own authority. Some late adolescents may abandon faith or religion, which can be an act of authority. Others explore their faith more deeply.

According to faith researcher James Fowler, late adolescence/ young adulthood is often the beginning of the individuative-reflective stage of faith development. No longer trying on other people's ideas about faith and religion, the individual consciously constructs her own. She looks critically at her previous commitments to religion. She considers the meaning of religious rituals and symbols and tries to figure out their meaning for her. As she rejects some aspects of her faith and religion and accepts others, she ushers in spiritual maturity, a process that happens both alone and with others.

Participation in a faith community can offer youth approaching adulthood a way to work in service of their moral ideals. Social activism within liberal faith communities highlights aspects of faith and religion that are realized through activity. Although able to think abstractly, the youth benefits from knowing that faith and spirituality are more than psychological constructs. The process of doing faith, beyond traditional religion, helps lay down the spiritual life path toward full adulthood.

Characteristics of This Age
- Achieves full physical development
- Becomes more self-assured about body image
- Engages in sexual activity and more likely to be partnered
- Learns to manage stress and maintain health
- Is able to think abstractly and hypothetically, using complex problem-solving skills and existential thinking
- Engages in relativistic thinking
- Expresses ideas with linguistic skill
- Becomes more self-reliant
- Develops identity
- Forms intimate attachments
- Continues to develop sexual identity and reconciles that with broader cultural contexts
- Expresses interest in vocational and personal life choices
- Often develops identities as a friend, partner, and member of a racial or ethnic group
- Expresses interest in moral and philosophical thinking in terms of both the self and the wider world
- Wrestles with personal morality and life choices
- Claims personal authority around issues of faith

Ways to Offer Support

- Provide support for self-care, including stress management.
- Provide information about birth control and safe sex.
- Respect the privacy of the late adolescent.
- Respect the intellect of the late adolescent.
- Provide complex problems and thick questions to ponder.
- Allow the late adolescent's questions to guide activities.
- Offer opportunities for complex learning.
- Tie activities to broader philosophical and social concepts or issues.
- Welcome the late adolescent/young adult as a person with their own ideas.
- Understand that intimacy and identity development are linked and respect the late adolescent's attention to this aspect of life.
- Provide contexts that affirm all sexual and gender identities.
- Celebrate the late-adolescent process of searching for a path toward adulthood.
- Provide models and conversations about vocational and life choices.
- Respect the importance of racial and ethnic heritage in late-adolescent lives.
- Facilitate sustained engagement with diverse peers to further individual and collective identity development.
- Become an antiracist ally and discuss privilege and oppression.
- Celebrate and channel the later adolescent's moral idealism into action.
- Encourage engagement with difficult moral issues.
- Encourage, love, and affirm.
- Accept the spiritual journey, including questioning of religion.
- Encourage the construction of individual religious and spiritual commitments.
- Encourage participation in faith communities.
- Provide opportunities for leadership development and leadership roles.
- Learn from youth.

Reader 4-2: Nurturing Youth of Color

ATTRIBUTION

By Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings; used with permission.

TEXT

Culture and Identity Formation

Every human person in certain respects:

Like All Others

Like Some Others

Like No Other[2]

Introduction

The culture of a country has a significant role in the identity formation of persons and communities. There has been significant research and documentation on identity formation in the United States of America (U.S.). However, most of the work done has used a Western/European cultural model as the normative experience of identity formation in the U.S. Such a model ignores or only gives minimal attention to people who identify as being persons of color or members of an ethnic minority group. Consequently, many members of the dominant culture who look to scholarly works or other literature to learn about the relationship between culture and identity formation never gain more than a superficial knowledge about people whose identities are tied to or rooted in soil other than that of the Western world.

This chapter will explore the importance of ministers and religious educators having awareness of the influence that the dominant culture in the U.S. has on the identity formation of people who identify as persons of color or members of an ethnic minority group. I will explore and define the terms culture, race, ethnicity, and minority. In addition, I will address the impact that U.S. culture has on the ability of ministers and religious educators to provide culturally sensitive pastoral care to people whose identity formation has been negatively impacted by the dominant culture in the U.S.

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[2] Clyde Kluckholn and Henry Murray, *Personality in Nature, Society and Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knoff, 1948), quoted in Emmanuel Y. Lartey, *In Living Color: An Intercultural Approach to Pastoral Care and Counseling,* 2nd ed. (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2003), 34.

Culture

What is culture? Culture includes the language, history, beliefs and behavior of a group. Culture "…denotes a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which [people] communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life."[3] Such systems can be defined with a range of other terms, such as mass or popular culture, dominant and subcultures. Lee Butler Jr., indicates that "Mass culture and popular culture are synonymous with what society commonly identifies as dominant culture and subculture, respectively."[4] The term dominant culture can be defined as one that is able to impose on subordinate cultures values and ways of behaving, perceiving, communicating and beliefs through legal or political domination. These include, for example, classism, the Puritan work ethic, ownership, the sense of superiority, and distrust of people who look and behave differently.

When the term subculture is used it sometimes refers to expressions of resistance by people who feel excluded, oppressed or misunderstood by the dominant culture. Subcultures focus attention on certain religious expressions, youth activities, immigrant communities, persons with disabilities, sexual orientation and ethnicity. Every person in the U.S. is influenced in some way by dominant and subcultures. Religious traditions express and reflect aspects of both cultures.

Unitarians, Universalists[5] and the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations have a long history of working for social justice in this country. Unitarians and Universalists also have a history of silence in support of the *status quo*. During the enslavement of Africans in this country there were UU ministers who advocated for the freedom of the enslaved, and there were UU ministers who for various reasons refrained from the debate. During the civil war there were UU ministers in the North who were loyal to the Union, while some UU ministers in the South supported those who seceded from the Union. During subsequent socially and politically related ills in this country (such as the women's suffrage and civil rights movements) many UU ministers and religious educators responded by framing the discussion in terms of social justice. With this frame, UUs were called to the streets to protest in the name of social justice.

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[3] Geertz, 89.

[4] Butler, 16-17.

[5] Unitarian and Universalists merged in May 1961 to form the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations.

However, the efforts towards "social" justice did not offer a holistic paradigm. Instead, a paradigm was established in which the demand for social and political change was the primary focus at the expense of recognizing the personal trauma experienced by persons who were being oppressed, leaving many of them spiritually, emotionally and psychologically wounded, without community or ministerial support to help in their healing.

Since Unitarian Universalists and other religious liberals are influenced by the dominant culture in the U.S., behavior change that will honor "the inherent worth and dignity of every person"[6] will need to be intentional, focused and reflected upon. For example: intentionality in not participating in oppressive aspects of the dominant culture; focused learning about the minority cultures of congregants and children in religious education programs; and reflection upon one's actions based on self-education about the cultures of congregants. In other words, the goals and trends of the dominant culture in the U.S. need to be challenged and UUs cannot passively accept or unquestioningly participate in the activities or agenda that the dominant culture sanctions.

Race

The category of race was an intentionally constructed concept by European scientists to classify people. According to Lee H. Butler Jr.,

It was not until 1570 that race developed as a concept. Francois Bernier first employed the category of "race," primarily denoting skin color, in 1684 for the purpose of classifying human bodies. The first authoritative racial division of humanity is found in the works of naturalist Carolus Linnaeus in 1735. Hence, it is not until the eighteenth century that political, linguistic, and geographical distinctions became "race" issues.[7]

Out of this intentionally constructed system of classifying human beings, a vertical hierarchy of importance and closeness to God was established. People of European ancestry were placed at the top of the hierarchy, and people of African ancestry were placed at the bottom.[8] In North America, this system of classification provided justification for the inhumane treatment of the sons and daughters of Asia, Africa and the indigenous peoples throughout the Americas. People of Chinese descent

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[6] Principles and Purposes of the UUA, see Appendix C.
[7] Butler, 37.
[8] Ibid 42.

were treated inhumanely even as they helped to build the U.S. railroad system. People of Japanese descent were divested of their property and liberty and placed in internment camps in California and other areas on the West Coast. Indigenous peoples throughout the Americas were first enslaved, then systematically divested of their land, religion and many aspects of their culture.

The concept of race continues to be used to justify the inhumane treatment of those who have been classified as being inferior to people of European descent. Discrimination is woven into the fabric of the dominant culture in the U.S. Consequently race continues to determine the quality and quantity of opportunities available to people who have been adversely and negatively classified according to the color of their skin or the place of their birth.

Ethnicity

In the dominant culture in the U.S., the terms race and ethnicity are often used interchangeably. However, there are substantial differences between the two. The concept of race was created to validate the supposed superiority of Europeans and inferiority of all other peoples. Additionally, the concept of race is primarily based on skin color and other physical characteristics of a person. Ethnicity encompasses a great deal more about a person than just the color of their skin, the texture of their hair or the shape of their eyes. According to the *Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling*, "Ethnicity may be viewed as a primary bonding, an identification and context of belonging, shared by groups with common language, behaviors, histories, lifestyles, values, and norms."[9] However, just as the concept of race has been used to deny the uniqueness of human beings, the concept of ethnicity has also been a simplistic means to ignore the complexities of human identity. For example, Chinese, Korean and Pilipino peoples have different languages, histories, and norms and yet are generally categorized as Asian. Similarly, in North America, Spanish speaking people from Central or South America and the Caribbean are labeled Latino/Latina/Hispanic regardless of their respective countries of origin. Therefore, ethnicity is a complicated and complex concept to comprehend. On one hand it is helpful in acknowledging similarity amongst groups, while on the other hand it ignores the differences amongst group members, differences that are very important to individual identity formation.

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[9] Way, 253-54.

Minority

"The term *minority* has traditionally been used in reference to groups whose access to power is limited by the dominant culture."[10] In the U.S. the term minority may refer to the following: gender, sexual orientation, age, disability, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, religion, national origin, and cultural heritage. In the U.S. people identified as 'minority' are very diverse in language, national origin, and ethnicity and many have experienced oppression in various forms. For example, most women of all ethnicities, ages, sexual orientation, physical ability or disability, rich, poor, U.S. born or foreign born have had their access to power limited by the dominant culture because of their gender. As a result, middle class white women mobilized and started the feminist movement, a movement that was the primary source of support and means for survival for many women. During the civil rights movement in the U.S., African Americans organized publicly to demand equal rights. During the mid-1980's gay and lesbian organizations joined forces to demand that health-care professionals and politicians put more money, time and energy into treating a new illness (AIDS) that was killing gay men. Minority group status in the U.S. today continues to limit many persons' ability to fully engage life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as promised in the U.S Constitution.

Identity Formation

By the time I was school age, I understood many things about my life. As a female I was restricted from doing certain activities that my brothers were allowed to engage in. When I questioned why, I was told that those activities were not lady-like. I was called nigger most times when I left my neighborhood. I experienced shame when my mother used food stamps to buy groceries or when I told people that I lived in public housing. Without knowing it, my identity formation was being influenced at the very deepest levels of my being.

Identity is a consistent sense of self discerned through relationships, whereby the character traits contained within every individual are expressed with consistency. An identity is only discernable through relationships, with the first and most fundamental series of relationship being the family. A person begins to experience himself or herself through the nurture received at home. Seeking to discern the answer to the question

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[10] Hays, *Addressing Cultural Complexities*, 13.

'Who am I?' is shaped within the context of a family that simultaneously states, 'This is who we are, and this is who you are to us.'[11]

A person's most influential relationship in identity formation is the family and the values, beliefs and behaviors passed down from generation to generation within one's family. The search for who I am is facilitated in the context of realizing who we are. When the first Europeans landed on the shores of North America, they were greeted by people who had lived on the land for thousands of years, a people who had well-established ways of behaving, perceiving, communicating and believing. In other words, the people who occupied this land when Columbus allegedly discovered it had rich and diverse cultures.

Within a few short years after contact with European settlers, sovereign Indian nations and their cultures came under attack. Their land was stolen and they were forced to live on uninhabitable land. Their families were separated when children were forced to attend missionary schools. They were threatened with violence or jail for practicing their religion or speaking their native languages. In other words, every aspect of their culture and way of life was systematically attacked and destroyed. What impact on identity formation would that have on a person? Mary Crow Dog explains:

The whites destroyed the tiyospaye,[12] not accidentally, but as a matter of policy. The close-knit clan, set in its old ways, was a stumbling block in the path of the missionary and government agent, its traditions and customs a barrier to what the white man called "progress" and "civilization." And so the government tore the tiyospaye apart and forced the Sioux into the kind of relationship now called the "nuclear family"—forced upon each couple their individually owned allotment of land, trying to teach them "the benefits of wholesome selfishness without which higher civilization is impossible."[13]

In the context of systematic destruction of a people's culture, a family answering the question "This is who we are and this is who you are to us" can be a complicated ordeal. After centuries of oppression, families and consequently persons within the family, internalize who their society tells them they are as a people and as an individual. The internalization of what a society tells a person about who he or she is often is stronger than who the family says they are. Therefore healthy identity formation for

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[11] Butler, 3.

[12] At the center of the old Sioux society was the tiyospaye, the extended family group, the basic hunting band, which included grandparents, uncles, aunts, in-laws, and cousins.

[13] Mary Crow Dog and Richard Erdoes, *Lakota Woman* (New York: HarperPerennial, 1991), 13.

people marginalized by the dominant culture has to be an intentional act of self-care and survival.

Erik Erikson is well known for his identification of the eight life-cycle stages of development. "Each successive stage and crisis has a special relation to one of the basic elements of society, and this for the simple reason that the human life cycle and man's institutions have evolved together."[14] His contention was that human beings go through certain developmental stages at certain ages and that social organizations have significant influence on whether or not individuals experience positive or negative support for development. The eight life-cycle stages are:

1. Basic Trust vs. Basic Mistrust (infancy 0-1). In this stage the infant learns trust through consistency and continuity of its care-providers.

2. Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt (early childhood 1-2). This stage is marked by the child learning to hold on and to let go. The child's care-providers must balance age appropriate boundaries (so the child does not injure himself/herself) with freedom for the child to experience its surroundings. Harsh words or actions toward the child in this stage can cause the child to feel shame or doubt.

3. Initiative vs. Guilt (play age 2-4). In this stage, initiative aids the child's autonomy by helping him or her learn about regulation of wants (care-provider's attention) and responsibility (picking up toys or helping with younger children).

4. Industry vs. Inferiority (school age 5-12). This stage is where the child learns to work with and alongside of others. It is also the stage at which a child sees himself or herself most clearly through the eyes and actions of others. If acceptance is withheld because of perceived physical or mental differences, thoughts and feelings of inferiority can develop.

5. Identity vs. Role Confusion (adolescence 13-18). This stage holds the tensions between values and behaviors learned in childhood and those expected to be developed in adulthood. The struggle with identity at this stage is heavily influenced by family and peer groups. Role confusion involves doubts about self in relation to socially constructed roles, especially those related to gender and sexual orientation.

6. Intimacy vs. Isolation (young adulthood 18-35). This stage marks the readiness of the individual to commit to relationships, partnerships and group affiliations with the willingness to be selfless and to compromise for the common good.

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[14] Erikson, 250.

7. <u>Generativity vs. Stagnation</u> (adulthood 36-60). The primary focus of this stage is for persons to take responsibility for guiding the next generation through their offspring, mentoring, coaching or teaching. Persons who decline to participate in this stage are in danger of stagnation in growth and limited intimacy with others.

8. <u>Ego Integrity vs. Despair</u> (mature adulthood 60 plus). This final stage encompasses the previous seven stages. Ego integrity involves emotional integration and wisdom acquired from lived experience. If the person has engaged and navigated through the previous seven stages, he or she will not have feelings of despair related to the life they have lived.

Stages four and five of Erikson's life cycle are especially important in understanding the identity formation process for individuals who are marginalized by the dominant culture. Erikson wrote,

We have pointed out … the danger threatening individual and society where the schoolchild begins to feel that the color of his skin, the background of his parents, or the fashion of his clothes rather than his wish and will to learn will decide his worth…and thus his sense of identity.[15]

For persons who are labeled as members of a subculture and are therefore marginalized by the dominant culture, developing a healthy sense of self and positive identity involves a process of intentionality in uncovering and understanding the messages of inferiority imbedded in and transmitted by the dominant culture. In recent years the importance of understanding this process has generated various ethnic/racial identity development theories and models. One such resource that is well known, but will not be used in this project, is *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice: A Sourcebook*, edited by Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell and Pat Griffin.[16] William E. Cross pioneered the Nigrescence (to become Black) Theory to define Black Identity Development in 1991. Cross' Nigrescence Theory consists of the Pre-Encounter, Immersion-Emersion and Internalization stages. The Pre-Encounter stage is characterized by three elements, assimilation (internalizing a 'pro-White' identity), Black self-hatred or anti-Blackness (a Black person's hatred of the self because of race), and miseducation (internalization of negative stereotypes about Blacks). The Immersion-

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[15] Erikson, 260.

[16] Rita Hardiman and Bailey W. Jackson "Conceptual Foundations for Social Justice Courses" in *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice*, ed. Maurianne Adams et al. (New York: Routledge, 1997), 23-29.

Emersion stage consists of the individual withdrawing from the dominant culture and becoming immersed in Black culture. Emersion involves dealing with the guilt, and anger/rage toward the dominant culture while developing a sense of self-pride. The Internalization stage is characterized by the individual's self-healing and being comfortable with being Black.[17] W.S. Carlos Poston noted that Cross' model has "inherent limitations when applied to biracial persons."[18] Sue and Sue remarked that Cross' model pertained specifically to the Black experience.

The following framework may be helpful to ministers and religious educators in understanding the stages of identity development for transracially adopted, biracial and persons of color or members of ethnic minority groups who have been miseducated about their inherent worth and dignity by the dominant culture. I chose to compile the following models to provide a more comprehensive user-friendly model for use by non-clinicians. This framework is my compilation of William E. Cross' Nigrescence Model, Derald Wing Sue and David Sue's five-stage Racial/Cultural Identity Development Model[19] and W.S. Carlos Poston's work on the five stages of Biracial Identity Development.[20]

Four Stages of Identity Formation Model

The following stages are meant to be guidelines; they are not stagnant, but fluid. A person can remain at one stage or move between stages during a lifetime. The value of having the following model as a guideline is that it provides valuable information for people who identify as persons of color or a member of an ethnic minority, and those working with them, to better understand identity formation. The limitation of such a model and guideline is that human beings are different, constantly evolving and changing; the model could be used to label or stereotype the populations who are the focus of the model.

1. Assimilation Stage. This stage is characterized in terms of a person being educated or indoctrinated to believe that the standard of excellence and all that is good is synonymous with the dominant culture. Indoctrination of this message from an early age becomes internalized for many persons who learn to think that the dominant culture is better than their own ethnic/racial culture. Consequently, many may prefer teachers,

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[17] Vandiver, et al., 174-200.
[18] Poston, 152-54.
[19] Sue and Sue, *Counseling the Culturally Diverse*, 215-33.
[20] Poston, 153-54.

doctors, lawyers, schools, etc. from the dominant culture, while denying the value of professionals of their own cultural group. Self-hatred is possible during this stage, as is lack of awareness or an integrated approach to assessing the merit or value of the dominant culture.

At this stage biracial/transracially adopted children are just becoming aware of their particular racial or ethnic identity. Children who are raised in homogenous environments and assume they are part of the dominant culture may experience this stage differently than other people of color and ethnic minorities, because "they just assumed they were like everyone else. Until they experienced some form of racial prejudice or discrimination from schoolmate, strangers, or even relatives of their adopted family."[21]

2. Questioning or Awareness Stage. This stage is usually initiated by a crisis (personal, political or social) or comment that causes the person to question their beliefs about self, by comparing what they have been taught with what they actually experience. Through questioning, awareness begins to take root and the person notices comments, behaviors and even facial expressions directed toward him or her that are offensive or hurtful. For example, recently at my church, I was engaged in conversation with two males, one of European descent and one Latino. A third male of European descent walked up and asked the Latino to help him move a heavy piece of furniture. A person in the questioning and awareness stage would ask why the male of European descent was not asked to help move the furniture. A person going through this stage begins to reflect on their life experiences and usually grows angry with self and society for a lifetime of indoctrination and unequal treatment.

For biracial and transracially adopted persons, this stage may be experienced slightly differently. At this stage a biracial person may question/become aware that society and possibly family members are forcing them to choose one ethnic/racial group identity. For persons who are transracially adopted by people of European descent, there maybe awareness that although their adoptive parents may want to live in a colorblind world, the people they interact with on a daily basis do not live in such a world. Experiences of racism in their communities, schools, churches and sometimes their adoptive families can trigger feelings of isolation and dejection.

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[21] C.N. Le, "Adopted Asian Americans" *Asian-Nation: Asian American History, Demographics, and Issues,* 2001-2007; accessed 8 July 2007; available from http://www.asian-nation.org/adopted.shtml.

3. <u>Rejection-Disengagement Stage</u>. This stage is characterized by withdrawal from the dominant culture and immersion in one's own culture. For Hispanics, it may mean taking pride in speaking Spanish and not wanting to speak English. For Asians, it may manifest as wanting to learn more about the culture and history of their country of origin. Persons in this stage develop and project a strong connection with their own cultural/ethnic identity. This stage is also marked by anger/rage as the person begins to address a lifetime of shame and guilt projected onto them by the dominant culture.

For many biracial persons, this stage helps to explain the feelings of guilt over the possibility of having to reject one parent's culture and ethnicity. Biracial persons may experience self-hatred because of having to reject a part of one's self. Transracially adopted persons may experience this stage in two ways. They may disengage from their ethnicity of birth and only identify with their adoptive parent's identity. Or they may disengage from their adoptive parent's identity and take pride in their ethnicity of birth. For both biracial and transracially adopted persons this stage is difficult because it usually involves having to reject either a part of self or a part of their family.

4. <u>Integration-Reengagement</u>. Persons in this stage, having learned from and moved back and forth through the previous stages, have gone through tremendous personal growth. Their sense of self is more positive and their connection/attachment to the world is more secure. They have discovered that being human is flexible and fluid and they have learned to embrace the many paradoxes of everyday living. They are able to accept the healthy and reject the harmful elements of the dominant culture. They are also willing to be critical of their own culture. In other words, they have integrated the cultures that impact their daily lives, and their outlook and attitude toward life is holistic and hopeful.

SESSION 5: Multiple Pathways to Youth Ministry (2 hours)

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore the many forms that youth ministry takes in and beyond congregations
- Address how to create a balanced youth ministry that is appropriate to the size of the congregation and youth developmental needs and interests.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Have a broader understanding of what youth ministry looks like
- Assess their own congregation's youth ministry, and how well it offers different pathways.

ACTIVITY 1: Describe Your Youth Ministry Setting (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Writing paper and pens/pencils
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Write the reflection questions below on newsprint and post.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity asks participants to think about youth ministry in their congregation or current youth setting.

Distribute paper and pencils to participants. Ask them to spend five minutes thinking about youth ministry in their congregation and writing responses to the following questions:

- Does your congregation have a youth group? If so, what are the types of activities that the youth group engages in?
- In what ways are youth active in the larger congregation?
- In what ways are youth active in the wider Unitarian Universalist community?
- How are youth connected with people of different ages in the congregation?

After most participants have finished writing, invite two or three participants to share their responses for each question. After the sharing, tell the group they will revisit these questions at the end of this session to see what they might do differently in their youth ministry setting.

ACTIVITY 2: Asset Development (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Make copies of Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, for all participants.
- Referring to Handout 5-1, write the four External Asset categories and the four Internal Asset categories on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This activity explores the Search Institute's Asset Development model for adolescents.

Tell participants that many youth development organizations are using an asset-building approach in their work. Much of the research behind the asset-building approach is done by the Search Institute, based at the University of Minnesota. Remind participants that they should have read an article about asset building in congregational settings in

Reader 5-1 as they prepared for the module. Distribute Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, and read or summarize the following to introduce it:

> The basic principle underlying the asset building approach to youth development is that youth will be more likely to grow up to be "healthy, principled and caring" if they have developed more of these assets in their lives. Search Institute research has shown that youth who posses many of the assets described in the handout are less likely to be sexually active, to be the victim or perpetrator of violence, and to have trouble with alcohol use. The same youth that have many of these assets are also more likely to have success in school, maintain good health, and help others.

There is a lot of synergy between what we are trying to do in Unitarian Universalist youth ministry and what is at the core of this asset development model. Unitarian Universalists want to grow strong and faithful youth who feel a sense of empowerment in their faith, who make healthy decisions, and who work to make the world a better place. This asset building model is a valuable for us to explore and use.

Review the asset building model on Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents. Ask participants to take turns reading the assets under the specific asset categories. Start with the external categories and then move to the internal categories.

After you review the handout, lead a brief discussion on the assets guided by the following reflection questions:

- Was there anything that did not make sense?
- Was there anything surprising?
- How could you use these assets in your youth ministry?

ACTIVITY 3: Web of Youth Ministry (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents
- Handout 5-2, Web of Youth Ministry
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Make copies of Handout 5-2, Web of Youth Ministry, for all participants.
- Draw the diagram on Handout 5-2, Web of Youth Ministry, on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants learn about the Web of Youth Ministry and connect it to the asset building model presented in Activity 2.

Ask participants if they can name the six components of a balanced youth program, the previous model for youth ministry in our Association. They should list: Leadership, Social Justice, Community Building, Worship, Learning, and Youth / Adult Relations.

Tell participants that building on the work of the UUA's Consultation on Youth Ministry and the Search Institute asset-building model, the Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module presents the Web of Youth Ministry as a multifaceted and spirit-filled model for our ministry with youth. The Web of Youth Ministry is essentially an expansion and reframing of the older balanced youth program model. It expands the model to include new areas such as pastoral care and identity formation, and reframes youth ministry in more explicitly religious and faith development language. This model acknowledges that youth ministry extends beyond the traditional youth group setting, and that congregations should offer multiple pathways for youth to participate in and benefit from the ministry of our congregations.

Distribute Handout 5-2, Web of Youth Ministry. Ask participants to take turns reading the components of the Web of Youth Ministry. Then lead a short discussion using the following reflection questions:

- What do you think of the Web of Youth Ministry model?
- Were you surprised about anything in the model?
- Do you have any questions about the model?

After five minutes of discussion, divide participants into eight small groups. Assign each group one of the components from the Web of Youth Ministry. Ask them to take Handout 5-1, 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents, with them to their small groups where their task is to consider their component and identify which assets are developed and

strengthened through that component of youth ministry. Give them five minutes for discussion before coming back to the large group to share what assets they identified.

ACTIVITY 4: Web of Youth Ministry Activities and Actions (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Eight sheets of newsprint
- Markers

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Write the name of one component of the Web of Youth Ministry on each of the eight sheets of newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants brainstorm specific activities or actions that fit within each component of the Web of Youth Ministry.

Ask participants to return to the small groups from Activity 3, to focus on the same component as before. Distribute the eight prepared sheets of newsprint to the eight groups.

Explain that their task is to reflect on what they have learned about adolescent development and asset building and come up with a specific list of activities and actions that fit within their Web of Youth Ministry component.

Give them 10 minutes to generate their list. After 10 minutes ask each group to share their ideas. As each group reports, post their list so it can be referenced in subsequent activities.

ACTIVITY 5: Adapting the Web (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Leader Resource 5-1, Size Scenarios
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Write the names of the four congregations from Leader Resource 5-1, Size Scenarios, at the top of four sheets of newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants explore how to adapt their youth ministry offerings depending on the size and situation of their setting.

Each of the activities and actions within each component of the Web of Youth Ministry is highly dependent on the size and available resources of the individual congregation. Explain that in this activity they will explore how to adapt the model to the limitations and opportunities of different congregational situations.

Divide participants into four small groups. Give each small group one of the scenarios from Leader Resource 5-1, Size Scenarios, and the corresponding sheet of newsprint.

Tell participants that they have two main tasks in their small group: 1) Spend five minutes identifying the opportunities and challenges present in their congregational scenario, and 2) Spend the rest of the time identifying at least one or two specific activities or actions for each component of the Web of Youth Ministry that would be appropriate for the congregation in their scenario. Ask them to record the opportunities/challenges and activities/actions on newsprint.

After 10 minutes bring the small groups back together and ask them to report back.

ACTIVITY 6: Revisiting Your Setting (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Participants' notes from Activity 1

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Write the reflection questions on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Participants look back at what they wrote about their youth ministry setting in Activity 1. They connect what their congregation is doing currently to the Web of Youth Ministry and the Search Institute Youth Developmental Assets.

Ask participants to take out their notes from Activity 1, and spend the next five minutes looking back at what they wrote about the youth ministry setting. Tell them to add to what they wrote by responding to the following questions:

- What components of the Web of Youth Ministry are well-represented in your congregation's youth ministry?
- What assets are youth in your congregation gaining through current activities and actions?
- What components of the Web of Youth Ministry are missing from your congregation's youth ministry?
- What assets should your congregation place greater emphasis on developing in your youth?

Give participants 5-10 minutes to reflect and journal on these questions. After participants have finished writing, go through each question and ask two or three individuals to share their answers with the group.

Handout 5-1: 40 Developmental Assets for Adolescents

ATTRIBUTION

TEXT

40 Developmental Assets® for Adolescents (ages 12-18)

Search Institute® has identified the following building blocks of healthy development—known as **Developmental Assets®**—that help young people grow up healthy, caring, and responsible.

External Assets		
Support	**1. Family support**—Family life provides high levels of love and support.	
	2. Positive family communication—Young person and her or his parent(s) communicate positively, and young person is willing to seek advice and counsel from parents.	
	3. Other adult relationships—Young person receives support from three or more nonparent adults.	
	4. Caring neighborhood—Young person experiences caring neighbors.	
	5. Caring school climate—School provides a caring, encouraging environment.	
	6. Parent involvement in schooling—Parent(s) are actively involved in helping young person succeed in school.	
Empowerment	**7. Community values youth**—Young person perceives that adults in the community value youth.	
	8. Youth as resources—Young people are given useful roles in the community.	
	9. Service to others—Young person serves in the community one hour or more per week.	
	10. Safety—Young person feels safe at home, school, and in the neighborhood.	
Boundaries & Expectations	**11. Family boundaries**—Family has clear rules and consequences and monitors the young person's whereabouts.	
	12. School Boundaries—School provides clear rules and consequences.	
	13. Neighborhood boundaries—Neighbors take responsibility for monitoring young people's behavior.	
	14. Adult role models—Parent(s) and other adults model positive, responsible behavior.	
	15. Positive peer influence—Young person's best friends model responsible behavior.	
	16. High expectations—Both parent(s) and teachers encourage the young person to do well.	
Constructive	**17. Creative activities**—Young person spends three or more hours per week in lessons or practice in music, theater, or other arts.	
	18. Youth programs—Young person spends three or more hours per week in sports, clubs, or organizations at school and/or in the community.	
	19. Religious community—Young person spends one or more hours per week in activities in a religious institution.	
	20. Time at home—Young person is out with friends "with nothing special to do" two or fewer nights per week.	

Internal Assets	**Commitment to Learning**	**21. Achievement Motivation**—Young person is motivated to do well in school. **22. School Engagement**—Young person is actively engaged in learning. **23. Homework**—Young person reports doing at least one hour of homework every school day. **24. Bonding to school**—Young person cares about her or his school. **25. Reading for Pleasure**—Young person reads for pleasure three or more hours per week.
	Positive Values	**26. Caring**—Young person places high value on helping other people. **27. Equality and social justice**—Young person places high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. **28. Integrity**—Young person acts on convictions and stands up for her or his beliefs. **29. Honesty—**Young person "tells the truth even when it is not easy." **30. Responsibility**—Young person accepts and takes personal responsibility. **31. Restraint**—Young person believes it is important not to be sexually active or to use alcohol or other drugs.
	Social Competencies	**32. Planning and decision making**—Young person knows how to plan ahead and make choices. **33. Interpersonal Competence**—Young person has empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills. **34. Cultural Competence**—Young person has knowledge of and comfort with people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds. **35. Resistance skills**—Young person can resist negative peer pressure and dangerous situations. **36. Peaceful conflict resolution**—Young person seeks to resolve conflict nonviolently.
	Positive Identity	**37. Personal power**—Young person feels he or she has control over "things that happen to me." **38. Self-esteem**—Young person reports having a high self-esteem. **39. Sense of purpose**—Young person reports that "my life has a purpose." **40. Positive view of personal future**—Young person is optimistic about her or his personal future.

Handout 5-2: Web of Youth Ministry

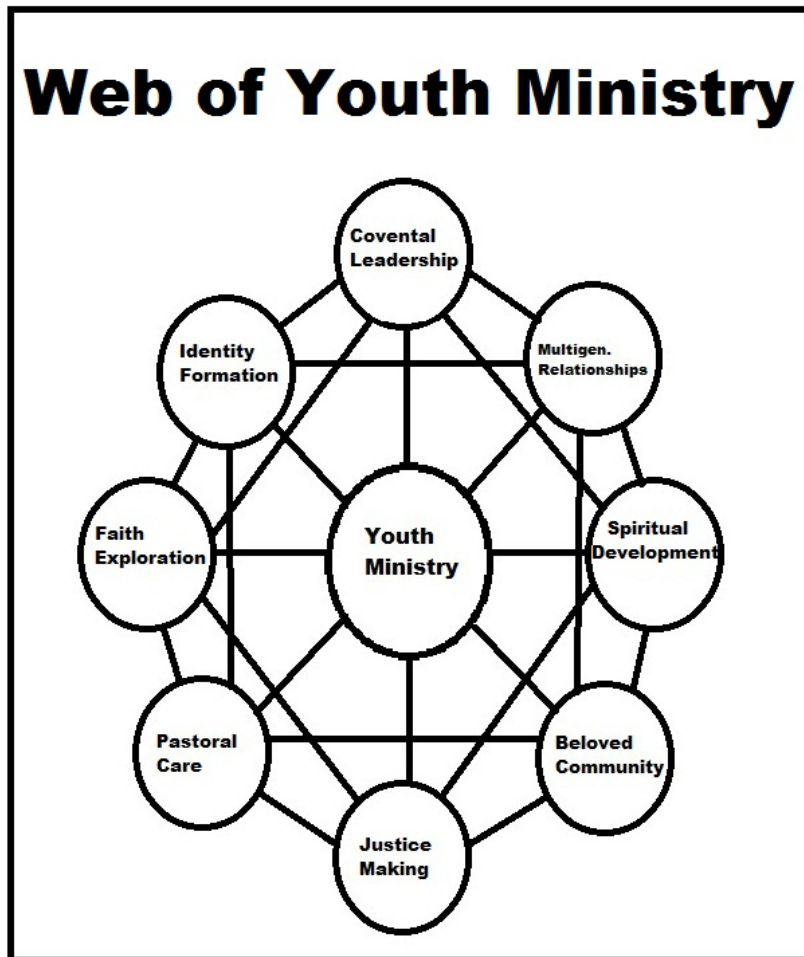**ATTRIBUTION**

By Jesse Jaeger and Beth Dana.

INSTRUCTIONS

Format so that the image is on one piece of paper and the accompanying text is on the next two.

TEXT

Web of Youth Ministry

- Covental Leadership
- Identity Formation
- Multigen. Relationships
- Faith Exploration
- Youth Ministry
- Spiritual Development
- Pastoral Care
- Beloved Community
- Justice Making

Web of Youth Ministry

Dynamic youth ministry is an interdependent web of the following components. . .

Spiritual Development: Spiritual development – the intentional cultivation of spirituality – is an important component of youth ministry. As spiritual beings, youth have experiences of awe, gratitude, wonder, appreciation, and oneness. These experiences are nurtured and sustained through both individual and group spiritual practices. Individual spiritual practice may include: meditation, sacred reading, solitary walks in the woods, and journaling. Group spiritual practice may include: worship (youth and congregational), music (church band, choir, group singing), group meditation, outdoor activities, and storytelling. Youth ministry should encourage and offer opportunities for engagement in practices that nurture and enliven their spirits.

Beloved Community: Being held in the arms of a beloved community is an essential part of being a religious person of any age. In youth ministry beloved community has three dimensions: Local, Unitarian Universalist, and Interfaith. It is important for youth to be grounded in a local community. By connecting regularly with people in their congregations, relationships are deep and authentic and long-lasting community can emerge. It is also important for youth to have a connection with the wider Unitarian Universalist movement. Camps and Conferences offer youth the chance to be part of a wider, global faith community and see the diversity of experiences that exist within Unitarian Universalism. Finally, interfaith community enriches youth and ministry with youth. As Unitarian Universalists we are open to and celebrate diverse religious perspectives. Unitarian Universalist youth live in a multifaith world, and It is important for them to be able to cultivate meaningful interfaith relationships.

Justice Making: Our Unitarian Universalist faith calls us to work for justice in our lives, our local communities and the world beyond. This can be done in a myriad of ways. Service trips – in your neighborhood, in another state, or even another country – can help open youth's eyes to the realities confronting other people and inspire them to work for justice. Organizing a social justice project within the congregation can connect youth to the rest of the congregation and place youth as leaders in the social justice work of the community. Youth can also do advocacy work around social justice issues that are important to them. Even curricula like the Our Whole Lives (OWL) comprehensive sexuality education program are part of justice making, and can help youth put their faith into action. In doing this work youth will grow their faith by practicing Unitarian Universalist

social justice that strives to be in solidarity with all people who work to create justice in the world.

Faith Exploration: Structured learning environments are an important component of youth ministry. Faith exploration takes place when youth engage with curricula such as Our Whole Lives (OWL), Coming of Age, and the Tapestry of Faith programs, which challenge youth to look deep and develop their faith. It also takes place through workshops at congregations, conferences, and camps. The free and responsible search for truth, meaning, and purpose contributes to youth faith development. The Unitarian Universalist approach to religious education and learning acknowledges that youth are learners *and* they are teachers; we all have something to teach from our own insight and experience. When youth are asked to co-facilitate formal learning activities such as curricula and workshops, this is a learning *and* leadership development opportunity.

Multigenerational Relationships: Youth ministry is an important part of multigenerational faith communities. Multigenerational faith communities have programs that meet the specific developmental needs of different age groups, as well as bring people together across ages. Dynamic youth ministry strives to help youth connect with people of all ages. This can be done through sharing leadership with adults, inviting youth to help with the religious education program, building mentor relationships between youth and adults, forming multigenerational choirs, and youth leading workshops for adults in areas they are knowledgeable about. Celebrating Coming of Age and Bridging ceremonies in the life of a congregation can also build multigenerational community. Dynamic multigenerational youth ministry should support whole families and finds ways to include caregivers and siblings into a youth ministry program. It is important to remember that multigenerational relationships form through having fun together. Game nights, retreats, and outdoor activities that are open to people of all ages can help build multigenerational community and strengthen youth ministries.

Covenantal Leadership: Youth leadership is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized, and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. This is done by encouraging youth to take on more responsibility as they grow and develop. The goal is for youth to be empowered and effective leaders, but this happens over time with intentional leadership development. Youth can grow in their leadership through teaching religious education classes, taking on congregational leadership roles, being a leader within their local youth ministry, or taking on leadership in regional and national youth ministry.

Identity Formation: Dynamic youth ministry recognizes that identity formation is an important

developmental task for youth, and supports them in the journey. Youth are striving to figure out who they are as spiritual beings, relational beings, racial/ethnic and sexual beings, people of faith, justice makers, lifelong learners, leaders, and how they fit in multigenerational communities. Youth ministry helps youth develop a healthy identity in these areas and helps them live with integrity, such that their Unitarian Universalist faith is inseparable from their identity as a whole person. This component, more than any other, is interconnected with the other seven. Understanding the myriad of ways youth identity is forming, and how that plays out in the other components of youth ministry, is important for supporting and nurturing youth identity formation.

Pastoral Care: Like people of all ages, youth have specific pastoral needs. Supportive pastoral care is grounded in communities where people know how to listen deeply to each other. Both youth and adults should have skills in deep listening. Pastoral care with youth includes creating safe congregations, supporting youth who are in crisis, and celebrating their joys and accomplishments. It is giving youth the skills to care for each other and the awareness of when to reach out to adults to get help for a friend or for themselves. Pastoral care with youth is also strengthened when ministers have a relationship with the youth in their congregations. Everyone works together to create a religious community that watches out for and supports its youth.

Leader Resource 5-1: Size Scenarios

ATTRIBUTION

Developed by Jesse Jaeger.

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut the scenarios apart so that you can distribute them to small groups.

TEXT

UU Fellowship of Somewhere Montana: You are a small Fellowship with 35 members. You have no paid staff but you do have a converted house as your worship space. There are three junior high youth who come pretty regularly with their parents. One is a boy who mostly stays for the service and sits with his parents. The two girls have started helping out in the one Religious Education class the Fellowship runs on Sunday during the service. There are also two other families that are very involved with the Fellowship who each have high school aged kids. One family has been part of the church for many years and their daughter was really involved in the RE classroom until she started high school. The other family recently moved to town. They were very active in the UU Church in their previous town. Their daughter was a leader in that church's youth group, but she has had a hard time connecting to this church community.

First Parish Someplace Connecticut: You are the classic small New England church. You have a rich history and an endowment that allows you to have a full-time Minister and a part-time Religious Educator, but the membership has dwindled to 100 members. Last year you had a successful Our Whole Lives class that was made up of five eighth graders and one ninth grader. They are pretty bonded and look to have the makings of a youth group. This is pretty exciting because it has been years since this church has had a youth group. You also have a group of four sixth graders as well as two pretty involved families that have seniors in high school. Both of those seniors are not seen very often and the parents report that they have a hard time convincing them to come to church.

UU Society of Over There California: You are a 300 member congregation in Northern California. You have a full-time Minister and a full-time Director of Religious Education. Each year your youth group has averaged about 10 really active youth and 10 other youth who come and go. You also have had for the past eight years a pretty stable 8th grade Our Whole Lives class and 9th grade Coming of Age program. Once the youth have aged out of these two classes you tend not to see the youth on Sunday mornings anymore. Though the high school youth group is pretty strong it is also not very visible in the day-to-day life of the church. The only contact they have with adults in the church is with the two long-time youth advisors and every once in a while the Director of Religious Education.

The UU Church of Ever Here Maryland: You are a church of about 600 members and you feel like you are poised to grow. As part of a vision for growth, your church has hired a 20 hours/week Youth Minister to coordinate all of the congregation's youth ministries. The church has also formally written youth ministry into the job description of the Associate Minister. There are about 40 youth who are involved in some way with the congregation. Along with excitement about the possibilities for the future there is also some anxiety in some quarters about youth getting lost in the cracks and resentment from some members of the church who do not have teenagers about all the resources the church is spending on youth ministry.

Reader 5-1: Tapping the Potential – Discovering Congregations' Role in Building Assets in Youth

ATTRIBUTION

TEXT
FORWARD

A new voice is being heard in conversations and debates about America's youth and their future. In the not-too-distant past, mention of congregations or religion as a resource for youth development would have been rare in public discussions. Today, that's beginning to change.

More and more people are affirming that congregations have tremendous potential for helping young people grow up healthy, principled, and caring. The challenge for congregations is to discover new ways to realize this potential.

With major support from the DeWitt Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Search Institute launched the Uniting Congregations for Youth Development pilot initiative to equip congregations of all faiths to build "developmental assets" for and with youth—to provide young people with the foundation they need to be successful in life. We had no idea how far-reaching the impact would be. Today, congregations in seven pilot communities, several other communities, and numerous national religious systems and denominations have committed to making asset building the foundation for their youth agendas. We also know that countless individual churches, synagogues, and other congregations across the country have also embraced this approach to youth development.

I believe the excitement and energy around asset building reflect congregation's discovering or reclaiming their tremendous, undertapped potential for helping young people grow up healthy, principled, and caring. This booklet presents a vision for youth

work in congregations that we hope captures your imagination, gives you ideas, and motivates you to take positive steps on behalf of youth.

Peter L. Benson, Ph.D.
President
Search Institute

A CONTEMPORARY PARABLE

What is your community doing to support and care for children and families?

Ben and Gloria have decided to move. As they search for a new home, they look for a community committed to caring for children and families . . . a community that works hard to be a community . . . a community with strong congregations and strong schools.

As they identify some possible places, they ask local educators, business leaders, clergy, youth workers, parents, and others one question: "What is your community doing to support and care for children and families?" In most communities, they hear of a smattering of programs that are available. . . if you look hard enough.

Ben and Gloria's search brings them to St. Anthony Village, Minnesota. Here, they learn about a community that has been working toward a vision for healthier youth. Unlike communities that seem consumed with worries about youth, they see a community that is enthusiastic about young people. They hear how the community has held "Villagefest" celebrations to focus attention on positive ways the community supports young people. They hear how the schools and neighborhoods are talking about what they can do. They hear how community leaders have been gathering to create a plan for "asset building." On further investigation, they discover that a congregation was the initial catalyst behind the vision and effort. The congregation—whose slogan is "Healthy Families for the Future"—had adopted a strategy of nurturing developmental assets as a focus for its mission with youth and families, based on Search Institute research. It had gathered a community-wide steering committee and helped to shape a community vision.

As part of the focus, the congregation sponsored a series of "Thank-You Sundays" to honor different groups who contribute to community health, including teachers, firefighters, and police officers. The congregation also wanted to sponsor an after-school program requiring a gymnasium. The search for a gymnasium space provided an ice-breaking conversation with the director of community services, which in turn led to a cooperative effort between the congregation and community services called "Teen Time," an after-school program for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders. Community services provides the space, and the congregation provides the staff and volunteers.

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CONGREGATIONS' ASSET-BUILDING POTENTIAL

It may be a different way of thinking to suggest that the faith community can play a lead role in building assets for youth. Yet more and more congregations are discovering that it is imperative to address all aspects of young people's lives. Consider some of the asset-building strengths congregations already offer youth:

• SUPPORT—Most congregations can provide a caring community in which young people are surrounded by networks of support.

• PARENT SUPPORT—Because families are often involved together in congregations, the faith community has a unique opportunity to influence, support, and equip parents in their central role of nurturing assets.

• INTERGENERATIONAL AND PEER RELATIONSHIPS—Congregations have a unique potential to be intergenerational communities in which youth connect with caring adults of all ages, build healthy relationships with peers, and develop attachments to younger children.

• SERVICE—All major faith traditions include an emphasis on service as an expression of faith. Personal involvement in service—at many times during childhood and adolescence—is a key strategy for nurturing assets.

• VALUES—Shaping values is at the core of the congregation's mission. By naming and nurturing positive values, congregations help to shape the life choices of the young people they touch.

• COMMUNITY ADVOCACY—The faith community can provide pivotal leadership, making congregations key partners in community-wide asset-building efforts.

Guiding and inspiring all these efforts is a community-wide vision:

In May 2007, the valedictorian of St. Anthony High School's graduating class (those children who entered kindergarten in the fall of 1994) will say: "This graduating class has reached a goal: Seventy-five percent of us have [almost all of the] assets. . . . I want to say thanks to my parents for their love and support, and also to my classmates, teachers, and other adults in this community, because it took the whole village to raise us."

THE POWER OF ASSET BUILDING

What does that congregation and community mean by "asset building"? And what is it about this strategy that has energized and united this congregation and community, as well as many others across the country?

The concept of developmental assets grows out of research conducted by Search Institute on youth across the United States. Instead of focusing on problems (such as violence or drug use), the research focuses on 40 developmental assets—positive things young people need to grow up healthy, principled, and caring (see box on page 6). These assets are divided into two broad categories:

• **External assets—**Twenty assets come primarily from outside of young people— from families, other people, and institutions—and surround them with the support, empowerment, boundaries and expectations, and constructive use of time they need to thrive. These external assets are like the nest in which young birds are carefully nourished, nurtured, and protected as they mature and become independent.

• **Internal assets—**The other 20 assets are commitments, attitudes, values, and skills that support our youth from within. To continue our analogy, they are the wings that provide strength and skills to enable growing birds to thrive and fly. Most people agree that these assets make intuitive sense. When they first hear about the concept of assets, they often say: "This helps me put together a lot of what I've been thinking and feeling. It makes so much sense!" In addition, people from many faith traditions see asset building as compatible with their theology and mission. But are the assets really important? Do they really make a difference? Research suggests that they are and do—and that's why so many people and organizations are joining the asset-building movement.

SEARCH INSTITUTE'S 40 DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS (page 6 box)

EXTERNAL ASSETS

SUPPORT	**EMPOWERMENT**	**BOUNDARIES AND EXPECTATIONS**	**CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**
1. Family Support 2. Positive family communication 3. Other adult relationships 4. Caring neighborhood 5. Caring school climate 6. Parent involvement in schooling	7. Community values youth 8. Youth as resources 9. Services to others 10. Safety	11. Family boundaries 12. School boundaries 13. Neighborhood boundaries 14. Adult role models 15. Positive peer influence 16. High expectations	17. Creative activities 18. Youth programs 19. Religious community 20. Time at home

INTERNAL ASSETS

COMMITMENT TO LEARNING	**POSITIVE VALUES**	**SOCIAL COMPETENCIES**	**POSITIVE IDENTITY**
21. Achievement motivation 22. School engagement 23. Homework 24. Bonding to school 25. Reading for pleasure	26. Caring 27. Equality and social justice 28. Integrity 29. Honesty 30. Responsibility 31. Restraint	32. Planning and decision making 33. Interpersonal competence 34. Cultural competence 35. Resistance skills 36. Peaceful conflict resolution	37. Personal power 38. Self-esteem 39. Sense of purpose 40. Positive view of personal future

For more information on building each asset, see Peter L. Benson, Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland, *What Kids Need to Succeed* (Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit, 1998).

Search Institute's research has found that these 40 assets powerfully protect young people from a wide range of risky behaviors, including premature sexual activity, antisocial behavior and violence, alcohol and other drug use, and more. The more of these assets our youth have, the less likely they are to get involved in each of these problems. Furthermore, youth with these assets are more likely to make positive choices and commitments (see charts, page 8).

Yet as important as these assets are, far too few youth in America have enough of them in their lives. Indeed, the average young person we surveyed has only about 18 of the 40 assets. No wonder so many people are worried about youth: young people don't have many of the building blocks that guide them to make healthy, positive choices. The power of the research often motivates people to focus on asset building. In addition, assets also attract people's energy and commitment because:

• **They give a framework—**Most congregations build assets, even though they may never think of what they do in those terms. The asset-building concept provides a framework for understanding the connections between many different emphases and efforts. It gives a focus to your congregation's mission for youth, reducing a sense of fragmentation by helping you put the pieces together.

• **They are shared—**People with many different perspectives find that they can unite behind the assets. They form a common ground on which diverse communities can start working together toward shared values and commitments.

• **They are hopeful—**Most efforts on behalf of youth have focused on problem solving. And while there certainly is a need to solve problems,

the emphasis on problems tends to drain energy. It doesn't take long before people burn out or become frustrated. In addition, the problem-centered approach is rarely effective in promoting long-term, positive change. Because asset building focuses on young people's strengths, sees youth as resources, and focuses on the positive possibilities, this approach can give energy and a vision that will sustain efforts. Furthermore, this hopeful perspective is consistent with the theology of most faith traditions.

• **They are effective—**People want to do things that they believe will make a difference. They want a return on their investment of time and energy. With asset building, people easily see how they can make a positive difference, creating healthier families and healthier communities.

• **They are manageable—**Asset building isn't dependent on cumbersome bureaucratic processes. One person or one group can begin immediately. Building the 40 assets can be seen as 40 goals or priorities. Each one makes a difference, and each one builds on the other, creating more strength as the number of assets increases.

• **They empower—**Everyone can build assets, so every congregation member has a role to play. In this way, positive

youth development becomes the responsibility of all members. People take creative action and make changes on their own, based on their own concerns and interests. When you begin understanding the asset building idea, it can refocus energy and give a new perspective for youth work (see box, page 7). In the process, it can challenge congregations to reenergize their youth programs and develop innovative strategies to build strengths for youth in the congregation and community.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT ASSET BUILDING? (page 7 box)

When congregations adopt an asset-building perspective, it can change many things about the way they work with youth and families. Here are some ways it may be different:

COMMON APPROACHES TO RELIGIOUS YOUTH WORK	AN ASSET-BUILDING APPROACH TO YOUTH WORK
• Program is made up of many seemingly unrelated activities without a clear mission or purpose. • It's often unclear what the congregation needs to do that will make a difference in youth's lives. • The focus is primarily on youth-to-youth relationships. • Children and youth in the congregation are the responsibility of the youth leader, volunteers, and parents. • Parents are only superficially involved in the youth program (providing refreshments or being informed). • Energy is consumed by reacting to problems after they occur. • The focus is almost exclusively on running the congregation's own youth program. • The youth worker is primarily a program leader, planner, and mentor for youth in the congregation.	• The framework helps to integrate diverse activities into a larger framework of positive outcomes. • The framework gives concrete things the congregation can do to make a lasting difference for youth. • The focus broadens to building intergenerational community. • Everyone in the congregation recognizes her or his responsibility for children and youth—and her or his power to build assets. • Parents are active partners in the youth program, through family activities and parent education. • Energy is put into nurturing skills and values that help to avoid problems before they start. • Congregations become committed to cooperating with others in the community. • The youth worker also serves as a networker and voice for youth in the community.

The Importance of Increasing Assets

Nurturing assets has tremendous potential for reducing many of the problems that we worry about among youth. Based on a Search Institute study of nearly 100,000 6th- to 12th-grade youth, the following charts show that youth with more assets in their lives are much less likely to be involved in a range of at-risk behaviors, and more likely to be involved in positive, prosocial behaviors. Percentages indicate youth who reported involvement in each area.

SEXUAL ACTIVITY
Average: 18%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
33%	21%	10%	3%

VIOLENCE
Average: 33%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
61%	35%	16%	6%
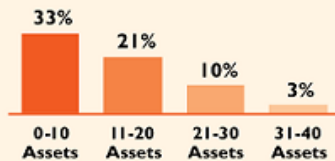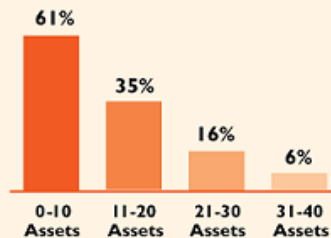
PROBLEM ALCOHOL USE
Average: 27%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
53%	30%	11%	3%
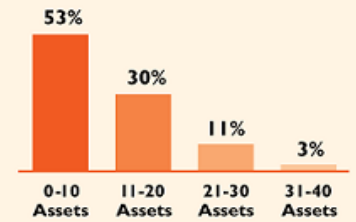
SUCCESS IN SCHOOL
Average: 23%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
7%	19%	35%	53%
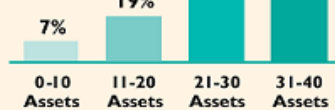
MAINTAINS GOOD HEALTH
Average: 52%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
25%	46%	69%	88%

HELPS OTHERS   Average: 83%

0-10 Assets	11-20 Assets	21-30 Assets	31-40 Assets
69%	83%	91%	96%
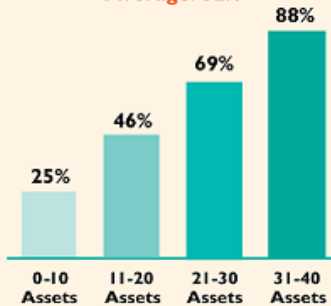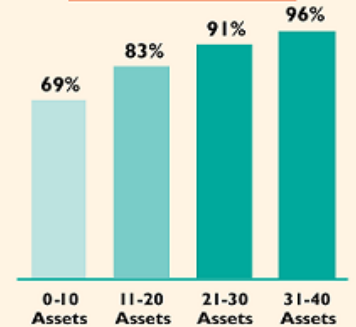
For definitions of each behavior, see Peter Benson, All Kids Are Our Kids (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1997).

page 8 charts

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ASSET BUILDING AND
SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

While people from many faith traditions have affirmed the compatibility of asset building with their theology, some have questioned its relationship to congregations' historical focus on spiritual development and socialization into a specific faith tradition. They worry that asset building could deflect energy from a primary focus on nurturing young people's religious identity. Some may have a tendency to say, "Our role is to focus on the religious aspects of development and leave the rest to families and others."

These perspectives raise important questions that are worthy of reflection and discussion among leaders, parents, and youth. Several points help clarify the issues:

• Most theological traditions affirm that religious youth work involves addressing young people's spiritual needs in the context of their whole lives, which includes the developmental issues identified in the assets.

• Many asset-building themes are rooted in a basic philosophy of religious youth work, including the importance of relationships, caring community, intergenerational relationships, and more.

• Many asset-building strategies are also important strategies for nurturing faith. These include involvement in service, creating a warm and caring climate for youth, supporting families, developing thinking skills, developing friendship-making skills, and others. Thus asset building can actually enhance faith development efforts.

• Many faith communities already have a tradition of being at the forefront of efforts to address the well-being of young people. Asset building is a natural expression of those commitments.

• All major faith traditions seek to guide young people away from various problem behaviors, such as alcohol or other drug use, premature sexual activity, and violence. Asset building can be seen as an effective strategy to employ in addressing these issues with youth. Of course, not all congregations have a clear commitment to developing strategies that address all aspects of young people's development. Thus, for some, asset building can be seen as a call to reclaim or reaffirm their tradition in nurturing the development of the whole child. For others, it may be a challenge to consider an intentional focus on youth development and asset building in their programming.

MIXING ASSET BUILDING WITH FAITH DEVELOPMENT*

A useful discussion for congregations is to talk about your goals for youth work using the circles below. Is faith development a subset of a commitment to youth development (#1)? Is asset building (youth development) a subset of a focus on faith development (#2)? Are the two essentially the same goal (#3)? Or are they totally distinct and unconnected goals (#4)? Your answers to these questions can help to shape the place of asset building in your congregation.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT
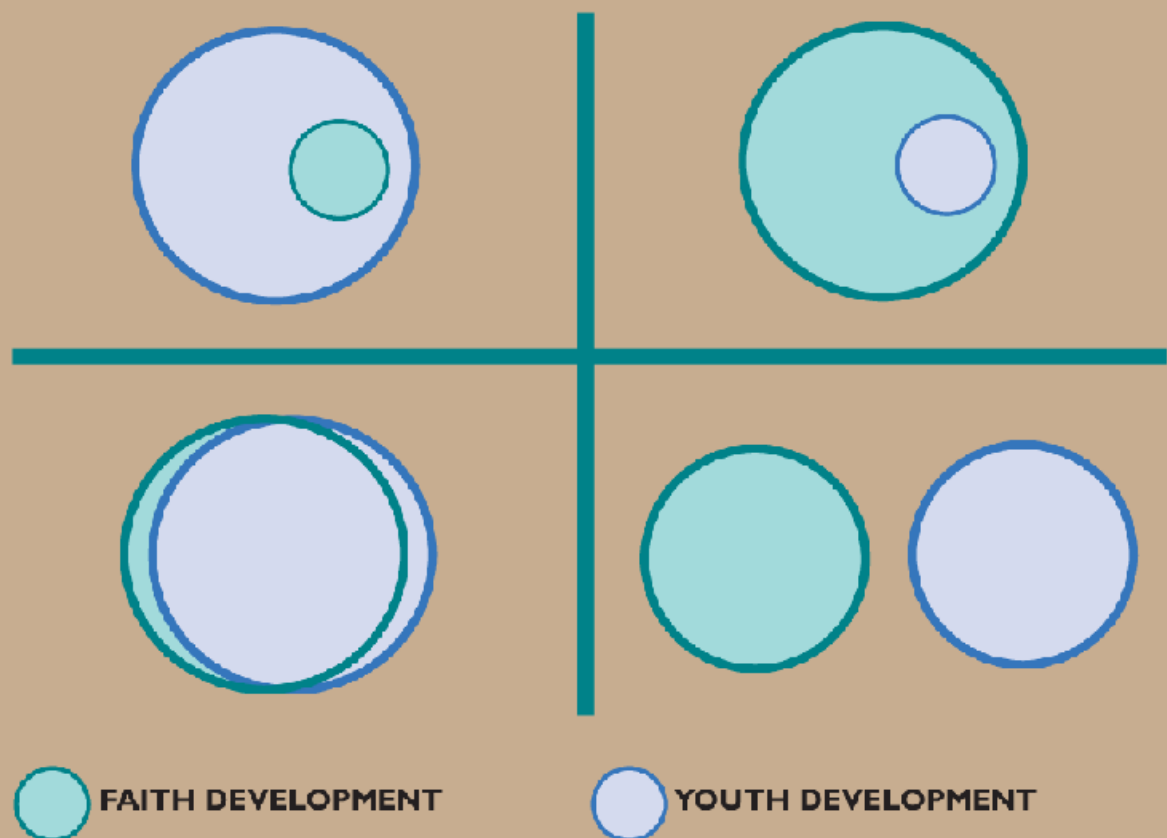
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

* The term "faith development" is used generically to refer to religious formation and/or spiritual development within all religious traditions.

10 ASSET-BUILDING STRATEGIES FOR CONGREGATIONS

Once you begin to see the possibilities of this new perspective for youth work, specific strategies emerge that build the assets, thus enhancing young people's lives and futures. While each congregation is unique, here are ten strategies to begin the process.

1. Assess current needs and pro- grams—As you begin thinking about how asset building might fit into your congregation, assess young people's needs and how they are being addressed through your congregation. Use the framework to evaluate existing programs—religious education, parent support, youth group, outreach, worship experiences, and other opportunities— and to begin identifying possibilities for innovative strategies. Also celebrate and strengthen congregational efforts that already nurture assets. Use the checklist on page 11 as a tool in your assessment.

2. Build a shared vision—Asset building can be particularly powerful in helping to shape a vision that gives focus and direction to youth work. When youth, parents, volunteers, congregational leaders (including clergy and the congregation's governing body), and other members all have a role in shaping your vision, it can unite and energize the whole congregation. Then, with vision in place, you can develop the concrete strategies that will move the congregation closer to that vision.

3. Create awareness and commitment—All members in a congregation may not lead the youth group or go on retreats, but they do influence young people's asset base. As adults accept responsibility for asset building, the congregation can truly become a place where young people are nurtured by the entire community of faith. Get out the message that everyone is an asset builder, and encourage members to make personal commitments to some kind of asset building. Do this by:
• Placing articles and announcements in newsletters, worship bulletins, bulletin boards, and special mailings.
• Talking about the ideas with the congregation's governing body and the planning group for youth activities.
• Sharing the ideas in adult and youth education classes and groups.
• Having a special event or retreat to create a shared vision for asset building.

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> **By articulating and nurturing positive values, congregations help provide a foundation for many of the life choices young people will make.**

In addition to building a general commitment to asset building, identify or form a group that will take the lead in assuring that your asset-building strategies move forward. Though an existing committee may be able to serve in this role, it may be more effective to form a special asset-building team of people who are eager to move the vision forward. Include leaders, parents, youth, older members, and representatives of other subgroups in the congregation.

4. Nurture the support assets—Congregations have great potential for building the support assets by nurturing positive relationships in families, with peers, with younger children, and with adults of all ages. Indeed, most faith traditions see creating a caring, affirming place for young people as central to their mission. However, too often the focus in youth work has been on developing relationships within a youth group and only with those few adults who commit themselves to working with youth. Others in the congregation may rarely see—much less talk with—young people. Too often, youth don't experience the community of care that congregations could offer.

Thus, it is vital to break down the barriers that tend to isolate youth. To do this will require promoting a youth-friendly environment in which adults know the names of youth, talk and listen to youth, and engage in activities with youth.

A goal might be for every child and adolescent in the congregation to have a sustained relationship with at least two non-parent adults in the congregation from age 5 to age 18. These relationships might be fostered by providing opportunities for adults

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USING THE CHECKLIST

The worksheet on page 11 can be used for personal reflection or with youth and adults to develop a shared vision for asset building.

1. Identify how important you think each strategy ought to be for your congregation's work with youth (1 = not important; 5 = top priority).

2. Evaluate how well your congregation nurtures each element of an asset-building characteristic or strategy (1 = not well at all; 5 = very well).

3. Think about ways you can focus more energy on the strategies that are most important to you, yet are not effectively addressed (i.e., the ones with the largest difference between the two columns).

Identifying Asset-Building Priorities

ASSET-BUILDING STRATEGIES	HOW IMPORTANT DO YOU THINK THIS OUGHT TO BE? (1=NOT IMPORTANT; 5=TOP PRIORITY)	HOW WELL DO WE DO NOW? (1=NOT WELL AT ALL; 5=VERY WELL)
1. ASSESS CURRENT NEEDS AND PROGRAMS Knowing and celebrating what is currently being done to build assets. Having a clear sense of the needs of youth in the congregation and community.	_____ _____	_____ _____
2. BUILD A SHARED VISION Developing a clear vision for children and youth programs that blends promoting assets with spiritual development. Involving many people in shaping the congregation's asset-building vision.	_____ _____	_____ _____
3. CREATE AWARENESS AND COMMITMENT Communicating the vision for asset building to all members. Having many members who intentionally seek to build assets among youth. Involving youth in identifying priorities and developing action plans for asset building.	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
4. NURTURE SUPPORT ASSETS Building sustained relationships between adults and youth. Nurturing caring relationships among youth. Building sustained relationships between teenagers and children. Nurturing a youth-friendly environment throughout the congregation.	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
5. EMPOWER YOUTH THROUGH SERVICE AND LEADERSHIP Engaging every young person, ages 5 to 18, in at least one service activity per year. Integrating youth as leaders throughout the congregation. Helping everyone in the congregation see youth as positive resources.	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
6. INVOLVE YOUTH IN CONSTRUCTIVE ACTIVITIES Connecting all 6th- to 12th-grade youth to a weekly program. Providing social opportunities for youth and their friends. Providing a safe place where youth can gather after school.	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
7. ARTICULATE AND NURTURE POSITIVE VALUES As a congregation, articulating core values to pass on to the younger generations. Educating the congregation and community regarding these commonly held values.	_____ _____	_____ _____
8. DEVELOP SOCIAL COMPETENCIES AND POSITIVE IDENTITY Provide opportunities for youth to lead and make decisions within the congregation. Intentionally building life skills through education programs.	_____ _____	_____ _____
9. EDUCATE AND SUPPORT PARENTS Nurturing parents' skills in areas of asset building and spiritual development. Providing opportunities for families to serve others together. Supporting parents by building relationships among families and across generations.	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
10. REACH OUT TO THE COMMUNITY Developing strategies for reaching out to unconnected youth. Working with other clergy and youth workers to promote positive opportunities for youth. Supporting community efforts to nurture healthy youth through strong schools, strong parks and recreation programs, enforcement of alcohol laws, and so on. Serving as a partner in or a catalyst for a community-wide asset-building initiative.	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

and youth to share meals, do service projects side by side, participate in sports and music together, worship together, and share congregational leadership.

In addition to fostering positive relationships in general, congregations can introduce programs that are specifically designed to nurture intergenerational relationships. These might include:

• Regular intergenerational programs (educational events, choir, plays, etc.).

• Intergenerational social activities and festivals (softball games, picnics, etc.).

• Intentional efforts to engage all ages in worship experiences.

• Formal mentoring programs that match youth with adults for long-term, intentional relationship building.

• Peer-helping programs in which youth learn skills to provide care and support to each other.

• Opportunities for youth to relate to children in leadership and caring roles.

5. Empower youth through service and leadership—Because of their commitment to service to others, most congregations already involve young people in service projects. In addition to the benefit to people being served, these opportunities can be instrumental in the healthy development of youth, particularly in nurturing in young people caring values, commitments, and skills.

Because service involvement can be a powerful asset-building strategy, a goal for congregations might be to engage every young person—ages 5 to 18—in at least one service project each year. At the same time, these efforts should involve opportunities for youth to interact with caring adults as they work side by side. In addition, a shift to an asset-building approach includes integrating young people into the leadership of the congregation. Involving youth as leaders builds important skills and competencies in young people, gives them a sense of real ownership of their programs and the congregation, and provides the congregation with new energy, ideas, and enthusiasm.

6. Involve youth in high-quality, constructive activities—In 1992, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development drew national attention to the fact that about 40 percent of young adolescents' waking hours are discretionary. In too many cases, the free time provides opportunities for experimenting with and developing negative behaviors—particularly when young people live in places that are unsafe or have few constructive opportunities.

Congregations have great potential for meeting young people's need for constructive activities. Efforts should be

made to connect all 6th-to 12th-grade youth with a weekly program, paying particular attention to maintaining involvement through high school. Congregations can provide:

• Safe, positive places to spend time after school or in the evenings, particularly if the congregation is in a unsafe neighborhood.

• Opportunities for recreation, athletics, or socializing with friends (both those within the congregation as well as others they might invite to participate).

• Opportunities for youth to build skills (for example, through computer training), enhance their education (through tutoring), and nourish their creativity (through music, theater, or other arts).

7. Articulate and nurture positive values—While schools and other non-sectarian youth organizations often shy away from discussions of values, shaping values is at the core of the congregation's mission. By articulating and nurturing positive values (such as compassion, honesty, equality, respect, and responsibility), congregations help provide a foundation for many of the life choices young people will make. Though articulating values may be an obvious task for congregations, it can also be a difficult one. Many congregations may assume shared values among youth and adults, only to discover divisiveness when those values are clearly articulated. However, the process of gaining clarity will have important benefits to young people, parents, and other adults.

8. Develop social competencies and positive identity—Young people need a set of social competencies or life skills to thrive. These include being able to make good decisions, being comfortable with people who are different, knowing how to make friends, having a sense of hope and purpose. Congregations have opportunities to build these competencies, particularly if intentional efforts are made. Some approaches that can make a difference include:

• Involving youth in challenging leader-ship positions in the youth program and congregation where they practice decision-making and assertiveness skills.

• Providing a caring, supportive, and affirming climate that nurtures a positive self-image.

• Building friendship-making skills (and other competencies) into religious education classes, youth group meetings, retreats, and other youth programs.

• Emphasizing the hopeful dimensions in the congregation's faith tradition.

Building social competencies and a sense of identity may be particularly important in communities where young people have fewer opportunities to develop these skills— and where some skills may be particularly critical. For example, Cass Community Church in Detroit developed a series of four retreats to help youth discover alternatives to violence. By participating in the program, young people examined their own attitudes toward violence, looked at the role of violence in the world, studied nonviolence, and developed their own strategies for addressing violence in their schools and community.

9. Educate and support parents— While it is true that everyone in a community has responsibility for raising young people, the family is the primary shaping influence. Congregations have unique access to families, since they maintain ongoing contact with many parents who often look to the faith community for education, guidance, and support.

WHY JOIN WITH OTHERS IN YOUR COMMUNITY?
Linking with other sectors in the community and with community-wide initiatives takes time and effort, and congregational leaders already have plenty of other things to do. Why add something else? Here are some benefits such an approach brings both to the congregation and the community.

WHAT CONGREGATIONS CAN GAIN FROM COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

COMMITMENT TO SERVICE—All major faith traditions include a commitment to serve others. Reaching out to build assets for the community's youth (particularly those most vulnerable) can be a significant and lasting outreach.

CONNECTION—Connecting with teachers, youth workers, city leaders, social service agencies, and other residents can help you identify resources for the young people and families in your congregation, while also providing opportunities for personal support and professional growth.

COORDINATION—A common complaint is that different sectors in a community don't know what others are doing, so conflicts in schedules and priorities inevitably emerge. Partnerships can ease some of these problems.

COMMUNITY CLIMATE—As more and more sectors in a community adopt the asset-building vision, the whole community is strengthened, creating a better place for all youth and families, including those in your congregation.

CLOUT—Joining with people in other sectors can heighten your congregation's visibility and influence in the community.

WHAT THE COMMUNITY CAN GAIN FROM CONGREGATIONS' INVOLVEMENT

COMPASSION—Congregations are filled with many willing and motivated hearts and hands that want to make a difference—and that can be mobilized effectively.

COMMUNITY—Congregations model intergenerational community in action. Congregations can provide settings where children and youth can learn from an older generation's wisdom and values.

CONTACT—More parents and other adults are involved in congregations than in any other institution in a community. Congregations can access these adults to bring them onto the asset-building team.

CLARITY—The congregation appropriately provides an ongoing safe place for people to test, reflect on, and articulate their values.

CATALYST—As congregational energy and excitement build around asset building, the energy becomes contagious to others in the community.

CREDIBILITY—In many communities, congregations maintain an important leadership role. Their support of an asset-building vision can be important in gaining support for the efforts.

From Eugene C. Roehlkpartain, *Youth Ministry in City Churches* (Loveland, CO: Group Books, 1987), pp 201-202.

> **An asset-building vision invites and challenges congregations to reach into the community to create a healthier place for all youth.**

Unfortunately, too few congregations do an effective job of involving, equipping, and empowering parents. A study of mainline Protestant congregations by Search Institute found that only 10 percent of those congregations offer regular parent education. However, some congregations—like Beth El Synagogue in Minneapolis—have made family support a focal point for youth programming. The congregation regularly offers workshops and study sessions for parents. It also sponsors mini-retreats for families. As a result, parents are highly motivated and supportive of the overall youth program.

By strengthening parents' abilities to build assets in their families, congregations can have a tremendous and lasting impact on young people. Several strategies may be appropriate:

• Providing educational and support groups for parents in which they examine their own parenting, explore developmental issues, and support each other in their parenting roles.

• Emphasizing family involvement (youth and adults together) in service projects in the community.

• Offering opportunities for youth and parents to talk together within the context of the congregation (in classes, retreats, or other settings).

• Distributing videos, audiotapes, and printed resources parents can use at home.

• Building support networks that include people from multiple generations for parents to depend on, particularly in times of crisis or stress.

10. Reach out to the community—In addition to reshaping the congregation's work with youth, an asset-building vision challenges your congregation to reach into your community to create a healthier place for all youth. Building bridges can happen on many levels. You can . . .

• Advocate with and on behalf of youth when public issues that affect their lives need to be addressed. This might include support for education, employment opportunities, health services, recreation and arts activities, and other positive opportunities.

• Connect with congregations of many faith traditions to nurture a shared commitment to asset building. Building relationships can open doors for joint training, support, programming, and advocacy.

• Network with secular youth workers and educators to develop mutual

respect and a shared understanding of asset building and to pool resources.

• Develop strategies for reaching youth who are not connected to congregations or other positive socializing systems in the community. These young people are often the most vulnerable youth in communities, yet they are often the youth for whom the least is available.

• Join existing community-wide efforts by sitting on task forces or vision teams. Work together to identify priorities and establish strategies for many sectors in the city or town.

• Initiate community-wide efforts if your community isn't already involved in asset building. This role might begin with convening community influencers and other residents to learn about asset building and explore possibilities. Then the congregation might provide ongoing coordination to see the vision begin to turn into concrete action.

RENEWED COMMITMENT

As American society has become more pluralistic, the influence of the religious sector has diminished in many communities throughout the nation. Too often, congregations are reluctant to work with other sectors for fear of compromising their priorities or values. Too often, congregations are not seen as resources for youth in their communities. Too often, the religious community is ignored in discussions of youth issues. And too often, congregations don't make it a priority to work with others in the community. These realities represent real challenges. But as congregations and other institutions in communities discover a new, positive vision for asset building, communities have the opportunity to commit to working through differences toward a shared vision for young people. When that begins to occur, the faith community will rediscover and begin to tap its tremendous potential for leading communities toward a hopeful future for youth in the congregation, the community, and the nation.

ASSET-BUILDING RESOURCES FROM SEARCH INSTITUTE

Building Assets in Congregations
A Practical Guide for Helping Youth Grow Up Healthy
This in-depth practical guide offers a discussion of developmental assets, an easy planning guide for creating an asset-building congregation, and work-sheets, strategies, and ideas for infusing assets into youth programs, work with families, congregation- wide activities, and work in the broader community.

A Foundation for Success
Video and Leader's Guide
This motivational and educational video offers ideas and examples from all faith traditions on how asset building can be integrated into the activities and life of a congregation.

Building Assets Together
135 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed
This book gives creative, easy-to-use activities to introduce developmental assets to youth. It includes 94 interactive group activities for 6th-to-12th-graders, and 41 attractive, reproducible worksheets that help youth understand their own assets.

What Kids Need to Succeed
Proven, Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids
What Kids Need to Succeed introduces the 40 assets and shows practical and specific ways everyone can build each of the assets. It includes more than 900 commonsense ideas for building assets

at home, in the congregation, at school, and in the community, and offers checklists to help parents and others identify the assets of their own young people.

All Kids Are Our Kids
What Communities Must Do to Raise Caring and Responsible Children and Adolescents
In his book, Peter L. Benson presents a comprehensive vision of what children and adolescents need to grow up healthy and what everyone in a community must do to build this foundation for healthy development. Included is a complete description of 40 developmental assets and practical steps for creating an asset-building community.

Ideas for Parents
Newsletter Master Set
This set of 50 newsletter masters is designed for schools, community groups, or other organizations to copy and distribute to parents. It focuses practical tips on how parents can help their children grow into responsible, successful adults. Master set includes a users guide with an overview of each newsletter and helpful suggestions for customizing, promoting, and distributing the series.
Note: This product is not intended for individual sale.

SESSION 6: Youth Leadership Spectrum (60 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore ways youth can be leaders in youth programs and congregations
- Show how youth leadership capacity can grow and change depending on youth's development and other factors in their lives
- Look at how youth-adult shared leadership can support growth in youth leadership capacity.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand how youth leadership is an important part of vibrant Unitarian Universalist youth ministry
- Be able to identify the appropriate youth-adult shared leadership model for their congregation, based on youth developmental levels, leadership capacity, and other factors in the youth's lives.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

To prepare for this session become familiar with the leadership sections of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Report and the Summit on Youth Ministry Report.

ACTIVITY 1: Youth Leadership Spectrum (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Handout 6-1, Youth / Adult Shared Leadership
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Make copies of Handout 6-1, Youth / Adult Shared Leadership, for all participants.
- Write "Ready to Lead?" at the top of a sheet of newsprint.
- Draw the diagram on Handout 6-1, Youth / Adult Shared Leadership on newsprint or make a PowerPoint slide.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity explores the spectrum of youth leadership and how youth leadership capacity is dependent on many factors.

Invite participants to name factors that indicate someone is ready to lead, regardless of age. Write responses on the newsprint labeled "Ready to Lead?"

After brainstorming for a couple of minutes, draw participants' attention to the illustration you have prepared from Handout 6-1, Youth / Adult Shared Leadership. Read or summarize the following:

> It can be easy, regardless of age, to assume that someone is either ready or not ready for leadership. However, leadership development is a process, not an either/or situation. Each of us is always growing in our leadership capacity. Adolescence is a particularly rich time for development, including growth in leadership.

> In Session 3, Philosophy & Theology of Youth Ministry, we talked about how empowerment and covenantal leadership are core components of youth ministry. Challenging youth to take on more responsibility, become stronger leaders, and feel ownership of their own faith formation is central to our philosophy of youth ministry.

> This diagram provides a visual representation of what youth leadership should look like in our youth ministries. Just like a person of any age, youth are not simply leaders or non-leaders; their leadership capacity falls on a spectrum. Leadership capacity depends on many of the factors that were identified in the brainstorm. Factors like age, maturity, and cognitive ability are important, as well as what is happening in their lives at any given moment.

The goal is to encourage youth to take on more responsibility and to become stronger leaders. However, as adults working with youth we need to recognize the leadership capacity of our youth and adjust our level of support accordingly. [*Point to the left side of the diagram.*] An immature group of 8th or 9th graders will need a program that is much more adult driven. [*Point to the right hand side of the diagram.*], But a group of experienced 12th graders can be expected to handle a much higher degree of responsibility and control of their own program. However, during final exams, that same group of 12th graders may suddenly need more help because they are stressed out by their academic responsibilities.

Of course, most youth ministries will have a mix of youth with various levels of leadership capacity. Our role as adults is to pay attention to these differences and adjust how much co-leadership we provide. You will notice that on each side of the diagram there is always a leadership role for youth or adults no matter what their capacity is. The most immature young person can be asked to lead the opening reading in worship, and the most mature and capable youth will always need to have an adult there to share ideas and strategize with.

Conclude by inviting questions or thoughts about the Youth / Adult Shared Leadership Spectrum.

ACTIVITY 2: Youth Leadership Scenarios (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Leader Resource 6-1, Youth Leadership Scenarios
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Make one copy of Leader Resource 6-1, Youth Leadership Scenarios, and cut apart the scenarios.
- Write the reflection questions on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants apply what they have learned about the youth leadership spectrum to scenarios they might encounter in their congregations.

Divide participants into five groups and give each group one of the scenarios from Leader Resource 6-1. Tell them they will have 10 minutes to read their scenario and discuss it using the following reflection questions you have posted on newsprint:

- Where on the spectrum are the youth (or group of youth) in your scenario?
- In what ways are they ready for leadership, and in what ways are they challenged?
- What specific action(s) can you take as an adult to support these youth?

After 10 minutes, ask each group to read their scenario and share the highlights of their discussion.

ACTIVITY 3: Youth Leadership Capacity and Support (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Prepare newsprint with the following headings:
  - High Leadership Capacity – Roles
  - Middle Leadership Capacity – Roles
  - Underdeveloped / Lower Leadership Capacity – Roles
  - High Leadership Capacity – Adult Support
  - Middle Leadership Capacity – Adult Support
  - Underdeveloped / Lower Leadership Capacity – Adult Support

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

In this activity participants look at specific ways youth of various leadership capacities can lead in congregations.

Post the first three sheets of newsprint you prepared. Tell participants that broadly speaking these are three zones on the youth leadership spectrum. Remind participants that the type of leadership a youth takes on will depend greatly on where they are on the leadership spectrum. Starting with high leadership capacity, brainstorm a list of appropriate leadership roles youth could take that would fit their leadership capacity. Then brainstorm appropriate roles for youth with middle leadership capacity, and then appropriate roles for youth with underdeveloped / lower leadership capacity.

Now post the last three sheets of newsprint you prepared.
Brainstorm a list of specific actions adults can take to support youth with these different leadership capacities.

Handout 6-1: Youth / Adult Shared Leadership

ATTRIBUTION

By Jesse Jaeger.

TEXT

Youth / Adult Shared Leadership

Adult Leadership

Youth Leadership

Level or Amount of Leadership

Growth in Maturity, Development, Leadership Capacity
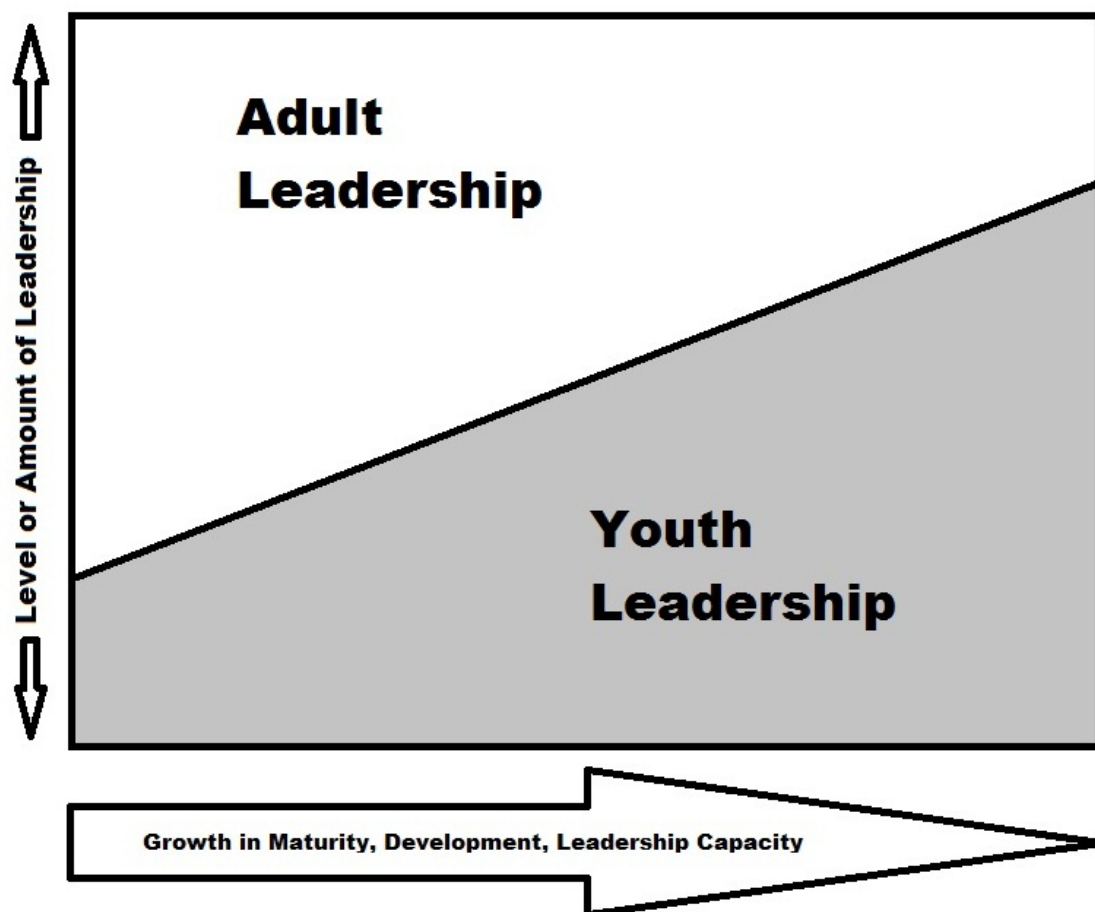
Leader Resource 6-1: Youth Leadership Scenarios

ATTRIBUTION

By Jesse Jaeger.

TEXT

1. Sarah is a junior in high school. She has always been a dynamic leader in the congregation's religious education program. Even when she was in elementary and middle school, she would be the one to volunteer to light the chalice during the congregation's worship service, take on the difficult parts in the annual Christmas pageant, and generally be a wonderful young person. That has not changed much now that she's in high school. After serving a term on the congregation's religious education committee she is now the first person to serve in the newly created Youth Board Trustee role. Through her leadership the youth group has decided it would like to use the UUA youth curriculum "A Place of Wholeness" and you will be co-facilitating that curriculum with her.

2. Jared is a freshman in high school. He is relatively new to the church but seems to have some interest in becoming more of a leader. However, he is unsure about how to go about that and your youth ministry program has a whole bunch of really dynamic older leaders. You can see Jared having a hard time figuring out where he can fit it and how to become a strong leader. Plus, the older youth are not doing a good job of making space for younger youth to step into leadership.

3. Your youth ministry program just graduated a whole bunch of seniors who formed a very dynamic group. Now you have only freshmen and sophomores in high school, who are relatively immature. With the dynamic group of youth leaders who just graduated, the youth advisors had gotten pretty used to being in a supporting role. Now there seems to be a big leadership gap and you are worried the youth program might seriously decline.

4. The youth in your congregation are generally a go-get-um group and there is a really healthy balance of youth leadership and adult leadership. However, the big state mandated tests are coming up next week and many of the youth are stressed out because if they do not pass or do well on the test there could be implications for graduation and college entrance. On top of that, several of the youth are on the same soccer team. They are really good and will be going to the state tournament but that is also creating some stress for them. You get a sense that youth really want to and could use the opportunity to together during this stressful time, but the idea of organizing something is stressing them out even more.

5. Jim is a bit of a mixed bag. When he is present and engaged he is terrific. He can be a dynamic leader who energizes other youth and helps take an activity to a whole new level. However, he also has a tendency to take on too much and then drop the ball. He will commit to do a bunch of things, and then you will not see him for a month, so nothing will get done.

SESSION 7: Engaged Spirituality (90 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Identify multiple ways to understand and deepen youth spirituality and worship
- Use the Circles of Spirituality model to explore different forms of spirituality and spiritual practice.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the different ways youth experience spirituality
- Have ideas for deepening the spirituality and faith development of the youth they work with
- Explore the components of youth worship and create youth worship for various settings.

ACTIVITY 1: What is Spirituality? (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 7-1, Defining Spirituality

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Copies of Handout 7-1, Defining Spirituality, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity explores the many ways that youth define spirituality.

Distribute Handout 7-1, Defining Spirituality. Explain that before we talk about spiritual experiences and spiritual practices, it is important to consider how we define spirituality. The first group of quotes on this handout is from youth around the world who participated in focus groups with The Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence. The second

group of quotes is from youth participants in a UU Youth Spirituality & Worship Conference. Go around the room with participants reading the quotes aloud.

Lead a 10-minute discussion guided by the following questions:

- Which of these quotes resonates with you the most? Why?
- Given what you know about adolescent development, how do these quotes illustrate youth spiritual development?

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

If you are using a bulletin board course system like Blackboard or Moodle you can ask people to read the quotes in the handout and then post a short reflection based on the reflection questions. In a webinar setting, ask a couple of individuals to share their thoughts about the reflections questions.

ACTIVITY 2: Circles of Spirituality (35 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint markers, and tape
- Handout 7-2, Circles of Spirituality
- Paper and pen/pencil for each participant

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Draw a large version of the Circles of Spirituality on newsprint, with enough room for participants to write in each circle.
- Copies of Handout 7-2, Circles of Spirituality, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity explores the many ways that youth and people of all ages experience and practice spirituality in their lives.

Invite participants to reflect on their ministry with youth. What kinds of spiritual experiences – one-time or regular practices – have youth shared with you? What kind of spiritual practices

have they engaged in with youth or would encourage youth to explore? Invite participants to journal for 3-5 minutes on this topic.

Display the Circles of Spirituality diagram on newsprint, and distribute Handout 7-2, Circles of Spirituality. Explain the model as follows, in these words or your own:

> These circles represent the different ways, areas, or places that many people experience spirituality. The first is Personal: this area includes things like meditation, reading, personal prayer, or journaling. The second area is Communal: this area includes things like group worship, making and eating a meal with friends or family, deep conversations with family or friends, teaching, or playing. The third area is Organizational: this area can include such activities as political organizing or social justice work, volunteering, church governance, or even a career or job. The final area is Environmental: this can include watching a sunset or sunrise, camping, hiking, experiencing the changing seasons, and stewardship of our earth's resources.

Invite participants to look at what they wrote in their journal, and identify which circles the spiritual experiences/practices fit in. One experience/practice might fit in just one of these circles, or it might fit in two, three, or all four. Invite them to come up to the diagram on newsprint and write in the circles. As a group, brainstorm any additional practices that might go in each circle.

Lead a five minute discussion guided by the following questions:

- Is there anything that surprised you?
- Is there anything that you will view differently now that someone else has identified it as a spiritual experience/practice?
- How will this impact the way you engage youth around spirituality?

Point out that there is another circle in the diagram that surrounds all the other circles - Engaged Spirituality. Invite someone to read the quote about engaged spirituality on Handout 7-2, Circles of Spirituality. Explain engaged spirituality, in these words or your own:

> The idea of engaged spirituality has two basic dimensions. The first is that engaged spirituality is an intentional practice of finding spiritual nourishment. The second is engaged spirituality's outward focus. Spirituality is not just about the individual. In the

words of Janet Parachin, engaged spirituality is also the engagement "in activities that move the world toward peace, justice, greater compassion, and wholeness." There is a moral or ethical component to spirituality. The personal experiences of spirituality are a place of regeneration and healing that allow us to go back out into the world and create justice.

The basic concept of engaged spirituality is about a connection between inward spiritual work and outward action and living. Our ministry with youth can help them live with this kind of integrity —— where their actions reflect their inner spirituality and values.

Lead a discussion with two questions:

What does your congregation do to nurture engaged spirituality with youth for nourishing spiritual life?

For engagement with the world to bring more love, justice and peace?

Invite participants to share their thoughts and reactions to the circles of spirituality model. Close by suggesting that this is a helpful model to use with youth. The Circles of Spirituality - Personal, Communal, Environmental, Organizational, and Engaged - can help them think about the meaning of spirituality, the role of spirituality in their lives, and what spiritual practices nourish them to live their faith in the world.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

For either a bulletin board system or a webinar develop a Power Point presentation to present the Circles of Spirituality Model. Ask people to do the reflection activity on their own time in either setting. In a bulletin board system ask participants to write a short reflection on the discussion questions and post them to a discussion board you have set up. Then ask them to comment on each others reflections.

ACTIVITY 3: Youth Worship (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 7-3, Components of Worship

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Copies of Handout 7-3, Components of Worship, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Explain that this activity focuses on one specific spiritual and religious practice: worship. Worship is a core communal practice and defining ritual of our religious community. Worship does not only happen on Sunday mornings. It happens in a variety of settings and takes diverse forms.

Begin with a brainstorm, writing the responses on newsprint:

- Why do Unitarian Universalists worship?
- Why do Unitarian Universalist youth worship?
- Is there a difference between the purposes of the two?

Purposes may include: to build community, to connect with the holy/sacred, to celebrate, to heal, to remember, to praise, etc.

Distribute Handout 7-3, Components of Worship. Explain that these components of worship apply across different worship styles and settings. Most worship services include these components in some way, although the specifics will differ depending on who is involved (youth or multigenerational), the timing (hour-long service or evening vespers), and the setting (congregation, youth conference, youth group, camp, etc.). Go around the circle having participants read the components aloud. Give participants the opportunity to ask questions about any of the components, and to share how they have seen these components manifest in various forms of youth worship.

ACTIVITY 4: Youth Worship (25 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 7-4, Checklist for Planning Worship
- Four paper grocery bags or cardboard boxes

- Four chimes/bells

- Four chalices

- Four balls of yarn

- Four small bags/boxes

- Four mirrors

- Four meditation manuals or books of poetry

- Four Unitarian Universalist hymnbooks

- Four spiral objects or images of a spiral

- Stones, beads, or shells (one for each participant, divided equally among the four bags/boxes)

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Gather the supplies for the worship objects activity, and put them into four bags/boxes for the four groups.

- Copy Handout 7-4, Checklist for Planning Worship, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity gives participants a hands-on opportunity to practice worship planning in a youth ministry setting.

Distribute Handout 7-4, Checklist for Worship Planning. Explain that this is a helpful resource for planning worship with youth because it helps worship planners think broadly about all the considerations and components that go into creating meaningful and inclusive worship beyond the Sunday morning model. Go around the circle having participants read the checklist aloud.

Tell participants they will now have an opportunity to get creative with worship planning. Divide participants into four groups: 1) Youth Group Worship, 2) Youth Camp/Retreat Worship, 3) Youth Conference/Lock-In Worship, and 4) Youth Sunday Congregational Worship. Give each group their worship setting assignment (1-4) and a bag/box containing the worship objects. Tell them that each object represents one of the components of a worship service.

Gathering (chime/bell)
Opening (chalice)
Acknowledging (ball of yarn)

Giving (basket)

Centering (mirror)

Receiving (meditation manual or book of poetry)

Acknowledging (hymnal)

Closing (spiral objects or images)

Dispersing/Postlude (stones, beads, or shells)

The task for the groups is to discuss what each object symbolizes, and to think creatively about how the object and the component it symbolizes could be used in their worship setting. Give the groups 15 minutes for discussion. Encourage them to use both Handout 7-3 and Handout 7-4, as well as the objects available to them.

After 15 minutes, gather again as a large group, and invite each small group to share briefly how they used the objects and components in their worship setting.

Close by re-emphasizing that worship happens in a variety of settings and takes diverse forms. Youth worship tends to be "outside the box" of Sunday morning worship. With creativity and careful consideration, worship can be a meaningful and inclusive experience for all.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

In a bulletin board system divide participants into four teams and assign each team one of the worship settings listed above. Ask each team to design a worship service for its setting and post the order of service and a group reflection on the planning process for other groups to view and comment on.

Handout 7-1: Defining Spirituality

ATTRIBUTION

The first group of definitions is from focus groups of youth from around the world conducted by the Center for Spiritual Development in Childhood and Adolescence; permission pending.
The second group of definitions was developed by participants at a Youth Spirituality and Worship Conference in the Metro New York District in January 2011; used with permission.

TEXT

Youth from around the world answer the question, what is spirituality?

- "I think spirituality is important to everyone. Maybe there's a section of people that doesn't realize they are following that path, but they are spiritual. And I think everyone has that kind of adaptability in themselves to go into that kind of path to being spiritual. Maybe the word 'spiritual' is more important in some people's lives, but the whole definition and the concept I think it's there in everyone." (Female, India)
- "Spiritual is how you feel inside, every emotion you express, everything you feel comes from inside, your spirit. Your feelings, your emotions, all comes from inside." (Male, Israel)
- "You can be spiritual and not religious. You can believe there is a soul, a spirit, an essence within a person and yet not believe in God." (Female, 13, Peru)
- "If you are not spiritual, then you don't ever struggle with things, you don't make a choice or ask, 'why did this happen to me?' If you are not spiritual, you will never learn anything ... [Spirituality] goes together with wisdom ... you have to reflect on what's happening to you." (Male, 18, South Africa)
- "You can be religious by coming to Jamat Khana [mosque] and doing your duty, but to be spiritual means that when you actually do your duty, you interact with Allah." (Female, 15, England)
- "Being spiritual is believing in things that are not real, intangible, that cannot be perceived by our senses, but that you know exist." (Male, 14, Peru)
- "I feel spiritual when I'm attuned to what matters ... noticing little things... like, a sense of perspective." (Female, 17, U.S.A.)
- "When the person grows up, his spirituality grows with him, particularly when he starts to use his intellect more." (Female, Syria)

- "Spiritual is something one experiences in your own being, religion is, well, your religion. The most of our religion is forced — the do's and don't — being spiritual means standing on a mountain with the wind blowing through your hair, and the feeling of being free."(Female, 15, South Africa)
- "'Religious' is kind of knowing the things in your head, but 'spiritual' is knowing them in your heart." (Female, 15, Australia)
- "You don't have to be religious to be spiritual, but you have to be spiritual to be religious. If you're fully religious, you've got to be spiritual." (Male, 15, Canada)

Unitarian Universalist youth answer the question:
- "Connecting with something greater than ourselves."
- "Getting yourself out of the way and hearing, seeing, experiencing others and connection."
- "Finding or getting closer to the greater being inside you."
- "A sense of gratitude and awe."
- "Spirituality is the link between people, animals, and the cosmos."
- "Spirituality is to know yourself well enough to learn about the rest of the world."
- "Spirituality is thinking deeper than the five senses will allow."
- "Spirituality is the ability to find a strength within yourself to hold things together when it seems as though your world is falling apart."

Handout 7-2: Circles of Spirituality

ATTRIBUTION

- Adapted from the Tapestry of Faith curriculum A Place of Wholeness, which draws on the following resources:
    - Driskill, Joseph D. "Spirituality and the Formation of Pastoral Counselors," *American Journal of Pastoral Counseling*, Vol. 8 No. ¾: 69-85
    - Parachin, Janet W. Engaged Spirituality: Ten Lives of Contemplation and Action. St. Louis, Mo: Chalice Press, 1999. Available Online
    - Stanczak, Gregory C. Engaged Spirituality: Social Change and American Religion. Piscataway NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2006. Available Online

TEXT

"Engaged spirituality involves living a dual engagement: engaging with those resources that provide spiritual nurture and engaging with the world through acts of compassion and justice. Engaged spirituality is not an either/or prospect, but a conscious and intentional commitment to engage both the nurturing and the active aspects of religious faith." — Janet W. Parachin

Handout 7-3: Components of Worship

TEXT

- **Gathering** - Marks the intentional gathering of religious community for the purpose of common worship.
- **Opening** - opening words, lighting the flame in the chalice. This indicates the opening of the sacred time we have chosen to spend with one another. The music and words heard, sung, and spoken here, the flowers and vestments, the flame of our heritage, are hereby lifted up and vested with special meaning. If we touch each other in greeting, it is sacramental touch. If we look upon each other in acknowledgment, it is sacramental seeing. If we partake of food, the elements are more than they would ordinarily be, because we have declared ourselves to be a community and because we intend to be changed by all these things of which we partake.
- **Acknowledging** - welcome, covenant, morning song, greeting each other, greeting the children. By this we are open to putting ourselves in the stream of our history, partaking of it; and we acknowledge that we are part of the present company, its values, and its aspirations; its children are our children, its elders are our elders. In this association we will unfold through moments like this, because we wish it so, and because we will act to insure it.
- **Giving** - offertory, announcements, milestones. By this we participate in the life of the religious community - by the gifts of our physical substance, and by our willing presence. We also address the bounty shared here into the larger community, and its needs and concerns touch us here and demand response from us.

- **Centering** - prayer or meditation, reflection. This invites a centering down to be aware of what may arise from within, or enter from outside us all of the time.

- **Receiving** - readings, sermon, dance, poetry, visual art. This inspires, informs, deepens, declares the possibilities, encourages, comforts, disturbs. This part may include discussion, talk about. Never a "talk back," in the sense of argumentation disputation. There are more appropriate forums for these outside of worship.

- **Acknowledging** - song, responsive reading. This is the congregational response to the end of the service. We who have gathered are about to disperse. It has been good to be together. Let us praise! Let us rejoice in each good and what we have done here.

- **Closing** - benediction. This marks the end of the sacred time and is an invitation to take what has been shared, strengthened, quickened in this time and place and community out into the rest of life.

- **Dispersing/Postlude** - Re-entering the world refreshed, enlivened, touched, changed, challenged, exalted. Doing this to music adds the dimension of moving into the ordinary to the rhythms of the sacred.

Handout 7-4: Checklist for Planning Worship

ATTRIBUTION

By Rev. Janne Eller-Isaacs from the Unitarian Universalist Association Spirituality Development Conference Manual (2005); used with permission.

Last bullet updated by Beth Dana to include sixth component.

TEXT

- o Within -- Among -- Beyond

  A time for each: going within yourself (reflection), being in community with others (participation), reaching out beyond ourselves to the wider world and/or the divine.

- o Ritual

  A theme that ties your worships together, a chalice lighting at every worship, etc.

- o Balance/Rhythm/Timing

  Balance readings, songs, reflection, participation. Make worship flow smoothly. Make sure your worship is not too long or too short.

- o Context, 5 Steps of Community Building, and Crisis

  Who is the group for whom you're planning worship? How close of a community are they? Make worship activities appropriate to the group's community building stage. If crisis occurs, offer worship as a place to heal.

- o -Isms

  Make your worships accessible to all people; try to evaluate any institutionalized oppressions in worship activities or worship formats.

- o Sight -- Sound -- Smell -- Taste -- Touch

  Appeal to all five senses when possible.

- o Visual learners -- Auditory learners -- Bodily-kinesthetic learners

  Balance words, images, and movement in order to reach people with all three learning styles. (Well-told stories tend to work equally well with all three styles.)

- o Worship -- community-building and fun -- leadership -- learning -- social action -- bridging the generations

Something to consider: all six components of a well-balanced youth group can be integrated into worship services. Even within youth communities, worship can bridge the "generations" of youth.

SESSION 8: Congregational Support for Youth Ministry (3 hours)

GOALS

This session will:

- Emphasize the importance of congregational ownership of youth ministry
- Discuss how the religious educator, minister, youth advisors, and other adult leaders can work together to support youth ministry in the congregation
- Explore "staffing" models, both volunteer and professional, and their appropriateness for different congregational youth ministries
- Reinforce the important role of parents and caregivers in the faith development of their youth and how parents and caregivers can be engaged in the youth ministry of the congregation.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Know how to build collegiality and understanding among adults working with youth in the congregation
- Have a greater understanding of the role of advisors, mentors, and teachers—how these roles are different and how they relate to youth
- Have a plan for engaging parents and caregivers in the youth ministry of the congregation.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

This session emphasizes the importance of congregational ownership of youth ministry as part of multigenerational congregations. Rather than have youth ministry as an isolated program under the responsibility of one youth advisor or other adult staff/volunteer leader, youth ministry is embraced as an integral part of the congregation and therefore the responsibility of the entire community. Congregational ownership refers to people working together to create a community

in which youth have multiple pathways for engaging in their faith and multiple sources of support. Signs of congregational ownership include: youth ministry is a valued part of the congregation's mission; the congregation embraces youth as a priority by actively building multigenerational community and leadership; youth are included in congregational leadership and decision-making.

This session include four activities, and one optional activity. If there are adults with different roles in congregational youth ministry (e.g. religious educator, youth advisor, minister, parent), and if time allows, you might choose to do Optional Activity 1, Fishbowl. To plan ahead, you could request that the registrar collect this information and share it with you.

ACTIVITY 1: Youth Ministry Support Structures (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 8-1, Youth Ministry Support Structures
- Blank paper
- Pens/pencils

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Tape together four sheets of newsprint so they form a large square. Write the words Advisor, Mentor, Teacher, Minister, and Administrator scattered around the newsprint, with space between each. Leave additional space to add roles.
- Make copies of Handout 8-1, Youth Ministry Support Structures, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This activity shows that there are many different support structures and staffing models, and the appropriate model will depend on the congregation.

Read or summarize the following:

> *We will begin this session on Congregational Support of Youth Ministry by exploring the many different "staffing" models for youth ministry. The appropriate structure will depend on the size and culture of your congregation and its youth ministry. Staff and leadership*

are only a piece of congregational support for youth ministry, though. Activity 2 explores how youth ministry is a ministry of the whole congregation, and how broadly the responsibility for this ministry resides. Then Activity 3 looks at the role of parents and caregivers.

Next, participants explore the differences and overlap among different adult support roles. Point to the sheets of newsprint you have prepared with the words Advisor, Mentor, Teacher, Minister, and Administrator. All of these are roles in the youth ministry support staffing structure. Ask participants if they can think of any other roles or kinds of adult support. Write them scattered around the newsprint. Then ask participants what action words (verbs) and qualities or characteristics come to mind when they think of each of these roles. Invite participants to come up to the newsprint and write words next to/around the different roles. Words that they associate closely with one particular role should be written close to that word. Words that may apply to multiple roles should be written in between or multiple times. After 3-5 minutes, bring the group back together. Invite participants to look at what they have written. Invite brief reflections or reactions.

Explain that these roles—advisor, mentor, teacher, minister, administrator, etc.—are enacted through many different youth ministry "staffing" structures in congregations.

Distribute blank sheets of paper and pens/pencils, and give participants five minutes to map out their own congregation's youth ministry support structure, noting who enacts the roles of advisor, mentor, teacher, minister, and administrator. After five minutes, have them turn to one or two others and share their maps. Ask participants to mention the size of their congregation, RE program, and the number of youth in their congregation. Congregation size and organization matter when talking about staffing structures.

Distribute Handout 8-1, Youth Ministry Support Structures, and explain that this handout shows the diversity of structures that exist. Give participants a few minutes to read it, then invite reflections and discussion on the different models. Ask:
Do any of these look like your congregation?
What ideas have you gathered from this handout that might fit your congregation, or improve the way things are working?

What would be the ideal youth ministry support structure for your congregation (assuming you had the resources to make it happen)?

ACTIVITY 2: A Ministry of the Congregation (1 hour)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Index cards
- Post-it notes
- Thin markers, one for each participant

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Write the questions for small groups on newsprint and post.
- Post several sheets of blank newsprint on the walls around the room, with a marker near each.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This activity explores the role of different people and groups that support youth ministry in the congregation. It considers how they can work together to promote congregational ownership of youth ministry. It looks at youth ministry from a whole congregation perspective, beyond just staff and institutional leadership, to see how the congregation can offer multiple pathways for youth to engage in the congregation.

Begin by either reading the following paragraph or putting it in your own words:

Part of building multigenerational faith communities is avoiding "silos" and building bridges between different ministries and people in our congregations. Bridge-building is important because when people work together it creates a setting in which youth have multiple pathways for engaging in their faith community and multiple sources of support. When there is collaboration and congregational ownership, it reinforces that youth ministry is a ministry of the whole congregation. The 2007 report of the UUA's Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth affirmed this: "Congregations emphasized the importance of youth ministry as a valued part of the congregation's mission; when the congregation embraces youth as a priority, there is a better chance for

success...Currently, youth ministry is perceived as a program rather than a ministry. Youth ministry should be valued as a ministry of the congregation for building community and leadership." (p. 37) It is important for people and groups in the congregation to build bridges of collaboration and support as they engage with youth in their own ways.

Explain that participants will brainstorm all of the people, roles, and groups in congregations that have or could have a role in youth ministry. Lead a brainstorm of people, roles, and groups, writing each on the top of one of the blank sheets of newsprint posted around the room. If someone names a person, role, or group that fits with or could be grouped with another, write them at the top of the same newsprint. If participants do not list them, be sure to remind them of: religious educators, ministers, youth advisors, religious education committee, musicians, membership committee, music committee, social justice committee, worship committee, board of trustees, and other adult leaders.

Divide participants into groups of three, and give each group a sheet of newsprint. Explain that they will have 3-5 minutes at each station to brainstorm and discuss that role as it relates to youth ministry, recording their ideas on the newsprint. Ask them to address the following questions for each category:

- What is their role in congregational youth ministry? How do they relate to youth?
- How are they enriched by their engagement with youth?
- How do they promote the eight components in the web of youth ministry?

After 3-5 minutes at each station, signal to the groups that it is time to rotate.

While participants are discussing each role and group, write each on an index card and lay the cards out with at least twelve inches between them on a wall, table, or open area on the floor.

Now explain that it is time to discuss how these roles work together to support youth ministry and promote congregational ownership of youth ministry.

Give each participant at least 10 sticky notes and a thin marker. Ask them to think about all of the lines of connection (religious educator-minister, religious educator-youth advisor, religious education committee-parents, minister-Board etc.), and the ways in which these roles can work

together—through communication or active collaboration—and support one another. For example, on the line between Religious Educator and Youth Advisors, you might put "Meet monthly to share information and support" and between Ministers and Other Adults, you might put "Minister asks Board members to consider youth ministry in strategic planning process." Tell participants to write these ideas on sticky notes (one idea per note) and then place the notes along the appropriate line of connection. Ask them to try to put at least one note on each connecting line.

When everyone has posted their ideas, read them aloud or ask participants to read them aloud. Then lead a 10-15 minute discussion guided by the following questions:

- Was there anything new or surprising for you?
- How has this activity shaped your understanding of *your* role in youth ministry?
- How will you contribute to building bridges among different people, roles, and groups in your congregation?
- How can you support others and be supported by others in your congregation's youth ministry?

Close by encouraging participants to take a look at all of the people, roles, groups, and relationships they have identified and discussed in this activity. Note that holistic youth ministry truly is a ministry of the *entire* congregation.

ACTIVITY 3: Parents/Caregivers of Youth (20 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 8-2, Resources for Parents/Caregivers of Youth

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Make copies of Handout 8-2, Resources for Parents/Caregivers of Youth, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity emphasizes the important role of parents/caregivers in youth ministry and offers suggestions and resources for participants to take home and share.

Tell participants that as they discuss the role of the congregation and various adult staff and lay leaders in youth ministry, it is important to consider parents/caregivers as well. They play a crucial role in the faith development of their youth. Congregations need to engage parents/caregivers in their congregation's youth ministry, and support them in their role as parents/caregivers of youth.

Read or summarize the following:

> The findings of the UUA Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth emphasized the important role of parents/caregivers as models in terms of participation and engagement in religious community. If parents/caregivers make it a priority to go to church, then youth are more likely to view their congregation as an important part of their lives - as important as other areas such as school, extracurricular activities, and socializing. It helps when parents have a connection to the adults working with youth in the congregation. Many congregations draw certain boundaries though - such as prohibiting parents of current youth from serving as youth advisors. When it comes to supporting parents/caregivers, it is important to recognize that both they and their youth are at developmental stages in their lives. Regardless of our age, we are all "in progress" – learning, growing, and changing as we go through the stages of life. Congregations must minister to the developmental needs of both and provide opportunities for families to grow together.

Open up a space for sharing about the role of parents/caregivers in the participants' congregations. Lead a discussion guided by the following questions:

- In what ways do parents/caregivers of youth relate to their youth and other youth in your congregation?
- In what ways do parents/caregivers of youth relate to adults working with youth in your congregation?
- What are appropriate and inappropriate roles for parents/caregivers of youth?

- What are some of the issues and challenges that parents/caregivers of youth are dealing with?
- How are parents of youth supported in your congregation?

Reemphasize that both youth and parents/caregivers are at developmental stages in their lives and thus have unique ministry needs, and that parents/caregivers can use the support of other parents/caregivers and the leaders of the congregation in their parental role.

Distribute Handout 8-2, Resources for Parents/Caregivers of Youth. Read through the ideas on the handout, and then ask participants if their congregations have any additional ministries or resources specifically for parents/caregivers. Encourage them to write these at the bottom of their handout.

Close by acknowledging that parents/caregivers have many different kinds of relationships with their youth—some are very close with their youth and some have strained relationships. Congregations can and should minister to parents/caregivers so that the care of parents/caregivers and the youth ministry of the congregation are mutually supportive.

ACTIVITY 4: Pastoral Care with Youth (70 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 8-3, Pastoral Care With Youth
- Leader Resource 8-1, Pastoral Care Scenarios
- Reader 8-3, Basic Approaches to Chaplaincy
- Reader 8-4, Understanding Human Needs

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Make copies of Handout 8-3, Pastoral Care with Youth, for all participants.
- Make one copy of Leader Resource 8-1, Pastoral Care Scenarios, and cut it into slips to distribute to small groups.

- Familiarize yourself with the scenarios in Leader Resource 8-1, and think about what your response would be to each situation.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Tell participants that pastoral care is an important part of the ministry and support congregations offer to youth. Our congregations should be places where they feel they can be their fullest selves, bring their joys, questions, and problems, and be listened to and supported.

Distribute Handout 8-3, Pastoral Care With Youth. Ask for a volunteer to read the definition of pastoral care. Invite participants to share other words/phrases they associate with pastoral care with youth. As they share, write the words/phrases on newsprint. Then ask for a volunteer to read the bullet points about the difference between pastoral care with youth and pastoral care with adults. Encourage them to think back to the activities on adolescent development, and to share their thoughts on what developmental characteristics of youth might inform pastoral care with youth.

Explain that pastoral care is often thought of as something that only ordained ministers do. Certainly, ministers have special training in this area and are often the one looked to for pastoral issues. Interestingly, in many congregations, the minister does not have much of a role in pastoral care with youth, and the youth do not always view the minister as someone they can go to. It is important to build the relationship between youth and their minister. Lead a short discussion about how the participants' congregations could build stronger relationships between the minister(s) and the youth.

It is also important to recognize that many people—congregational staff and clergy, youth advisors, pastoral associates/care teams, and even youth themselves—can and do provide pastoral care to youth. All of these people should have good listening and pastoral care skills, but should also know their limits and when it is appropriate to refer someone to another source of help. Sometimes you will need to refer a youth to someone else in the congregation because of a shared identity (e.g. when it would be easier for a female youth to talk to an adult woman than an adult man), because of the nature of the pastoral issue, or because it is beyond the scope of your skills and abilities; sometimes you will need to refer a youth to outside resources such as therapy or provide them with resources such as organizations and hotlines. You are

encouraged to do research, if you have not already, about resources that exist in your local area.

Next, divide participants into six small groups, and give each group one of the scenarios from Leader Resource 8-1, Pastoral Care Scenarios. If there are not enough participants to have at least two in each group, omit one or two of the scenarios. Tell the groups that they will have 10 minutes to discuss their scenario and how they would respond if the youth were coming to them for support. Encourage them to refer to Reader 8-3, Basic Approaches to Chaplaincy and Reader 8-4, Understanding Human Needs. The groups should prepare to present their scenario and explain their response to the larger group. After 10 minutes, bring everyone together and have each group present their scenario and response. After each group finishes their presentation, invite the input of the rest of the participants. Ask: Is there any additional response you would have? Would you do anything differently?

Close this activity by acknowledging that pastoral care with youth is a very broad and complex topic, and the module has only skimmed the surface. Hopefully, this activity inspired thinking about the meaning of pastoral care and how to respond to particular situations.

OPTIONAL ACTIVITY 1: Fishbowl (45-60 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Index cards
- Pens/pencils

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- If possible, get information from the registrar prior to the training about what roles participants hold in their congregation's youth ministry. This will help you determine how to structure the fishbowl.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
This activity gives participants an opportunity to have a discussion with those who share the same youth ministry role, and to listen to those who occupy a different place in the

congregation. This is an optional activity that is best for larger groups, and groups where there is a critical mass in each role.

Explain that the group will now participate in a fishbowl. A fishbowl is an exercise where one group (the fish) sits in the middle and has a conversation, while everyone else sits in a circle around them and listens (the fishbowl). People on the outside circle cannot speak or ask follow-up questions; they must simply listen. After the first group speaks, they will switch and another group will be in the center. The discussion of the group in the center will be guided by a series of questions developed by the other groups.

Based on who is in the room, decide how to divide the participants. Potential categories/roles could include:

- Religious Educators - Directors of Religious Education, Ministers of Religious Education, Lifespan Religious Educators
- Parish Ministers - including seminarians preparing for parish ministry
- Youth Advisors or Youth Directors

When splitting into groups, if there is some overlap (i.e. a participant holds more than one of these roles), ask the participant to consider which is their most significant role in the congregation and which experience they can speak from best.

Ask each group to meet and develop a list of questions for the other groups. Have you always wondered what religious educators/ministers/youth advisors think about some aspect of youth ministry, what their vision is, how they see their role in youth ministry, or how they would go about doing something? This is an opportunity to ask and to hear the perspectives of the people in the room. Suggest that they limit their questions to five, or rank them in order of importance if they have more. Distribute index cards and pens/pencils and have them write one question on each card. After seven minutes, bring the groups back together and collect the question cards. Draw straws or toss a coin to see which group will go first.

Determine the amount of time each group has to talk depending on how much total time you have and how many groups you have. Each group should have at least 10 minutes to speak. Ask the questions one by one to the group in the center, moving on to the next question when there seems to be a lull in conversation.

When all the groups have had a chance to be in the center, ask the whole group to reflect on the experience. Ask:

- What was it like to be in the center of the fishbowl?
- Was anything you heard from the other group(s) surprising?
- What were the most significant insights gained from this experience?

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

There is no great way to do a fishbowl virtually. But the participants could engage in an exercise where they ask and answer each others' questions. The questions could be gathered ahead of time and posted by the leader on a discussion board or posed to groups of participants on a webinar/call.

Handout 8-1: Youth Ministry Staff Structures

ATTRIBUTION

Compiled from religious educators on the Unitarian Universalist Association's LREDA-L and REACH-L email lists.

INSTRUCTIONS

As you look at these seven congregational youth ministry support structures, where do you see the roles of Advisor, Mentor, Teacher, Minister, and Administrator being enacted?

TEXT

Congregation #1 (79 members):

- Director of Religious Education (4-6 hours/month on youth ministry)
    - Recruits and trains teachers
    - Supplies curriculum
    - Supports youth activities at the cluster level
- Minister
    - Knows who the youth are
    - Involved when problems arise

Congregation #2 (155 members):

- Director of Religious Education (6 units/week)
    - Recruit, train, support, and facilitate communication among volunteers
- Youth Program Coordinator (2 units/week for 10 months/year, receives stipend)
    - Recruit, train, support, and facilitate communication among volunteers
- Minister
    - Meets with high school seniors 4-6 times to prepare for bridging
- 18 volunteers for grades 7-12

Congregation #3 (212 members):

- Director of Religious Education (full-time, recently hired and prior to this DRE they had 3/4-time or 1/2-time DRE, devotes average of 25% of time to youth programming)
    - Organizational and direct responsibility for youth programming
    - Selects curriculum, in conjunction with the RE Board
    - Trains advisors and teachers
    - Attends youth group planning meetings
    - Attends at least part of lock-ins, cons, and other events
    - Keeps track of forms and records for events
    - Reports to the Minister and the Board
- Minister
    - Supervises the DRE
    - Meets with high school youth in the spring in preparation for the Senior Recognition Ceremony in June
- Youth Advisors - 1 lead advisor, 3 other advisors
    - Attend trainings
    - Meet with DRE, report to the DRE
    - Implement decisions of the RE Board
- RE Board
    - No one with specific responsibility for youth ministry

Congregation #4 (250 members):
- Director of Religious Education
    - Meets monthly with the team of youth advisors and the minister
    - Meets monthly with the Youth Adult Committee (YAC)
    - Informal time with the youth
- Youth Adult Committee (YAC)
    - 4-6 youth, 2 parents, 1 advisor
- Youth Advisors - 4 volunteer youth advisors, 2-3 present each week
- Minister
    - Meets monthly with the DRE and team of youth advisors

- o Meets with the youth if/when working on a worship service

Congregation #5 (374 members):

- Director of Lifespan Religious Education (full-time, average 5% of time for youth ministry)
- Youth Programs Coordinator (10 hours/week, 10 months/year)
- Youth Advisors - 2 volunteers
- Youth Adult Committee (YAC)
- Youth Support Team
    - o Chaperones, transportation, etc.
- Assistant Director of Religious Education (half-time, average 1% of time for youth ministry)
- Minister (full-time, average 1% of time for youth ministry)
    - o Also reaches out to and connects with youth to invite them to participate in congregational life
- The DLRE and YPC are links between the groups, and they communicate through a closed email group.

Congregation #6 (575 members):

- Director of Youth Ministry (3/4-time, 10 months/year)
- Minister of Religious Education
    - o Supervises the Director of Youth Ministry
- Youth Advisors - 7 volunteers
- Youth Ministry Committee
- Religious Education Committee
    - o Has a youth member

Congregation #7 (665 members):

- Youth and Young Adult Programs Coordinator (full-time, paid)
    - o Works with youth in grades 7-12
    - o Serves as youth advisor to senior high youth group

- o Coordinates activities and events
- o Meets with the Minister and Director of Religious Education to coordinate and plan
- Minister of Religious Education
  - o Supervises Youth/Young Adult Programs Coordinator and Director of Religious Education, meets with both of them to coordinate and plan
- Director of Religious Education
  - o Meets with the Minister of Religious Education and Youth/Young Adult Programs Coordinator to coordinate and plan
- Religious Education Committee
  - o Provides volunteer support to the youth programs
- "Leadership Circles" of adults and youth work with the Coordinator to plan events and activities
- Youth Advisors - 2 volunteers, plus the Youth/Young Adult Programs Coordinator

Handout 8-2: Resources for Parents/Caregivers of Youth

INSTRUCTIONS

The following is a list of resources for parents/caregivers of youth. Please share these resources widely, add your own, and encourage your congregation to minister to parents/caregivers using these resources and more.

TEXT

Small Group Ministry for Parents/Caregivers

Support Groups - general, adoptive parents, single parents, same-sex parents, foster parents, etc.

Orientation Sessions

- For religious education classes
- For youth group
- For Our Whole Lives (OWL)

Simultaneous Youth and Adult OWL classes

Book Groups - some suggested books

- Nurturing Children and Youth: A Developmental Guidebook by Tracey L. Hurd
- The Teens Years Explained: A Guide to Healthy Adolescent Development by Clea McNeely, MA, DrPH and Jayne Blanchard
  A resource from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Center for Adolescent Health.
  Online: http://www.jhsph.edu/bin/s/e/Interactive%20Guide.pdf
- Beyond the Big Talk: A Parent's Guide to Raising Sexually Healthy Teens - From Middle School to High School and Beyond by Debra Haffner

Handout 8-3: Pastoral Care with Youth

ATTRIBUTION

Introductory information and definitions are from Rev. Dr. Monica Cummings's workshop on Pastoral Care with LGBT Youth; used with permission..

TEXT

What is pastoral care?

Pastoral care is "the support and nurturance of persons and interpersonal relationships, including everyday expressions of care and concern that may occur in the midst of various pastoring activities and relationships." Rodney J. Hunter, "Pastoral Care and Counseling (Comparative Terminology)," in Dictionary of Pastoral Care and Counseling, ed. Rodney J. Hunter et al. (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1990), 845.

Pastoral care with youth is not the same as pastoral care with adults. Compared to adults, youth have less:

- Cognitive development
- Control over support networks
- Control over where to live, the home environment, where to attend school, and which church to attend
- Control over access to help
- Sense of self-identity.

Who provides pastoral care in congregations?

- Ministers
- Religious Educators
- Pastoral Associates/Teams
- Youth Advisors
- Youth (Peer Chaplains)
- Parents
- Other adults – often youth open up to an adult they like such as a teacher or friend of a parent

Leader Resource 8-1: Pastoral Care Scenarios

ATTRIBUTION

Scenarios #1-5 adapted from the Unitarian Universalist Association Youth Chaplain Manual (2006), scenario #6 by Beth Dana.

INSTRUCTIONS

Print one copy of this page and cut apart the scenarios to distribute to small groups.

TEXT

Scenario #1:

Mary, a 17-year-old, says, "It's my father. For years now, I can't remember the last time he came home sober. He's drunk all the time now. He thinks that he's fooling everybody, but he isn't. All my friends know what's going on. I can't take it anymore."

Scenario #2:

Alex, an 18-year-old high school senior, says, "Things haven't been going so well in school lately. I've been flunking most of my classes, but telling my parents that I'm just getting Cs and Ds. My dad keeps giving me a hassle about my grades and he keeps telling me to either clean up my act or drop out of school and get a job. If he found out that I'm doing even worse than I'm telling him, he'd kick me out of the house for sure. I'd have no job, no education, and nowhere to live."

Scenario #3:

John recently moved to a new church in a new region. He started attending his local church Sunday services and youth group in the evening. During services he often feels as if he is unwanted and out of place. It seems as if the older members of the congregation are uncomfortable with his personal appearance. During youth group, the kids are alright, but he feels uncomfortable being the only person of color because whenever he relates personal experiences of racism, his views/feelings are questioned and challenged by members the group.

Scenario #4:

Aimee, a high school freshman, says, "I get really worried about my friends—sometimes I can't get to sleep at night I'm so worried. They all recently began to use the 'real heavy stuff.' I was at a sleepover at one of their houses last weekend, and I saw them using some inhalants. One person nearly passed out, but I didn't saying anything to anyone about it afterwards."

Scenario #5:

James is a sophomore in high school and is beginning to have questions about gender identity. Although born a male, James recently chose to wear clothing traditionally associated with women to school. When this happened, James was met with harassment from classmates and ridicule from teachers and school administrators. James says, "I'm scared and confused. Something just doesn't feel right with how I am, but I don't know what it is. All I know is that day at school was the worst day of my life, and I never want to go through something like that again."

Scenario #6:

Erica is a junior in high school and has been coming on her own to the UU youth group since she started high school. Her family is Catholic, but she decided after confirmation class that she didn't want to go with them anymore. She feels much more at home at the UU church, and is very spiritually and theologically curious, but she is worried about her parents' growing disapproval. She isn't sure whether she should keep going to the UU church, or just give in to her parents' wishes.

Reader 8-1: Role of the Religious Educator in Youth Ministry

ATTRIBUTION

From the RE Road Map (2006) by Cindy Leitner, used with permission

TEXT

With respect to youth advisors

- Work directly with Board, RE Committee, Youth Group, and minister to develop criteria, qualifications, and job description for Youth Advisor
- Provide Youth Advisor(s) with training opportunities and all the support material from the UUA Office of Youth & Young Adult Ministries and your district
- Provide advisors with best curricula and encourage working with youth to set yearly programming
- Check in with advisors regularly
- Ensure that supply needs are adequately covered by the budget and advocate for better budget as necessary
- Provide a "dedicated" youth meeting space (that they can call their own)
- Acknowledge advisors and make them and youth visible in the congregation

With respect to youth program

- Talk about including all the components of the web of youth ministry in your youth ministry
- Provide church calendar to group and advisors so that date conflicts for social events can be avoided
- Advocate for the value of youth programs in the congregation and with the Board
- Support the presence of youth as members, on committees, and on the Board

With respect to district youth programs

- Know the structural organization of your district
- Invite a district Youth Adult Committee (YAC) member to visit the congregation

- Make sure that a DRE from your cluster is represented or will act as liaison to the YAC
- Make sure youth advisors understand the need to connect beyond the church with youth cluster groups, YAC, etc.
- Support the presence of youth on district committees and district Board

With respect to parents

- Hold a parent meeting early in the year to go over the program plans, complete permission slips, and address parental concerns
- Use the fishbowl technique as a way to get adults and youth listening to one another
- Provide support materials to parents
- Suggest/facilitate a support group for parents of teens in your congregation

Reader 8-2: Role of the Parish Minister in Youth Ministry

ATTRIBUTION

From the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Summary Report (UUA, 2007).

INSTRUCTIONS

Parish ministers have an important role in ministry with youth. This resource provides some food for thought about how ministers can build relationships with youth in their congregation.

TEXT

In the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth, many stakeholders including the UU Ministers' Association discussed their vision of the ideal minister.
The ideal minister:

- Recognizes that spiritual growth is a lifelong process and commits to ministry with people of all ages
- Connects with youth outside of Sunday services
- Offers worship opportunities that inspire people of all ages and is open to exploring a variety of liturgy options
- Has a sense of humor
- Deeply respects youth
- Is able to gain or earn youth's trust
- Listens to youth
- Understands the developmental needs of youth, especially when it comes to racial/sexual/gender identity development
- Has a strong understanding of racism and oppression and how they operate in our Association and the larger world
- Understands their power in the congregation and is able to step back when necessary in order to allow space for youth to claim their power (and models this process of stepping back for other adults)
- Values their relationships with youth

- Is creative in their ministry

- Is present with youth and is a source of pastoral support

- Is skilled in conflict management (and does not resort to conflict avoidance)

How do ministers engage with youth in Unitarian Universalist congregations?

- Participate in recruiting and hiring youth advisors

- Meet with youth advisors periodically

- Let youth know that they are available for pastoral and spiritual support

- Meet with the youth group periodically

- Plan worship with youth

- Help with Coming of Age

- Lead workshops for senior youth who are bridging

- Lead or help with the senior high youth's bridging ceremony

- Lead multigenerational worship services

- Encourage youth to attend worship and create worship that is multigenerational, youth-inclusive, and which youth have a role in planning

- Holding up the importance of youth when engaging with the leadership of the congregation

- Serve as chaplain at youth conferences, camps, and events

Reader 8-3: Basic Approaches to Chaplaincy

ATTRIBUTION

From the Unitarian Universalist Association Youth Chaplain Manual (2006).

TEXT

There are several key aspects to remember when approaching any chaplaining situation. These recommendations help guide the general framework of the relationship between chaplain and chaplainee.

Respect as a Fundamental Value:

In his book, The Skilled Helper, Gerard Egan states that respect should be the fundamental value of any counseling relationship. Respect must not be merely felt by the chaplain, it must also be communicated to the chaplainee (Egan 46). Egan demonstrates some of the ways in which this respect can be shown.

Communicate to the chaplainee that you are "for" them: Focus on the chaplainee, give them your undivided attention. Find whatever ways seem natural to you to communicate to them that, at that moment, they are the single most important person in the world for you to be with.

Keep the needs of the chaplainee central: Egan emphasizes focusing at all times on why the person has come to talk to you, what they want to communicate, and how you can assist them with this. Do not unnecessarily bring issues from your personal life into the relationship and do not delve into people's lives and emotions simply to satisfy your interest or curiosity (Egan 46).

Be Nonjudgmental:

Another important way of communicating respect is to avoid being judgmental of them, their situations, or their actions. Every person has different values and makes different decisions based upon those values. Rather than trying to encourage someone to conform to what you believe is best, the chaplain is instead there to "help them identify, explore, and review and challenge the consequences of the values they have adopted" (Egan 46). The chaplain's job is to provide emotional and spiritual support, not to serve as an authority for moral guidance.

It's All About the Feelings!

More than anything, chaplaining is about feelings. In our society, it's often difficult to find safe places to express deep feelings. So much of chaplaining is simply seeking to provide a space where people can share and explore their feelings. Simply being able to express one's feelings generally does people a tremendous amount of good. Having someone who cares about and listens to those feelings helps even more so. Freudian psychotherapists might try to deal with subconscious desires; Zen masters might try to help a person find peace with the universe. When chaplaining though, the primary "realm" that you will be in is that of the chaplainee's feelings.

Other Suggestions:

In his book, Peer Counseling, Vincent D'Andrea gives a number of other suggestions to guide counseling relationships such as chaplaining:

- **Don't Take Responsibility for the Other Person's Problem**: It is not the chaplain's job to solve the problems people bring to them. When you start feeling frustrated or inadequate as a chaplain because resolution does not come quickly or easily to the chaplainee, it becomes very easy to fall into the trap of overstepping your boundaries and to start directing the other person's life in order to fulfill your own desires to feel effective (D'Andrea 8).

- **Stick With the Here and Now**: The reasons for this are largely practical. Delving deeply into peoples' pasts generally requires a much more long-term and professional helping relationship. Furthermore, it is difficult to resolve complex issues involving people who are not present (D'Andrea 1910). The chaplain's job is primarily to assist people in dealing with and making sense of the feelings they are experiencing right now. This can be a time to be more directive in the conversation than you might otherwise be. For example, a person is distressed because they are failing a class in school and they start talking at length about their fears that now they won't be able to go to college and then they won't be able to get a job, and then they will have a miserable life, etc., etc. It may be good to steer the conversation back towards the immediate situation of the class the person is failing, how they're feeling about it, what's causing the situation, and what they can do about it. Likewise, if someone is fighting with their mother, dwelling on fights the person had with her several years ago is not likely to be as effective as looking into what can be done in the immediate future to improve the relationship.

- **Deal With Feelings First**: As has already been mentioned (and will be mentioned many times again, due to its great importance), feelings are amongst the most crucial things that

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chaplains deal with. Although chaplains may also assist people in problem solving, evaluating their options and decisions and other such factors, it is almost always best to first address what the person is feeling. Once a person has been able to vent and perhaps clarify their feelings, it is then possible to move into other areas such as problem solving (D'Andrea 10).

Works Cited

D'Andrea, Vincent, and Peter Salovey. Peer Counseling. Palo Alto: Science and
    Behavior Books, Inc., 1983.

Egan, Gerard. The Skilled Helper. Pacific Grove: Wadsworth Group, 2002.

Reader 8-4: Understanding Human Needs

ATTRIBUTION

From the Unitarian Universalist Association Youth Chaplain Manual (2006).

TEXT

Every person has some basic needs that must be met in order for them to live a happy and healthy life. There are a number of needs that are universal. Often, when these needs are not met, they cause serious emotional difficulties that can result in situations that bring people under your chaplaining care. Some essential human needs include:

- **Safety and Security**: "Human beings need to feel safe and secure, and to live in a non-threatening environment" (Doyle 18).
- **Stability and Order**: While everyone has some degree of personal lifestyle preferences, a life with absolutely no predictability or dependability, a life where there is no knowing what will happen from moment to moment is apt to be exceptionally stressful (Doyle 18).
- **Structure**: Once again, each person has some variation in preference, but having some regular structures such as school, jobs, relationships, etc. in which to invest time and energy is a basic human need (Doyle 18). Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week with absolutely nothing to do, no time commitments or requirements is not a healthy living situation.
- **Need for Attention and Human Contact**: Humans are innately social creatures. We need contact (physical and emotional) with other people and we need to have our presence recognized. "Those of us who do not have these needs satisfied in a positive manner by receiving smiles, hugs, or words of approval will seek to have them satisfied in negative ways by seeking frowns, slaps, or words of admonition" (Doyle 18).
- **Need for Affection and Love**: Likewise, we also need affirming relationships in our lives that value our self-worth and goodness as individuals. "When this need is not met, it is one of the more prominent causes of behavioral problems among individuals" (Doyle 18).
- **Need for Uniqueness and Worth**: "Each one of us needs to feel unique and worthwhile and to have a positive feeling of self-worth" (Doyle 18).
- **Need for Personal Time/Space**: Each person also needs, to one degree or another, personal and private space to be alone and reflect (Doyle 18).

- **Need for Control Over Environment**: A person living in an environment over which they have no control and living a life in which they have (or feel they have) no influence over what happens to them is a person with great needs being unmet (Doyle 18).

It can be very beneficial to keep these needs in mind while chaplaining. Not only can they be harmful when not met, people can also be driven to seek unmet needs in harmful, destructive, or inappropriate ways (such as tolerating abusive relationships to satisfy the need for attention). As chaplains, we can be of tremendous help to people if we can help them better understand their own needs: what they are currently doing and what they can do in the future to meet them.

Works Cited

Doyle, Robert E. Essential Skills and Strategies in the Helping Process. Pacific Grove: Wadsworth Group, 1992.

SESSION 9: Safe Congregations (60 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Explore safe congregation policies as they relate to youth
- Present some of the risks and liabilities that exist in youth ministry
- Clarify the role and responsibility of adults in creating safety in youth ministry settings, including their role as mandated reporters.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Have a greater understanding of safety and liability issues and the authority of the congregation in creating a safe community
- Know how to work with both youth and adults to build a safe community
- Be aware of the resources available to them to create safe congregation policies and to respond when issues arise.

NOTE TO THE LEADER

This training draws on materials from the UUA's *The Safe Congregation Handbook*. There are two readings for this session that participants need to read beforehand. If you are leading this training at a four- or five-day conference, remind participants to read these documents the day before this session.

ACTIVITY 1: Boundaries, Confidentiality, and Mandated Reporting (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 9-2, Mandated Reporting Laws
- Handout 9-1, Types of Secrets and Guidelines for Confidentiality
- Reader 9-1, Boundaries and Confidentiality

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Follow instructions in Leader Resource 9-2 and make copies of mandated reporting laws for the states represented among the participants.
- Make copies of Handout 9-1, Types of Secrets and Guidelines for Confidentiality, for all participants.
- Write the reflection questions on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Participants reflect on different types of secrets and how those secrets relate to their responsibility as mandated reporters.

Divide participants into groups of four or five. Distribute Handout 9-1, Types of Secrets and Guidelines for Confidentiality. Invite the small groups to discuss the following questions:

- Are there ways in which respect for the privacy of individuals and the need for transparency in conducting congregational affairs come into conflict? Can you identify possible conflicts and how they can be addressed?
- Do you find the typology for different kinds of secrets outlined in Reader 9-1 and Handout 9-1 helpful? Can you think of either real or hypothetical examples of each type of secret that might exist in a congregation or in your youth ministry context?
- Do you think the four guidelines from William Rankin, reprinted on Handout 9-1, are helpful in deciding whether or not to keep a confidence? Do they offer guidance about how to resolve the potential conflict areas identified in the first question?

Give the small groups 10 minutes for discussion, then bring them back to the large group. Ask each small group to report the highlights of what they discussed.

Distribute Leader Resource 9-2, Mandated Reporting Laws. Explain that this handout details the mandated reporting laws for their states.

Close emphasizing that the laws tell you what is legally reportable and whether you are considered a mandated reporter. However, there is a moral component to decisions around reporting. Even if you are not a mandated reporter you might have a moral obligation to report to

your congregation's minister or religious educator. Similarly if the situation is not legally reportable, it might be morally reportable to the congregational leadership.

ACTIVITY 2: Creating Policies with Youth (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Handout 9-2, Checklist for Developing Youth Group Safety Guidelines
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 9-1, Safety Policy Scenarios
- Reader 9-2, Creating Policies with Youth Groups

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Make copies of Handout 9-2, Checklist for Developing Youth Group Safety Guidelines, for all participants.
- Make one copy of Leader Resource 9-1, Safety Policy Scenarios, and cut apart the scenarios.
- Write both sets of reflection questions on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
In this activity participants explore what is needed to co-create safety policies with youth.

Point out that "an ounce of prevention is often better than a pound of cure." This is especially true in the realm of safety in youth ministry. Remind participants that the Reader 9-2, Creating Policies with Youth Groups, explores how to develop policies in a way that both empowers youth and ensures the development of good policies. Lead a five minute large group discussion using the following questions:

- Why do you think it is important to include youth in developing safety policies?
- What do youth have to offer in this process?
- What are the potential challenges of having youth co-create safety policies with adults?

After a five minute discussion, divide participants into five small groups. Distribute Handout 9-2, Checklist for Developing Youth Group Safety Guidelines. Give each group a scenario from

Leader Resource 9-1, Safety Policy Scenarios. Ask them to answer the following questions related to their scenario:

- What are the safety concerns in your scenario?
- From Handout 9-2, Checklist for Developing Youth Group Safety Guidelines, what guideline areas do you need to make sure you cover?
- How would you include youth in the policy making process?

Let the small groups know they have 10 minutes, then bring the whole group back together. In the large group ask each small group to share their scenario and their responses to the questions.

Handout 9-1: Types of Secrets and Guidelines for Confidentiality

ATTRIBUTION

Adapted from Rebecca Edmiston–Lange essay *Boundaries and Confidentiality* in *The Safe Congregation Handbook;*

http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/handbook/leadership/165736.shtml

TEXT

Types of Secrets

1. **Sweet secrets** are of short duration and kept for the purpose of fun and surprise, such as those involved in planning surprise gifts or parties.

2. **Essential secrets** involve those areas of privacy that are central to a person's or community's identity and well-being. They help to promote necessary boundaries, define relationships, and preserve dignity. For example, details of one's personal history or the intimate secrets that committed couples share are essential secrets. Essential secrets can also provide necessary protection, as in keeping secret the location of a battered women's shelter.

3. **Toxic secrets**, while not posing any immediate physical danger, poison relationships with others, disorient identity, and promote anxiety. Maintaining a toxic secret has a chronic negative effect on emotional well-being and energy, both for the person carrying the secret and for others in relation with that person. Toxic secrets create barriers between those who know and those who don't.

4. **Dangerous secrets** are those that put people in immediate physical jeopardy or debilitating emotional turmoil. In contrast to toxic secrets, which allow time to carefully consider the impact of revelation, dangerous secrets require immediate action to safeguard persons. Examples of such dangerous secrets are physical or sexual abuse of children, plans to commit suicide or homicide, or incapacitating substance abuse. In many jurisdictions, there is a "duty to warn" if one discovers such a secret; the need to protect outweighs any claims to confidentiality or promise not to tell.

Guidelines for Confidentiality

- Is the request for secrecy a fair request? In other words, could you reasonably make the same request of another if your roles were reversed?

- Is what is being asked of you in consonance with your deepest values?

- Is what is being requested of you something that you would regard as undesirable if anyone else did it?

- Does the request allow you to respond in ways compatible with Unitarian Universalism?

Handout 9-2: Checklist for Developing Youth Group Safety Guidelines

ATTRIBUTION

From *The Safe Congregation Handbook;*

http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/safecongs/handbook/handout_13.pdf

TEXT

Within the congregation:

Youth Group Staffing

☐ Clear accountability structure

☐ Clear step-by-step advisor-selection process

☐ Ongoing supervision of the advisor

☐ Explicit advisor termination process

☐ Availability of advisor training

Boundaries for Adults Working with Youth

☐ Limits to one-on-one time

☐ Clear physical boundaries

☐ Clear emotional boundaries

☐ Clear boundaries of role (i.e., advisor is not the youth group's therapist)

Creating Rules

☐ Consequences of rules infractions

☐ Site safety procedures and policies

☐ Parental permission

☐ Prevention through education

☐ A signed and understood code of ethics

Beyond the congregation:

Field trips

☐ Safety procedures followed by all participants

☐ Emergency contact information available

☐ Parental permission obtained

☐ Communication with congregation about purpose, length, time, and place of field trip

☐ Liability issues responsibly covered by adult leaders and congregational policies

Conferences

☐ Policies for travel to and from conference site

☐ Rules and policies created together for conference covenant

☐ structure for addressing violation of rules

Leader Resource 9-1: Safety Policy Scenarios

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut scenarios into slips for each group.

TEXT

1. Your congregation's board and staff have decided that the congregation needs to have safety policies. You have a large youth group that is very active. Regular activities include weekly youth group meetings, a youth choir, youth conferences and overnights, camping trips and other overnight outings.

2. Your congregation's youth group has asked to host a band night at your church as a fundraiser for a local charity. Local high school rock bands, some including members of the youth group and some not, will be invited to perform. The event will be open to the public, so there will be lots of youth who are not part of the congregation in attendance.

3. A local shelter and food pantry has invited your congregation's youth to join other youth groups (both religious and secular) in the city to take part in a poverty and hunger education event. The event involves the youth sleeping outside for the night in the local high school football stadium, taking part in educational activities and sharing a meal that is equivalent to what is served at the local soup kitchen. The event is a fundraiser for community agencies that address poverty.

4. Youth at your congregation would like to attend a district youth conference. The conference site is an 8-hour drive from your congregation and the conference will last from Friday night to Sunday noon. About 10 youth from your congregation would like to go.

5. Your church is relatively small, with only three youth involved. You do not have the critical mass needed to form a youth group, and the youth are not interested in a youth group anyway. What they would like to do is teach younger kids in the Religious Education.

Leader Resource 9-2: Mandated Reporting Laws

ATTRIBUTION

Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network (RAINN)

INSTRUCTIONS

Below is a link to the website of the Rape, Abuse and Incest National Networks database of state Mandated Reporting Laws. Print out the fact sheets for the states where participants are coming from for the module.

TEXT

http://www.rainn.org/public-policy/legal-resources/mandatory-reporting-database

NOTES

In addition to providing hardcopy for participants, share this link with them so they will always be able to access this information.

Reader 9-1: Boundaries and Confidentiality

ATTRIBUTION

By Rebecca Edmiston-Lange, in *The Safe Congregation Handbook*;
http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/handbook/leadership/165736.shtmlEnter

TEXT

Is everything a congregant tells a minister confidential? Is everything a congregant tells another congregant "in confidence" confidential? When is it okay to break a promise to "keep a secret"? When does confidentiality become secrecy and an abuse of power? Are all secrets bad? What is the difference between privacy and secrecy? What is the difference between anonymity and confidentiality? Is any gossip "good" gossip?

How members and staff of a congregation answer these questions has a great impact on whether or not a congregation can be deemed "safe." Unfortunately there are no easy answers because there is an unavoidable tension in the appropriate handling of sensitive information. Our congregations should be places where individual privacy is respected, where individuals feel they can risk being vulnerable and can rely upon clergy and other congregants to treat personal communications with trust and discretion. On the other hand, especially in an association governed by congregational polity and an emphasis on democratic practices, our congregations should be places where leadership, both clergy and lay, is committed to a certain level of transparency in its operations, to truth telling, and to the sharing of information vital to the well-being of all.

Nowhere is this tension more apparent than in clergy sexual misconduct and child abuse cases. Too often in such cases we have seen how a destructive cloak of secrecy can be confused with legitimate claims to privacy, how claims of confidentiality can be abused to shield injurious behavior, and how desires to avoid "unpleasantness" have led to silence, which compounds the betrayal and cripples a church's effectiveness as a spiritual institution. As a consequence, we have recognized the need to "break the

silence" about such matters, to cultivate openness in dealing with such violations of the public trust. But sometimes such an emphasis has led to further confusion. Any claim to confidentiality can be viewed as suspect and secret has almost become a dirty word.

Now more than ever, we need shared clarity about definitions and insight into how ethical distinctions should be made concerning these issues, not just for clergy-congregant relationships but also for members of our congregations involved in shared ministries or leadership positions. While there are no hard and fast rules and no substitutes for personal judgment and moral discernment, there are some problem-solving techniques that can help guide our way. Perhaps the first step is to acknowledge that not all secrets are bad. Some secrets can be delightful and strengthen relationships. But how do we tell the difference? As Evan Imber-Black writes in her book, The Secret Life of Families, "Enforced silence, selective telling, covert talking, and whispered confidences all can be used to plan a surprise party or to shield a pedophile." Imber-Black distinguishes four kinds of secrets. Sweet secrets are of short duration and kept for the purpose of fun and surprise, such as those involved in planning surprise gifts or parties. Essential secrets involve those areas of privacy that are central to a person's or community's identity and well-being. They help to promote necessary boundaries, define relationships, and preserve dignity. For example, details of one's personal history or the intimate secrets that committed couples share are essential secrets. Essential secrets can also provide necessary protection, as in keeping secret the location of a battered women's shelter.

Sweet and essential secrets are positive and beneficial. Toxic and dangerous secrets, on the other hand, are destructive and threatening to emotional and possibly physical safety. Toxic secrets, while not posing any immediate physical danger, poison relationships with others, disorient identity, and promote anxiety. Maintaining a toxic secret has a chronic negative effect on emotional well-being and energy, both for the person carrying the secret and for others in relation with that person. Toxic secrets create barriers between those who know and those who don't. Living inside such a secret makes us question our perceptions and second guess others' responses to us

and cuts us off from vital resources. We wonder what others would think of us if they knew. Living outside a toxic secret creates confusion and disequilibrium and inhibits growth. We know something is amiss, but not knowing what it is, we begin to doubt our reality. A philandering spouse is an example of a toxic secret in a family system. Knowledge of clergy sexual misconduct is an example of a toxic secret in a congregational system.

Carrying a toxic secret feels like living inside a pressure cooker. The pressure to reveal the secret can build until the secret erupts in damaging ways, or it can leak out in subtle clues that force someone else to uncover it. Toxic secrets most often need to be revealed both for the health of the person carrying the secret and for the health of the relationship system, but because a toxic secret does not involve immediate physical danger, its revelation can be planned carefully. Revealing toxic secrets is always painful and upsetting, sometimes shattering. Healing and reshaping relationships take a long time and much therapeutic work. But such healing may take even longer if the toxic secret is revealed in a reckless or explosive fashion.

Dangerous secrets are those that put people in immediate physical jeopardy or debilitating emotional turmoil. In contrast to toxic secrets, which allow time to carefully consider the impact of revelation, dangerous secrets require immediate action to safeguard persons. Examples of such dangerous secrets are physical or sexual abuse of children, plans to commit suicide or homicide, or incapacitating substance abuse. In many jurisdictions, there is a "duty to warn" if one discovers such a secret; the need to protect outweighs any claims to confidentiality or promise not to tell.

Dangerous secrets often involve power dynamics, intimidation, and fear. The powerless person in a dangerous secret is often threatened physically or emotionally and led to believe that revealing the secret will result in even greater harm to themselves or someone they care about. The powerful person in a dangerous secret often invokes a false notion of privacy, saying, "This is no one else's business but ours." By their very nature, dangerous secrets must be disclosed.

Understanding the different kinds of secrets helps to distinguish between truly private matters and unhealthy secrecy. The same information, depending upon the context, may be either. For example, not telling my neighbors about my positive HIV status might be maintaining an appropriate level of privacy. Not telling my fiancé the same information is keeping a dangerous secret.

The distinctions among different kinds of secrets are also helpful in defining the limits of confidentiality and a "promise not to tell" within a congregation, both for professional ministers and lay leaders. Most people assume that whatever they tell their minister in private is confidential—and in the majority of cases that is a safe assumption. We expect ministers to respect individual privacy and autonomy and, indeed, they are bound by professional ethics to do so. Without the expectation of confidentiality, those who need pastoral help or spiritual counsel might never seek it. But clergy are not only responsible to individual congregants. They are also stewards of the overall spiritual and moral well-being of the congregation as a whole. In addition, clergy feel, and may be mandated by law to consider, an obligation to the good of society. At times these other considerations may outweigh an individual congregant's expectation of confidentiality.

Generally speaking, in both law and ethics, confidentiality is considered only a prima facie duty, meaning that it can be overridden by other more compelling duties in certain circumstances —to protect someone from harm to self or to protect an innocent third party, for example. Here we are dealing in the realm of dangerous secrets, and decisions regarding whether or not to divulge information may seem rather straightforward. If a congregant confesses to a minister that he abused a child in the church's Sunday school, the minister cannot keep that information secret. If an otherwise healthy adult reveals to a minister a plan to commit suicide, most ministers would not hesitate to break confidence in order to avert the suicide, whether or not they are legally obligated to do so. (Many jurisdictions do have laws imposing a "duty to

warn" or a "duty to divulge" when clergy possess knowledge of child or elder abuse, potential homicides or suicides, or participation in criminal activity.)

But not all cases where a clergy person may feel the need to break confidentiality are that clear cut. Toxic secrets, because of the lack of immediate physical danger, may present more complex choices about how, what, and to whom to divulge them. A teenager confesses she is pregnant and intends to seek an abortion and wants to keep this secret from her parents. In many cases the minister will most likely try to assuage her fears regarding her parents' response and urge her to talk to them directly, even offering to accompany her. But if the teenager refuses, is the minister obligated to tell the parents, to whom the minister also has an inherent, obligatory relationship of trust? A variety of factors might enter into the decision—the age and maturity of the girl, what the minister knows about the health of the family system, the stage of the pregnancy, and so forth.

It is important to note that the issue of clergy confidentiality is further complicated by the laws regarding whether or not clergy-congregant communications are deemed inadmissible as legal testimony. Further, states often have laws specifying who can waive confidentiality, the congregant or the clergy person or both. Such laws may vary from state to state or even from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. (Note: Generally speaking, courts consider four factors in deciding what is confidential—whether the information was disclosed in a setting where it might be overheard; whether the information conveyed implies harm to the discloser or to another person; whether the disclosure was made in the sacramental context of confession of sins; and whether the person receiving the disclosure is ordained professional clergy. (Read "Confidentiality in the Church: What the Pastor Knows and Tells" by D. Elizabeth Audette and Confidentiality and Clergy: Churches, Ethics and the Law by William W. Rankin for fuller discussion of these matters.) It behooves clergy to acquaint themselves with the relevant state and municipal laws, particularly those regarding the situations in which one has a "duty to warn" or "duty to divulge."

However situations can arise in which one's ethical judgment appears to be at odds with the law. One might, because of a higher duty to protect, feel the need to divulge confidential communications regarding a potential suicide even when there is no legal obligation to do. Alternately, one might consider a form of civil disobedience under certain circumstances in order to meet the demands of conscience and choose not to report, for example, a planned suicide by a mentally competent and terminally ill person. Under such circumstances, legal counsel should be sought so that the decision is not made without full understanding of the legal consequences. It should not be the policy of a congregation to condone disobedience of existing laws.

Nevertheless, as Sissela Bok stresses, any decision to override confidentiality requires a rigorously derived justification. William Rankin, arguing from Bok, offers four guidelines to aid in the decision:

- Is the request for secrecy a fair request? In other words, could you reasonably make the same request of another if your roles were reversed?
- Is what is being asked of you in consonance with your deepest values?
- Is what is being requested of you something that you would regard as undesirable if anyone else did it?
- Does the request allow you to respond in ways compatible with your religious tradition?

Both Rankin and Bok caution that confidentiality issues in churches can become clouded by a tendency to treat some ethical problems as purely pastoral problems rather than as wrongs for which redress is needed. While this tendency may be motivated by a laudable compassion, it may just as likely be motivated by an overestimation of one's ability to change another's behavior. Honest reflection on Rankin's four questions mitigates these tendencies since they acknowledge both obligation to one's self as a promise-keeper and obligation to justice in community. Given that compelling reasons to break confidentiality can exist, perhaps it is always more honest to state one's intent as "I will try my best to keep confidential what you are about to disclose but if you reveal something illegal or that puts yourself or another person in danger, I may feel obligated to break your confidence to protect you or another person."

When confused about which course to follow, clergy should not hesitate to seek counsel from other colleagues or district executives. In many cases it is possible to talk about a situation without divulging identifying information.

Much of the discussion on clergy confidentiality is applicable to lay people in positions of leadership. While lay people do not possess any legal privilege concerning confidentiality, they are often privy to sensitive information and are bound by their covenantal relationship with the church to take issues of confidentiality seriously. Lay leaders must also distinguish different kinds of secrets and may, at times, feel compelled to consider higher ethical considerations, such whether to warn or to protect, when confronted with toxic or dangerous secrets. Lay leaders, like clergy, bear responsibility for the welfare of the church as a whole and will, at times, need to balance individual requests for secrecy with the community's need to know. Like clergy, lay leaders should feel predisposed to honor confidences, but if a rigorous moral justification to override a confidence exists, they should not feel they have betrayed another by divulging the information. Even when a "promise not to tell" has been exacted, confidence can and should be breached if secrecy would allow violence to be done to innocent persons or involve complicity in a crime. As Sissela Bok puts it in her book Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life, "We can properly promise only what is ours to give or what is right for us to do," that having "made a promise" does not justify participation in wrong doing. Again, there is no substitute for personal discernment. There will be times when the right course involves potential conflict and pain. Such is the burden of leadership. But the guidelines offered for clergy can be helpful to lay people also. Like clergy, lay people should not hesitate to ask for advice, either from their minister or the district executive.

The positions of lay pastoral ministers and covenant group leaders warrant further discussion. Trainings for such lay pastoral ministries as the Befrienders Program or Stephen's Ministry explicitly address confidentiality issues, recognizing that congregants in those roles will need ongoing supervision to strengthen their ministry. When discussing a case, these programs suggest omitting names or disguising identifying characteristics to preserve the person's anonymity and the confidential nature of the

information. Such an approach can be helpful in other situations as well; for example, when seeking advice from another (one's minister, a colleague, or district executive) about whether or not to break a confidence. Furthermore, there will be times in congregational life, as in clergy misconduct cases or child abuse cases, when it is necessary to disclose facts and, at the same time, protect the vulnerable by preserving the anonymity of the victim.

Most covenant groups within our churches do not have an expectation of complete confidentiality. It is expected that members of covenant groups will have conversations among themselves outside the group meetings. It is also expected that members of a covenant group will want to share their experiences with non-members. Rev. Robert Hill recommends a "covenant of discretion and respect for privacy interests of members." Some groups have rules that members sharing particularly private information within the group should identify it as such or that one must ask permission to share another's identifying story. Discussion of confidentiality and privacy issues should be part of the covenant building process for such groups.

There should be ongoing conversations in our congregations about confidentiality and privacy issues. All members of the church need to understand the limits of confidentiality and recognize that blanket assurances of confidentiality, even from clergy, are neither possible nor wise. Furthermore, our congregations are covenantal communities of people responsible to and for each other. An appropriate sharing of information is necessary if we are to minister to one another through the trials and sorrows of life and if we all are to grow spiritually. By joining a covenantal community one has made a choice to be in relationship, to have others involved in our lives.

Certainly none of us wants to encourage malicious, intrusive, or even trivializing gossip, but a certain level of is probably inevitable and maybe even desirable in congregations. Writers like Sissela Bok have pointed out the many supportive uses of gossip: It allows us to learn life-lessons by observing others; it conveys information vital to a group's functioning; it spreads the word about who is sick or in need of help; and, it teaches through example how others navigate the trials of life with grace. Phyllis Rose argues in

Parallel Lives, Five Victorian Marriages that gossip is the beginning of moral inquiry, the low end of the ladder that leads to self understanding. In Dakota, Kathleen Norris coins the phrase "holy gossip" to describe gossip that strengthens communal bonds. She points out that gossip is derived from the words for God and sibling and thus means those who are spiritually related.

Whether or not we want to reclaim a positive definition of gossip, we need to share information about one another if we are to truly minister to one another. If we err too far in the direction of an unqualified right to privacy, our communal life will be stifled. On the other hand, we need to be respectful of personal autonomy. Whenever we talk about someone who isn't present we need to ask ourselves if we are talking out of genuine concern for the other person or whether we are talking out of a need to feed our own ego—to feel superior, to seem important or "in the know." In this, as in so much, there is need for discernment and judgment.

And that is why we need to talk about how we talk. For it is through congregational conversation, which honors our commitments to one another, that we will best find the ways to live creatively with the tension between openness and privacy, truth telling and confidence keeping.

Reader 9-2: Creating Policies with Youth Groups

ATTRIBUTION

By Sarah Gibb Millspaugh, in *The Safe Congregation Handbook*;
http://www.uua.org/leaders/safecongregations/handbook/reand/165938.shtml

TEXT

When congregations have healthy, viable, active programs for youth (ages fourteen to twenty), both the young people and the congregations receive incredible benefits. Some of these youth, now young adults, have written about their experiences. Elizabeth Martin of the Fourth Universalist Society in New York City writes,

In Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), I learned to get along with others. Youth and adults, together. We worshipped, played games, cooked, ate, talked, and sang. I discovered myself. .. I have built friendships I hope to keep for years to come. Most importantly, my memories of YRUU continue to make me feel loved and safe. During the moments when I was in YRUU, I was safe.

And in a Washington Post article from a few years ago, Ashley Wilson of Cedar Lane Unitarian Universalist Church in Bethesda, Maryland, speaks of her experience:

One thing I appreciate is that my church believes in full education so individuals can make their own educated and informed decisions...I love my church because it is so supportive of youth...this religion has given me a better way to live my life, exposed me to many wonderful people, educated and supported me.

With youth ministry, as with any type of ministry a congregation might undertake, there are risks involved. Some of these risks, like the risk of abuse, are risks in all of a congregation's programs. Others, like the risk of underage drinking, are more particular to this age group. Some universal risks need to be emphasized more with youth than with adults. Anyone in a church can break furniture, but youth are more likely than adults to think of using a couch as a trampoline.

Unitarian Universalist (UU) youth are at a crucial phase in their religious and social development; they are simultaneously empowered and vulnerable. They've been raised to think for themselves and by their capacities for independence of thought and action are increasing; yet they are vulnerable due to cultural sexualization and a lack of legal power. Youth in Unitarian Universalist congregations need a safe environment in which they can share themselves in a genuine way and develop as leaders.

Unfortunately well-intentioned adult leaders can actually diminish youth safety by creating and enforcing rules in a disempowering way. Our religious movement has too many examples of youth programs being damaged or dismantled because adults in leadership positions forget that youth can be their allies in creating safety. Some examples include church boards barring all youth from district conferences because one youth was found smoking marijuana or religious education committees disallowing youth group overnights because someone broke a classroom window.

But our movement also has many positive examples of youth and adults working together to create safety. When a pair of youth playing tag at one youth conference, youth and adult leaders convened to determine who should fix the window and helped identify constructive ways for the hyper youth to channel their energy.

Youth sometimes rebel against rules and structures imposed from the outside. It can be alienating for a youth group to be told, "This is how things are going to be." On the other hand, a lack of rules and structure can be equally alienating for youth, resulting in chaos and compromising their safety.

There must be a balance. Youth, like adults, have a strong interest in safety in youth groups and at youth events. They can work as allies rather than adversaries. In "The Sunday-School: Discourse Pronounced before the Sunday-School Society," William Ellery Channing writes that the goal in religious education with young people is "not to impose religion upon them in the form of arbitrary rules, which rest on no foundation but our own word and will, but to awaken the conscience, the moral discernment, so that they may discern and approve for themselves what is everlastingly right and good." Discussions about youth group safety are an ideal place to awaken the consciences

and moral decision-making skills of youth. This is a chance to see UU values and Principles in action.

Our congregations often take great care to offer well-balanced religious education curricula for children from preschool to eighth grade. We teach children that ours is a religion of diversity, respect, and acceptance. We teach children to honor and uphold the "inherent worth and dignity of every person," and "justice, equity, and compassion in human relations." Although many of our congregations do not use formal curricula with high-school aged youth, noted religious educator Maria Harris, author of Fashion Me a People: Curriculum in the Church, reminds us that these youth are absorbing a curriculum nonetheless. The circumstances of the life of the church form what she calls an "implicit curriculum." This implicit curriculum is conveyed to youth in the way the church and its representatives relate to them. Though the explicit curriculum of a church school may be to uphold the seven Principles, an implicit curriculum of conflict and interpersonal power struggle could undermine what the church is attempting to teach. For youth, the implicit messages communicated in the creation of guidelines and policies can have just as a profound effect upon their faith development as the explicit messages about honoring our UU Principles. When the implicit curriculum is in line with the explicit curriculum, a congregation is more likely to foster youth commitment to Unitarian Universalism.

Creating policy well is an essential aspect of doing our job as congregations. Therefore as congregations set out to discuss, develop, or revise safety policies that concern youth programs, including youth in the process is very important. Maybe a group of adults would arrive at the same policy that a group of youth and adults would, but creating different policies, or different rules, is not even half of the point of youth inclusion. Primarily, as Angus MacLean taught, "the method is the message." Inclusion of youth communicates that their congregation honors them and respects their experiences and ideas. Further, when youth have a role in creating policy, they are more likely to feel responsible to and abide by it. On both practical and philosophical levels, youth safety is enhanced when policy is created in a context of youth

empowerment in our congregations and conferences. Congregations should consider the following elements as youth and adults assemble to create policies together.

Youth Group Staff

Who are the adults who advise the youth group? Are they volunteer members of the congregation? Are they paid advisors? Are they on the staff of the church? The answers to these questions can help to determine the accountability of adults who work with youth in your congregation.

Questions surrounding accountability include: Who selects advisors? If there is trouble, who can fire an advisor? Who supervises adult advisors, and how? Who reviews their performance on a regular basis and offers feedback?

When establishing a structure of accountability for adults who work with youth, it's advisable to include youth input in the hiring and selection processes as well as feedback and performance review. Anonymous feedback can also bring up issues that youth are afraid to talk about in person. The Youth Office publishes a helpful guide for this process, "Seven Steps to Hiring a Youth Advisor," available at www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/leaderslibrary/45566.shtml.

Adults working with the youth group must sign a code of ethics under "Resources" on the above. It is also recommended that youth advisors consent to a criminal background check or at least a sex offender background check. Church Mutual, an insurance carrier used by many congregations, offers background screening for employees and volunteers (see www.churchmutual.com).

In staffing a youth group, many congregations often find themselves without many willing adults to choose from. Therefore if an adult with little or no background in youth work wants to be an advisor, advisor training can be very valuable. The Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries provides a series of trainings for youth advisors through the Chrysalis Training Program Training covers such issues as ethical behavior and safety as well as more basic items like how to lead youth group activities.

Congregations can also set policies concerning the ratio of youth to adults in the youth program. Typical rations are ten youth to one adult and seven youth to one adult. At Con Con, an annual continental YRUU conference, a ratio of ten youth to one adult is in place. Such ratios are established not because adults need to supervise youth or run all their activities but because youth community is enriched by the positive participation of adults. The Search Institute's research, published in "Forty Developmental Assets," indicates that support from "three or more nonparent adults" is one of the building blocks that enable youth to develop in healthy, caring, and responsible ways.

In order to staff youth groups responsibly, adults working with youth must acknowledge that they are different from youth and behave accordingly. Adults help youth the most not by acting like youth but by acting like adults and setting a good example. They must also acknowledge that certain boundaries between youth and adults are necessary to create and uphold a healthy youth group.

Just like in the church school, it is advisable to have more than one adult with youth at all times. This helps to protect youth from abusive or manipulative situations as two adults can "check" each others' behavior. The presence of more than one youth can serve the same purpose. In some cases, youth may want to meet privately with an advisor for a variety of reasons. In such situations, it's advisable to meet in a public place, such as a mall or a coffee shop, or at the church with others nearby.

For many Unitarian Universalist youth, the opportunity to give and receive hugs and affection at youth group is vital. Touch is so sexualized in other contexts that it can be a real joy to have friends in YRUU whom they can caress and snuggle with without it being "a sexual thing." Adults who work with youth may crave this kind of casual affection too. However the power differential between youth and adults makes it impossible for adults to participate in hugs or backrub circles as "just one of the gang." Even well intentioned adults can get themselves in trouble in this area because youth can feel violated by an adult's hug even though they might feel comfortable with similar hugs from other youth.

"Jack," an advisor who saw himself as loving and kind would walk up to female youth in coffee hour, put his arm around their waists, and stroke their hair as he chatted with them and their friends. The girls probably wouldn't have minded the same behavior by another youth. But the girls in this youth group felt, understandably, extremely uncomfortable with the advisor's behavior. He was twenty years older than they were. "It just felt icky," one of the girls said. That "icky" gut feeling indicated that something was wrong. It was inappropriate for the advisor to initiate this kind of physical contact with the young women in his group.

Adults working with youth are responsible for maintaining boundaries. It's important, therefore, that they understand that physical affection is not theirs to initiate. Adults also have the responsibility to resist certain kinds of physical affection initiated by young people. While youth should understand appropriate boundaries of youth-adult touch, adults are ultimately responsible for enforcing these limits.
What kind of physical affection is appropriate then? Here is a checklist of guidelines that can help any adult working with youth:

- The touch is initiated by the youth.
- The touch is clearly not intended as a sexual advance.
- The adult does not experience the touch as a sexual advance.
- The touch is taking place in an open setting with other people around.
- The touch is clearly socially acceptable within the terms of the adult's advisory relationship to the particular youth, i.e., a handshake, a pat on the back, a moderate hug.
- The touch is something both the youth and adult can stop easily if it becomes uncomfortable.

Finally, the receiver of the touch determines whether a touch is appropriate, inappropriate, or confusing. For this reason, no matter what the advisor's intentions, it is best to err on the side of too little touch than too much.

Advisors are sometimes invited to participate in youth group activities that involve touch, such as back rubs or games like "Ha," "Wink," and "Honey, if you love me." Such touch-

oriented games are risky for advisors to participate in because they could involve youth group members sitting on the advisor's lap and vice versa ("Honey if you love me"), the advisor holding the ankles of youth and kissing them on the cheek ("Wink"), or the advisor's head resting on a youth's belly and a youth's head resting on the advisor's belly ("Ha"). Advisors are strongly discouraged from getting involved in such group games and activities.

"Check-in," a popular element of youth group meetings, involves sharing things that are going on in the lives of youth in the group. Adult advisors also participate in check-in. Two safety issues arise from this situation; one involves the advisor's level of sharing and the other involves the limits of confidentiality.

As with touch, advisors are reminded not to use the youth group to meet their own needs. An advisor using check-in as a place to unload emotional baggage on the youth group is inappropriate. It changes the dynamic of a youth group so that youth find themselves caring for the advisor rather than the other way around. Sharing details of your love life, tales of last night's drinking escapade, or sexual fantasies is totally inappropriate. Beyond clearly inappropriate topics, however, there is a grayer zone. Advisors are well-advised to think in advance about bringing up personal topics close to their hearts that would dominate the youth group's attention and care-taking—topics such as a break-up or pending divorce, a friend's illness, or a family member's death. Advisors can address these issues during check-in in appropriate ways that let the group know what's going on. For example, saying, "Please keep me in your thoughts and prayers as I head down to Florida for the funeral" lets the youth group know that you are sad and that you're dealing with the death of a loved one. The advisor must not lean on the youth group too heavily for emotional support. Advisors are well-advised to have adult friends whom they can lean on and sources of emotional support beyond the youth group.

Confidentiality is a principle that is basic to most congregations' youth groups. It is understood that sensitive personal information stays in the room. There are, however, limits to the confidentiality a youth group can and should offer. First, state law may designate youth advisors as mandated reporters of abuse. Certainly religious education

directors are mandated to report abuse. Adults working with youth should make it clear at the outset that there are cases in which information shared in the group, or privately, must be shared with others. Advisors ought to be able to discuss confidential youth issues with their supervisors on the congregation's staff. Regular supervisory meetings between advisors and ministerial staff allow advisors to openly process their experiences and keep the ministerial staff informed of youth program activities. It is important that advisors have the freedom to be totally candid about their youth program experiences in these supervisory meetings. Therefore when discussing confidentiality, advisors can clarify that they reserve the right to discuss what comes up in youth group with their supervisors, who are also sworn to confidentiality.

The Unitarian Universalist Association's (UUA) Youth Advisors Handbook sums it up nicely:

It may sometimes be difficult to stay in your "adult" role as advisor. The youth in your group are looking for a friend and advisor, but they want you to be an adult one. If you think becoming an advisor is a chance to relive your youth, think again. This doesn't mean that you can't play games or participate with your group. It does mean that you should keep a certain distance or boundary between you and the youth. They will not be comfortable with you at the same level of intimacy that they share with each other.

Creating Rules Together

Aside from rules and policies set by committees charged to do so, youth groups traditionally play a role in setting up their own ground rules, or covenants. Some typical rules for youth group activities include:

- Personal information is confidential.
- Everyone has the right not to share personal information.
- Listen when others are speaking.
- Don't interrupt.
- Respect people's differences.
- Use "I" statements when talking about opinions.

- Speak for yourself.

- Alcohol and drugs are prohibited.

- Sex and "hooking up" are prohibited within the youth group.

- Weapons are forbidden.

- Turn off cell phones.

Youth groups often develop lists of rules by brainstorming and then coming to consensus on the rules they will abide by. This gives the members of the group the opportunity to own the rules—to feel that they can both abide by and help enforce them. Adults working with the youth group are expected to abide by the same rules at youth group events.

An adult's primary role in a youth group is that of advisor, not supervisor. Youth and adults work together to ensure the safety of the group. This partnership must be clearly communicated because both youth and adults can assume that the adults are the only ones in charge. A revolutionary aspect of YRUU is that rule infractions are dealt with by the whole group, not just adults. For example, if a young man is found to be drinking alcohol at a conference, the Spirit Committee—a group of youth and adult leaders—will convene to deal with the problem. However, in cases of imminent bodily danger, such as fire or oncoming traffic, a collaborative approach is not necessary. Youth or adults are encouraged in such cases to do whatever it takes to get people out of harm's way. Advisors are strongly encouraged to become familiar with their congregation's safety policies and reporting procedures.

At overnights and conferences, it is not the adult's job to patrol from room to room and sleeping bag to sleeping bag to make sure that no rules are broken. At most conferences and overnights, at least one adult is awake and available at all times that youth are awake. This adult can even go from room to room, checking in on people. But the goal is to relate to youth. If adults (or youth) see rule infractions it is their responsibility to handle these concerns through the appropriate channels. These channels are often defined in advance of the overnight and include both youth and adult leaders (like the Spirit Committee).

Fire safety policies and procedures as well as parental permission procedures must be followed with youth groups in the same way that they are with children in the church school. Please see "Healthy Religious Education Community" for guidelines in this area.

Education plays a role both in preventing unsafe situations and helping people know how to respond if one does arise. The Our Whole Lives sexuality education curricula can help young people recognize and respond to sexual harassment and sexual assault. Congregations must recognize, however, that even the best sexuality education program does not inoculate a person from being a victim or a victimizer in the case of sexual assault and harassment. Teaching the curriculum is not enough. Education must be partnered with clear codes of ethics, expectations, and policies.

Clearly stating expectations and policies at the outset of events serves both to educate and to prevent. If the "no drugs" rule is written in the registration materials and announced at the beginning of a conference, youth are far less likely to use drugs because the expectation that they will not is clear.

Youth Safety at Programs Beyond the Congregation

Most Unitarian Universalist youth groups engage in activities beyond the walls of their own church. These outings may be related to subjects they are studying in their religious education programs or they may involve participation in denominational activities at the regional or national level. In either case, taking field trips and attending conferences with young people requires sound planning and firm safety rules. The essential safety elements of field trip planning are five-fold. They involve safety on the trip itself, emergency contact information, parental permission, communication with the congregation, and liability issues.

To make the trip as safe as possible, the first step is to assess the risk level of the planned activities. For instance, a field trip to a Buddhist temple will clearly involve a different level of risk than a three-day wilderness backpacking trip. Assessing the risk in advance can help the trip's leadership plan appropriately.

Some safety elements to consider when planning a field trip include:

- written permission from parents or guardians (see the sample permission form included at the end of this book). For trips involving physical challenge, include a clause indicating parental understanding of the risk and releasing the congregation from liability in case of injury or death.
- emergency medical information for each participant that includes signed parental consent for emergency medical treatment, emergency contact information, and health insurance policy information. Keep a binder with this information on hand at all times during the trip and leave additional copies in the church office.
- signed code of ethics forms for all adults accompanying youth on the trip.
- drivers' names, license information, insurance information, and license plates on file with the church office
- Further, congregations may want to set:
- a required adult-to-youth ratio for off-site trips
- a minimum age requirement for drivers (may be required by congregation's insurance policy)
- a requirement that trip leaders carry first aid supplies, and that at least one participant is certified in first aid and CPR

Youth conferences, gatherings of Unitarian Universalist youth from multiple congregations, are typically held under the auspices of a sponsoring organization such as a district youth steering committee or continental Young Religious Unitarian Universalists. These organizations all have their own safety policies and guidelines for behavior. Sometimes the conference site has its own policies and guidelines, depending on whether the site is a church building or a privately owned camp. It is the responsibility of the conference's planning committee to negotiate the differences and similarities in the sponsoring organization's and hosting site's policies, creating a unified set of policies, procedures, and guidelines for behavior.

Most youth conferences have trained youth and/or adult YRUU chaplains. These chaplains are caring, understanding, and compassionate listeners who offer personal care-emotional and spiritual-and attention to members of the conference community. Chaplains serve the conference community with active listening, responsive awareness

of ethical behavior, and their ability to refer members to certified professionals when appropriate.

Congregations can set policies concerning transportation to conferences. Because some youth will be old enough to drive themselves and others will be too young, the possibility of youth driving is an issue to consider. Additionally, congregations have an interest in establishing the safety and insurance coverage of drivers and vehicles transporting youth, regardless of age.

University Unitarian Church in Seattle, Washington, requires drivers to hold automobile liability coverage for a minimum of $100,000 per person and $300,000 per accident. Further, drivers are asked to sign an understanding that their own insurance will provide primary coverage in case of an accident and that the congregation will not compensate them for the use of their vehicle. Drivers are then required to fill out a form with the following information, which is then verified by the director of religious education:

- driver's name and address
- driver's children's names (if enrolled in church school)
- driver's license number, state of issue, and expiration date
- auto insurance carrier and policy number
- whether the driver has been convicted of a moving violation within the past three years
- description of the vehicle: make, model, year, registered owner's name and address, license plate number and state registered, number of seat belts, whether there is a passenger-side airbag, and whether an insurance card is kept in the vehicle

This information is kept on file with the church office for the duration of the trip. Some congregations (and some district youth steering committees) have created policies requiring youth drivers to be eighteen years of age or older and/or stating that youth can drive themselves but not other youth. The policy that works well for one congregation or one district may not meet the needs of another. It is advisable to consider the length of the trip and the type of driving involved in attending conferences. The ten hours of

mountain driving required to bring youth to some conferences in the Mountain Desert District is different from the thirty minutes of interstate and city driving required to bring youth to a typical conference in eastern Massachusetts. Both types of driving have their dangers—your congregation can take these factors into consideration when drafting a policy. Congregations may want to look into what coverage, if any, is offered by their congregational insurance policy for volunteer drivers traveling on church business.

Like all adults working with youth, congregations are well advised to ask adults who drive youth to sign a code of ethics. Congregations that do not permit youth-adult one-to-one time in regular contexts need to consider whether they will permit one youth and one adult to travel together to a conference. Some congregations find this situation acceptable as long as the adult signs the code of ethics. Others would seek travel alternatives.

Youth conference safety begins long before arrival at a conference, or even registration. Safety at youth conferences requires careful planning. First, registration materials must include parental permission forms with emergency contact information, health information, insurance policy details, and a signed release authorizing emergency medical attention. Second, registration materials need to be up front in presenting a code of ethics for adults (and youth in leadership positions like the conference dean or the worship coordinator). The signed parental permission forms and codes of ethics must be prerequisite for participation in the youth conference. It is important for the conference registrar to make sure that these materials are obtained from all participants.

The book *How to Be a Con Artist: Youth Conference Planning Handbook for Unitarian Universalists* gives more suggestions and details about the conference planning process and is available online. This resource shares the following wisdom on creating guidelines for behavior at conferences:

One of the most important tasks for a conference staff is the creation of a safe, nurturing environment in which the community can flourish. The creation of a safe environment requires the creation of rules. Keeping in mind the age and needs of the conferees,

brainstorm a list of rules that will allow them to feel safe and cared for. Some districts have established rules for youth conferences. Looking at your list, ask yourselves if the conferees, both youth and adult, are likely to agree to these rules.

- The rules should be stated clearly and concisely on the conference flyer and listed and explained at orientation. Many conference registration forms ask participants to sign an agreement to abide by the rules, listing the consequences of violating rules (being sent home, for example).
- Sometimes an Energy Committee or Rules Committee is formed at the conference (composed of one person from each touch group, the chaplain, and another adult or two). This committee should meet regularly to touch base, to share their perceptions of how the conference is going, and to deal with any rule infractions that come up.
- Clarify among the staff how you will handle rule violations before they occur. Who will be responsible? What will be the process for decision-making? Where will you meet? If you decide these things when you are cool, calm, and collected, in the frenzy of a conference you can easily follow your established procedure.
- A sense of responsibility to the community and to individuals and a willingness to make compromises to maintain peace in the community are essential to conference unity.
- As a committee, decide what rules and policies will be necessary to hold your conference successfully, peacefully, and with unity. Whatever you decide, the rules must be wholeheartedly supported by the planning committee.
- Part of the Planning Committee's role is to have a good relationship with participants, let them know what's going on, listen to their concerns, and be involved in the community as regular conferees as much as possible.
- The key to gaining support for behavior guidelines is for the community to have a sense of ownership of them. If conferees feel responsible for their own rules and policies, they will be more likely to uphold them rather than if they feel they must live under oppressive rules handed down from a faceless source. The process of

creating behavior codes is one of the most crucial aspects of allowing conferees to feel a part of the community.

Further, How to be a Con Artist suggests firm enforcement coupled with creativity to address rule infractions:

When conference rules include consequences such as being removed from the conference community, "safe houses" are sometimes established. These are homes where the offenders can stay for the remainder of the conference, removed from the community but without the hassle of arranging transportation home. Creative thinking often can solve difficult problems, and keeping minds and hearts open to alternatives can produce amazing results.

Youth safety and youth empowerment can co-exist in an environment that nurtures religious and moral growth. When congregations and conference communities uphold the notion that everything we do is religious education, the opportunity to create and enforce safety policies is an opportunity to strengthen Unitarian Universalism.

SESSION 10: Youth Ministry Vision, Mission and Covenant (45 minutes)

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Explore the importance of vision, mission, and covenant to a successful congregational youth ministry
- Present a model for developing a vision, mission, and covenant for congregational youth ministry.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Understand the importance of vision, mission, and covenant in guiding and strengthening congregational youth ministry
- Be prepared to lead a vision, mission, and covenant process in their congregation.

ACTIVITY 1: Defining Vision, Mission, and Covenant (10 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Leader Resource 10-1, Vision, Mission, and Covenant Diagram
- Leader Resource 10-2, Sample Vision, Mission, and Covenant
- Scissors
- Handout 10-1, Vision, Mission, and Covenant

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Draw the diagram in Leader Resource 10-1 on newsprint.
- Cut the eight sample statements in Leader Resource 10-2 into strips.
- Make copies of Handout 10-1, Vision, Mission, and Covenant, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity helps participants understand the connections and differences among visions, missions, mission objectives, and covenants.

Explain that developing vision and mission statements and a covenant helps us reflect and articulate who we are as religious people and religious communities. It is important to consider how the guiding statements for youth ministry relate to the guiding statements for the congregation as a whole.

Ask if any of the participants' congregations or youth ministries have developed a vision, mission, and/or covenant. Invite volunteers to share how this has impacted their youth ministry.

Before we can develop these statements, it is important to understand the connections and differences among them.

Distribute Handout 10-1, Vision, Mission, and Covenant. Invite a participant to read each of the definitions and sample statements. Ask if there are questions.

Show participants the diagram you have drawn on newsprint. Explain that the biggest box (vision) is the broadest statement. As the boxes get smaller, they become more specific. "Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together" (UUA, 2005) explains: "The mission grows directly out of the vision, and the vision is built upon the shared values, concerns, and principles that are articulated in the covenant." (p. 13)

Distribute the strips of paper from Leader Resource 10-2, Sample Vision, Mission, and Covenant. Explain that the words on those slips are either Vision, Mission, Mission Objectives, or Covenant. Invite participants with slips of paper to read them aloud, one at a time, and encourage the whole group to decide which of the four types of statements it illustrates. Once the group has decided, have the volunteer reader tape it by the corresponding box on the newsprint diagram.

Close this activity by asking if there are any questions about the differences and connections among Vision, Mission, Mission Objectives, and Covenant before we move into the process of developing these statements.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

In an e-learning environment, leaders could ask participants ahead of time to gather examples of each of these types of guiding statements to share with the group.

ACTIVITY 2: Developing a Vision, Mission, and Covenant (30 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY
- Newsprint, markers, and tape
- Handout 10-2, Envisioning the Future
- Pen/pencil for each participant
- Handout 10-3, Vision, Mission, and Covenant Retreat
- Sticky notes (four per participant)

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY
- Make copies of Handout 10-2, Envisioning the Future and Handout 10-3, Vision, Mission, and Covenant Retreat, for all participants.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity walks participants through a very abbreviated process of developing a vision, mission, and covenant for their youth ministry.

Distribute Handout 10-3, Vision, Mission, and Covenant Retreat.

Emphasize that the process of developing these guiding statements can contribute to the growth and vibrancy of youth ministry, so it is important to give it adequate time in the congregation.

Explain that there are a couple different ways of doing this. It is important to bring together youth, advisors, parents, religious educators, ministers, and other congregational leaders for the process. Doing it with a multigenerational congregational group reinforces youth ministry as a congregational ministry with multiple pathways for youth participation. Bringing together stakeholders to develop these statements creates wider support for the youth ministry and generates new ideas for how that ministry should move forward. Some youth groups may also choose to build on the congregational vision, mission, objectives, and covenant for their group, as one "pathway" among many in the congregation's youth ministry.

Because of the turnover that youth ministries naturally experience, it is important to do this process every three or four years as each new generation of youth becomes involved in the life of the congregation.

Now move on to the suggested structure for a Vision, Mission, and Covenant Retreat, outlined on Handout 10-3. Explain each step in the process, and follow the instructions below for leading the group deeper into Envisioning the Future.

1) Why We Are Here

Explain that it is important to begin the process by emphasizing the importance of vision, mission, mission objectives, and covenant. Share the definitions of each so that they are clear.

2) Envisioning the Future

Distribute Handout 10-2, Envisioning the Future, and tell participants to put it aside for now. Lead the group in the following guided meditation, substituting the name and appropriate pronouns for the current UUA president.

Invite participants to relax, breathe deeply, close their eyes or keep them slightly open and focused on the floor or the chalice. Read the following slowly, giving participants time to breathe and reflect:

> *Imagine that it is June and you are all attending the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). You are in a very large convention center room filled with 4,000 Unitarian Universalists of all ages...*

The president of the UUA, [insert name], is speaking. You are all on stage behind the president. The president is giving national recognition for the youth ministry at your congregation...

The president is telling Unitarian Universalists from all over the continent what makes your youth ministry so successful...

Listen closely. What is the president saying?

What adjectives does the president use to describe the qualities of youth activities here?

What actions have occurred that make you proud to be representing your congregation?

What values are expressed in your congregation's youth ministry make it extraordinary?

How does it feel to be an exemplary organization that others admire?

What images, thoughts, feeling, or words occur to you as you imagine this scene?

Gently bring your consciousness back to this time, this space, this room with these people, I invite you to use the handout to write down some of the key words and images that came to you during this meditation. You do not need to write sentences, or paragraphs, just words, pictures, ideas, and notes to help you recall the images from each set of questions. Use verbs, adjectives, and values to describe your thoughts. You have five minutes to collect your thoughts and make notes on your handout. When you are done, please maintain a quiet space until everyone is finished...

When the time for journaling has ended, ask participants to turn to someone next to them, and share their reflections. Ask each pair to write down no more than six key words (verbs, nouns, adjectives, and values) on post-it notes. After three to five minutes, invite each pair to share their key words and post them on a sheet of newsprint. As the pairs share their words, identify patterns and group the post-it notes.

Explain that envisioning the future is the basis for developing mission and covenant. There are multiple resources available to help congregations structure their Vision, Mission, and Covenant retreats – direct them to the list at the bottom of Handout 10-3.

Now outline the remaining steps.

3) Creating a Mission Statement for the Congregation's Youth Ministry

The mission statement answers the question "Why do we do what we do and what difference does it make?" After grouping key words in the last step, the process now moves into a series of small and large group mission-crafting efforts, in which participants develop, combine, and refine their statements. This can be a long process, but a skilled leader can find ways to capture the feelings of the group, and help them think outside the box, so they can conclude with a lot of power, excitement, and consensus.

4) Developing Mission Objectives

To make a mission statement truly effective and real, the participants now need to set some goals for the year. Mission objectives, or goals, are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, and Time-bound. They are things like "# participants in a youth worship service" or "# social justice projects." They are NOT things like "a more nurturing and loving youth group."

5) Next Steps

Now that the participants have created a mission statement and identified mission objectives for the next year, next they should discuss next steps. How will they share the vision/mission/objectives with the congregation and leadership? What are the needs? Who are the allies, and what are the resources? They should make plans to develop an implementation process, and to evaluate progress regularly.

6) Covenanting Together

Participants will probably be most familiar with creating covenants since this is a common practice within UU communities. Explain that now that they have developed a vision and mission, it is important to consider how they will be with each other and affirm their commitment to fulfilling the goals they established for themselves. Refer participants back to the definition of covenant on Handout 10-1.

7) Closing Circle

The retreat should close with a ritual, which could include participants answering the following questions:

- What have we done today? (concrete, tangible, descriptive)

- What have you learned? (something you didn't know when we started)

- What hope do you have for the future?

- What action are you committed to as we leave?

Conclude this session by reminding participants that there are multiple resources and models available to help congregations structure their Vision, Mission, and Covenant retreats – direct them to the list at the bottom of Handout 10-3.

E-LEARNING ADAPTATION

Leaders could lead the group in the guided meditation, if using webinar. If using Blackboard/Moodle-type forum, give the participants the questions ahead of time to think about and post their responses to.

Handout 10-1: Vision, Mission, and Covenant

ATTRIBUTION

Definitions and sample vision and covenant drawn from "Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together" in *The Congregational Handbook: How to Develop a Healthy and Vital Unitarian Universalist Congregation* (UUA, 2005).

Sample mission and mission objectives drawn from "Mission Workshop for an Empowered Youth Group" by Jan Taddeo (2006); used with permission.

TEXT

Developing a vision, mission, mission objectives, and covenant helps us reflect and articulate who we are as religious people and religious communities. These statements should reflect who we are as Unitarian Universalists. Youth ministry guiding statements should also relate to the guiding statements for the congregation as a whole.

The mission grows directly out of the vision, and the vision is built upon the shared values, concerns, and principles that are articulated in the covenant.

Vision: A carefully defined picture of where the youth ministry/program wants to be in five or more years. It is a dream of what the youth ministry/program can become.

Sample Vision: Together in beloved community, we will build a world without borders where all are valued and supported as they navigate their individual religious journeys. (Source Unknown)

Mission: A concise statement of what the youth ministry/program wants to be known for, or known as, within the wider congregation and world; what the youth ministry/program wants to mean to the community.

Sample Mission: The mission of the RRUCYRUU is to empower youth to be life-long Unitarian Universalist leaders unified by friendship, trust and common values, through transformative social action and enticing group events that spawn deeper sharing.

Mission Objectives: Specific, measurable strategies for implementing and living out the mission. Should be SMART: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time bound.

Sample Mission Objectives:

- Leadership: Restructure the Youth Ministry Committee to operate more efficiently.
- Congregational Activities: Conduct at least four intergenerational events with the congregation.
- Social Justice: Raise at least $6,000 for social justice causes to be determined by the entire group at the September youth retreat.
- Denominational Connections: Be involved in District and Continental youth events including Cons, General Assembly, and the United Nations Spring Conference.
- Community Building, Learning, & Spirituality: Experience escalating participation in RRUCYRUU: Social Justice Saturdays, Retreats, Sunday morning youth group, and other events.

Covenant: A statement of how members of the youth ministry/program will be with, and will behave toward, one another, as well as what is promised or vowed to one another and to the youth ministry/program as a whole.

Sample Covenant: We covenant to build a community that challenges us to grow and empowers us to hold faithful to the truth within ourselves, living out the profound connections that bind each of us and all beings together. We will be generous with our gifts and open in hearts and minds, seeking to recognize and accept each other in all our complexity and diversity. (Working Group Covenant C, Second Unitarian Universalist Church, Chicago, IL)

Handout 10-2: Envisioning the Future

ATTRIBUTION

From "Mission Workshop for an Empowered Youth Group" by Jan Taddeo (2006); used with permission.

INSTRUCTIONS

Jot down some key words and images that came to you during the guided meditation. You do not need to write sentences, just words to help you recall the images from each question.

TEXT

Imagine that it is June and you are all attending the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). You are in a very large convention center room filled with 4,000 Unitarian Universalists of all ages...

The president of the UUA is speaking. You are all on stage behind the president. The president is giving national recognition for the youth ministry at your congregation...

The president is telling Unitarian Universalists from all over the continent what makes your youth ministry so successful...

Listen closely. What is the president saying?

What adjectives does the president use to describe the qualities of youth activities here?

What actions have occurred that make you proud to be representing your congregation?

What values are expressed in your congregation's youth ministry that makes it extraordinary?

How does it feel to be an exemplary organization that others admire?

What images, thoughts, feeling, or words occur to you as you imagine this scene?

Handout 10-3: Vision, Mission, and Covenant Retreat

ATTRIBUTION

Outline based on "Mission Workshop for an Empowered Youth Group" by Jan Taddeo (2006); used with permission.

TEXT

Time:

4-5 hours

Who:

A multigenerational group of youth, advisors, parents, religious educators, ministers, leaders

OR

Youth group and adult advisors

Sample Agenda:

- Opening - chalice lighting and words
- Introductions
- Process Agreement - what we can expect from one another to make this work
- Why We Are Here - the importance of vision, mission, and covenant
- Envisioning the Future
- Creating a Mission Statement
- Developing Mission Objectives
- Next Steps
    - Discuss how to share the vision/mission/objectives with the congregation and leadership
    - Identify needs, allies, and resources
    - Develop an implementation plan
    - Evaluate progress regularly
- Covenanting Together
- Closing Circle
    - What have we done today? (concrete, tangible, descriptive)
    - What have you learned? (something you didn't know when we started)

- What hope do you have for the future?
- What action are you committed to as we leave?

Resources:

Jan Taddeo. "Mission Workshop for an Empowered Youth Group." (2006)

Unitarian Universalist Association. "Process Guide for Congregational
Conversations on Youth Ministry." (2006) Available on the UUA website
(www.uua.org).

Unitarian Universalist Association. "Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a
Future Together." (2005) Available on the UUA website (www.uua.org).

The activities in the Youth Ministry Renaissance Module are a "hybrid" of these three resources.
You may draw from any of these three to craft a vision, mission, and covenant building process
that fits your congregation.

Leader Resource 10-1: Vision, Mission, and Covenant Diagram

ATTRIBUTION

Adapted from diagram in UUA Growth Services: "[Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together](http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/visionmissioncovenant.pdf)" (2005);

http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/visionmissioncovenant.pdf

INSTRUCTIONS

Draw this diagram on newsprint before Session 10, Activity 1. If possible, draw the circles in different colors.

TEXT

Leader Resource 10-2: Sample Vision, Mission, and Covenant

ATTRIBUTION

Sample vision and covenant drawn from "Vision, Mission, and Covenant: Creating a Future Together" (UUA, 2005)

Sample mission and mission objectives drawn from "Mission Workshop for an Empowered Youth Group" by Jan Taddeo (2005); used with permission.

INSTRUCTIONS

Cut apart the statements below to distribute to participants. The answer key is as follows:

1) Vision

2) Mission

3) Mission Objectives

4) Covenant

5) Vision

6) Mission

7) Mission Objectives

8) Covenant

TEXT

1) Together in beloved community, we will build a world without borders where all are valued and supported as they navigate their individual religious journeys. (Source Unknown)

2) The mission of the RRUCYRUU is to empower youth to be life-long Unitarian Universalist leaders unified by friendship, trust and common values, through transformative social action and enticing group events that spawn deeper sharing. (River Road Unitarian Church Youth Group)

3) Leadership: Restructure the Youth Ministry Committee to operate more efficiently.
Congregational Activities: Conduct at least four intergenerational events with the congregation.
Social Justice: Raise at least $6,000 for social justice causes to be determined by the entire group at the September youth retreat.
Denominational Connections: Be involved in District and Continental youth events including Cons, General Assembly, and the United Nations Spring Conference.

Community Building, Learning, & Spirituality: Experience escalating participation in RRUCYRUU: Social Justice Saturdays, Retreats, Sunday morning youth group, and other events.
(River Road Unitarian Church Youth Group)

4) We covenant to build a community that challenges us to grow and empowers us to hold faithful to the truth within ourselves, living out the profound connections that bind each of us and all beings together. We will be generous with our gifts and open in hearts and minds, seeking to recognize and accept each other in all our complexity and diversity. (Working Group Covenant C, Second Unitarian Universalist Church, Chicago, IL)

5) We envision members and friends of First Church as pilgrims traveling on life's journey together - creating a shared ministry through which we can grow our souls in ways truthful to ourselves, caring of others, and sustaining the planet. (First UU Church of San Diego, San Diego, CA)

6) The Youth Group at UUCWV is a welcoming and growing group of friends guided by our UU Principles to develop social responsibility and leadership with the help of great mentor involvement in an active and fun environment. (UU Church of Wyoming Valley Youth Group)

7) To have three or more youth group members participate in a gathering with other district youth.
To increase the number of youth participating in the youth group from 3 to 5.
To raise $500 for charities.
To plan and carry out three outdoor activities.
(UU Church of Wyoming Valley Youth Group)

8) We will be kind to each other, treat people fairly and with respect. That's how we want people to treat us, no matter how old we are. (Children's Covenant, Unitarian Society of Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA)

Reader 10-1: Mission Workshop for an Empowered Congregational Youth Group

ATTRIBUTION

By Jan Taddeo (2006); used with permission.

OVERVIEW

This is a guide for creating an energizing time of visioning, goal setting, and covenanting for a congregational youth group.

The minimum time to complete the mission statement and create three to five specific, measurable, and achievable objectives is three hours. Larger groups may need four or five hours.

Youth really appreciate this process and the work they do in this workshop. They feel great about what the group is able to create and they come out of the workshop feeling empowered and energized. Don't underestimate their capacity to take this work seriously, in a fun way.

Invite the youth and advisors to schedule this workshop outside their normal meeting time so it feels special. Combine it with a pizza party, an overnight, or some other fun event so it feels celebratory and fun.

SUPPLIES
- Chalice, candle, and matches
- Reading for opening circle
- Easel
- Flipchart – prepare pages in advance. Be sure to leave at least one blank sheet between each prepared page. See Facilitator Resource: Flipcharts.
- One flipchart page with your congregation's mission statement
- Flipchart markers
- Tape
- Participant journals – one for each participant

- Pens or pencils – one for each participant

- Sticky notes – about 1/3 of a pad for each participant

- Sharpies – one for each participant

- Sticker dots – five per participant

- Refreshments – snacks and drinks

SECTION 1: GENERATING IDEAS

Opening Circle (20 minutes)

Light the chalice and share opening words or a short reading.

Share introductions around the circle. Invite each participant to share their name, their best memory related to their congregation, and their favorite cartoon character (including why it's their favorite).

Review Agenda (5 minutes)

Refer to Flipchart 1, which you prepared prior to the workshop. Read through the agenda so everyone is clear about the plan.

Process Agreement (5 minutes)

Explain that the process agreement is a list of what we can expect from one another during the workshop to make it a positive and productive experience. Present the process agreement on Flipchart 2, and ask if anyone has questions or ideas to add.

Why Are We Here? (5 minutes)

Referring to Flipchart 3, review why doing this workshop is worth their time and energy. This leads into the first stage of the process.

Guided Meditation (15 minutes)

This brings the group into a quiet space and helps everyone focus. It is also the foundation for creating the mission statement and objectives. Invite participants to relax, breathe deeply, close their eyes or keep them slightly open and focused on the floor or the chalice. Read the script slowly, giving participants time to breathe and reflect:

Imagine that it is June and you are all attending the General Assembly of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). You are in a very large convention center room filled with 4,000 Unitarian Universalists of all ages...

The president of the UUA, [insert name], is speaking. You are all on stage behind the president. The president is giving national recognition for the youth ministry at your congregation...

The president is telling Unitarian Universalists from all over the continent what makes your youth ministry so successful...

Listen closely. What is the president saying?

What adjectives does the president use to describe the qualities of youth activities here?

What actions have occurred that make you proud to be representing your congregation?

What values are expressed in your congregation's youth ministry that make it extraordinary?

How does it feel to be an exemplary organization that others admire?

What images, thoughts, feelings, or words occur to you as you imagine this scene?

Personal Reflection and Journaling (10-15 minutes)

Invite participants to bring their consciousness back to this time, this space, this room with these people. Distribute the Participant Journals, and ask them to jot down some of the key words and images that came to them during the meditation. Explain that they do not need to write sentences or paragraphs, just words, pictures, ideas, and notes to help them recall the images from each set of questions. Use verbs, adjectives, and values to describe thoughts. Tell the group they will have 10 minutes to collect their thoughts and make notes in their journals. Encourage them to maintain a quiet space until everyone is finished.

Pair Sharing (15 minutes)

Pair participants to share their personal reflections. Pair people who may not naturally choose to be together. Ask the pairs to write on sticky notes the key words from their reflections. The words should be verbs, nouns, adjectives, and values. They should write no more than six notes per pair.

Post Notes (15 minutes)

Ask each pair to give you their sticky notes following these steps:
1. Two most important
2. One that is most different from the others that were posted
3. One that hasn't been posted yet
4. The last two.

As they give you the notes, put them on a blank flipchart page or on the wall. Start looking for patterns and grouping like items. Ask for more information about notes that are unclear or might have several meanings. Engage the group in the process of looking for patterns and grouping them. Look for a value that might fit in the middle as an overarching theme such as love, friendship, justice, caring, or freedom.

When all of the notes are grouped, ask if there is anything missing.

PART II: CREATING THE MISSION STATEMENT

What is a Mission Statement? (5-10 minutes)

Using Flipchart 4, review the elements of mission.

      Purpose: What needs do you meet?

      Business: What do you do to meet those needs?

      Values: What values guide your action?

Share some statements from other organizations, written on Flipchart 5. Then share the mission statement from your congregation. This will help them see they are part of a larger whole. Encourage them to consider how the youth group's mission is a subset of the mission of the congregation.

Small Group Mission Statement Development (20 minutes)

Break into groups of three or four. Ask each group to create a draft mission statement using as their inspiration the words and phrases on the sticky notes, conversations during the process, their personal notes, and the sample statements. Give each group a sheet of flipchart paper on which to write their statements.

Share Small Group Mission Statements (10 minutes)
Ask each group to read their statements to the larger group. Start listening for "energy" around certain words and phrases.

Combining the Statements (20 minutes)
Once all the groups have shared, ask each group to identify words and phrases from the other group statements that appeal to them. Circle these words and phrases as they are identified.

Working with a blank flipchart sheet, start crafting a combined statement using the words and phrases the participants like. This is still a very rough draft, with lots of crossing out and inserting words and phrases.

Look for creative ways to combine elements or offer new phrases and words that might capture the feelings of the group.

In creating the final statement, think outside the box of what the small groups first created and guide them toward something new.

When they have a final statement you will feel it. Using a blank sheet of paper, write the mission statement big and bold. Ask one of the youth to stand up and read it to the group with power and excitement. If they don't cheer and make lots of noise, it isn't done yet. Keep working it until the energy is clearly positive and enthusiastic.

PART III: DEVELOPING MISSION OBJECTIVES

Mission Objectives: Overview (5 minutes)
Explain to the group that the mission statement will have energy for three or four years. They may choose to review it each year to make sure it still feels good. But to make the mission statement truly effective and real, they need to set some goals for the year.

Refer to Flipchart 6, and explain that goals or objectives are: specific, achievable, and measurable. Read aloud the examples of what mission objectives are NOT, and what they are.

Mission Objective Process – Individual (5-10 minutes)
Ask each person to write five possible objectives or goals, one each per sticky note. When they are done, tell them to throw away two of them.

Mission Objective Process – Small Groups (10-15 minutes)
Have participants form groups of three or four and invite participants to share their ideas in their group. Ask the groups to come up with no more than five items from the group. Have them write each one on a sticky note.

Mission Objective Process – Whole Group (15-20 minutes)
Ask each group to share an objective, one at a time. Stick the notes on a blank sheet or on the wall and start grouping similar ideas together.

The task now is to combine or eliminate items to form no more than five objectives for the year. There may be items that are too specific and could be used as an activity within an objective. If it is not possible to combine them or to eliminate any, then the group should vote.

Dot Voting: Give each person five sticker dots and ask them to vote for objectives.

Review Next Steps (10-15 minutes)
Refer to Flipchart 7.

Discuss with the group how they might share the mission statement and objectives with the congregation, the leadership, and others who might be allies in helping them to accomplish their objectives.

Encourage them to post their mission statement and objectives in a prominent space in their meeting room as a point of focus during the year.

As soon as possible, create a covenant together so they can affirm their commitment to fulfilling the goals they have established for themselves.

Work out an implementation plan over the next few weeks, either as a group or with the Youth Ministry Committee/Youth Adult Committee. Consider:

- What activities will achieve these objectives?
- Who will be responsible for managing these activities?
- How will the group evaluate their progress during the year?

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

Use the four questions on Flipchart 8 to process the workshop. For the first two questions, you may let people answer as moved. Then for the last two questions, you might go around the circle and invite each person to respond or pass. If pressed for time, omit questions 1 and 3.

"What have we done today?" is asking for very concrete descriptions of what happened: we ate pizza, we created a mission statement, we stayed in this room for 3 hours, etc.

"What have you learned?" asks what do you know now that you didn't know when we started: Joe likes to watch The Simpsons; Sarah really cares about homelessness; Sam volunteers every week at the soup kitchen, etc.

"What hope do you have for the future?" asks where you hope this work we have done today will take us: We'll earn an award, we'll accomplish all our objectives, we'll be more integrated in the congregation, we'll have more fun this year, etc.

"What action are you committed to as we leave?" asks for individual commitments to make real the work done this day: I will call the church office to schedule a car wash; I will write an article for the church newsletter; I will go to the next Board meeting and present our mission statement and objectives, etc.

Facilitator Resource: Flipcharts

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare these flipcharts before the workshop. Be sure to leave at least one blank sheet between each prepared page.

FLIPCHART 1TITLE: Workshop Outline

Spiritual Opening

Introductions

Process Agreement

Envisioning the Future

Creating a Mission Statement

Developing Mission Objectives

Next Steps

Closing Circle

FLIPCHART 2TITLE: Process Agreement

- All ideas and perspectives are welcome

- Listen attentively and respectfully

- Respect our time together

- Trust the process

- Practice self-care

- Each person is responsible for success of the workshop

FLIPCHART 3TITLE: Envisioning the Future – Why Are We Here?

Mission can…

- Focus energy and activities

- Express the group's relationship with the congregation

- Articulate the group's purpose

- Develop clear objectives

- Establish expectations

- Identify accountabilities

FLIPCHART 4 TITLE: Creating a Mission Statement

Why do we do what we do and what difference does it make?

- Purpose: What are the opportunities or needs that we exist to address?

- Business: What are we doing to address those needs?

- Values: What principles or beliefs guide our work?

FLIPCHART 5

UU Congregation of Frederick: The UUCF YRUU is a balanced religious community committed to creating a better world. Through love, respect and fun we learn and grow together.

UU Church of Cherry Hill: The UUCCH youth group mission is to empower youth to create a welcoming space and build friendships through community activism, learning together, and becoming moral, compassionate people who model UU principles.

River Road Unitarian Church: The mission of the RRUCYRUU is to empower youth to be lifelong Unitarian Universalist leaders unified by friendship, trust and common values, through transformative social action and enticing group events that spawn deeper sharing.

FLIPCHART 6 TITLE: Developing Mission Objectives

- Specific

- Achievable

- Measurable

FOCUS ON THE MISSION

NO: Many happy helpful youth.

YES:

1. # community service hours

2. youth participate in # Sunday services

3. # youth in _____ program

4. # visitors to youth group events

FLIPCHART 7 TITLE: Next Steps

Ownership:

- Share the mission statement and mission objectives with other youth, congregational leadership, and congregation

- Post the mission and objectives in a prominent place where youth meet regularly

Create a Covenant:

- Expectations for self

- Expectations of others

- Consensus agreement

Implementation:

- Identify needs, allies, resources

- Develop strategies

- Implement strategic plans

- Evaluate progress regularly

FLIPCHART 8TITLE: Closing Circle

- What have we done today? (concrete, tangible, descriptive)

- What have you learned? (something you didn't know when we started)

- What hope do you have for the future?

- What action are you committed to as we leave?

Youth Group Mission Workshop Participant Journal

Name: _____

The president of the UUA is telling Unitarian Universalists from all over the continent what makes your youth ministry so successful. What is the president saying about you that sounds good?

What adjectives does the president use to describe the qualities of youth activities here?

What actions have occurred that make you proud to be representing your congregation?

What values are expressed in your congregation's youth ministry that make it extraordinary?

How does it feel to be an exemplary organization that others admire?

What images, thoughts, feeling, or words occur to you as you imagine this scene?

Sample Youth Group Mission Statements
& Mission Objectives

UU CHURCH OF CHERRY HILL

The UUCCH youth group mission is to empower youth to create a welcoming space and build friendships through community activism, learning together, and becoming moral, compassionate people who model UU principles. January 8, 2005

JPD YOUTH STEERING COMMITTEE

The mission of the Joseph Priestley District Youth Steering Committee (JPD-YSC) is to empower youth to:

- develop vibrant local youth groups,
- facilitate spiritual growth, and
- be active Unitarian Universalist leaders through
- stellar youth conferences,
- effective outreach, and
- unified District experiences that embrace multiple communities with respect and compassion.

2005-2006 Mission Objectives

- 50% increase in Con attendance with emphasis on under-represented areas of the JPD
- One HUGE JPD Youth Social Justice event and three simultaneous local/cluster events
- Communications that effectively express our UU values/principles AND provide timely, accurate information about JPD youth activities
- 20 youth participate in the JPD Annual Spring Conference Bridging program in April 2006
- JPD Youth Steering Committee conducts 5 Caravans by SpringCon 2006.

RIVER ROAD UNITARIAN CHURCH

The mission of the RRUCYRUU is to empower youth to be life-long Unitarian Universalist leaders unified by friendship, trust and common values, through transformative social action and enticing group events that spawn deeper sharing. June 12, 2005

The mission objectives for the year are:

- Leadership: Restructure the Youth Ministry Committee to operate more efficiently. Congregational Activities: Conduct at least four intergenerational events with the congregation

- Social Justice: Raise at least $6,000 for social justice causes to be determined by the entire group at the September youth retreat

- Denominational Connections: Be involved in District and Continental youth events including Cons, General Assembly and United Nations Spring Conference

- Community Building, Learning, & Spirituality: Experience escalating participation in RRUCYRUU: Social Justice Saturdays, Retreats, Sunday morning youth group, and other events.

JPD UU YOUNG ADULT NETWORK STEERING COMMITTEE

The Joseph Priestley District UU Young Adult Network Steering Committee (JPD-UUYANSC) affirms and promotes welcoming, diverse and connected young adult faith communities. We support age-centered programs through increased visibility and effective use of resources. We are guided by love, justice, respect and our UU principles as we nurture spiritual homes for young adults. August 27, 2005

UUYANSC 2005-2006 Mission Objectives

- Have 30 Young Adults participate in Young Adult Leadership training.

- Retain current Young Adult and Campus Ministry groups and establish five new groups.

- Initiate five new Outreach mechanisms including:
    o UUYAN visits to or contacts with every congregation;
    o UUYAN link on all congregation websites; and,
    o At least one UUYAN article in one newsletter in every congregation.

- Provide at least one affinity gathering for YAs (other than Mayhem).

- Have at least 25 new, diverse Young Adults attend at least one UUYAN event during the year.
- Establish Young Adult programs consistent with JPD-UUY ANSC budget.

WASHINGTON ETHICAL SOCIETY

The Washington Ethical Society Teen Group creates an inclusive, safe haven while having a positive impact on the community and upholding ethical values. January 23, 2006

UU CONGREGATION OF FREDERICK

The UUCF YRUU is a balanced religious community committed to creating a better world. Through love, respect and fun we learn and grow together. September 10, 2006

UU CHURCH OF THE WYOMING VALLEY

The Youth Group at UUCWV is a welcoming and growing group of friends guided by our UU Principles to develop social responsibility and leadership with the help of great mentor involvement in an active and fun environment. Adopted on 10/15/06

UUCWVYG Objectives for 2006-07:

1) To have 3 or more youth group members participate in a gathering with other JPD youth.
2) To increase the number of youth participating in the youth group from 3 to 5.
3) To raise $500 for charities.
4) To plan and carry out 3 outdoor activities.

UUCWVYG Next Steps:

To form a Youth Ministry Committee with adults who might be allies in helping to accomplish these objectives. To develop an implementation plan with activities that will meet the objectives. To determine who will be responsible for managing these activities. To evaluate progress during the year.

SESSION 11: Youth Ministry Action Plan (60 minutes)

GOALS

This session will:

- Prepare participants to take what they have learned back to their congregations
- Return to the participants' philosophies of youth ministry, and incorporate insights and learnings from this training.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Be able to articulate their youth ministry philosophy
- Develop an action plan for their congregation that incorporates what they have learned in the training.

ACTIVITY 1: Youth Ministry Philosophy Statements Revisited (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statements from Session 3
- Notepad and pen
- Copies of Handout 11-1, Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statement and Action Plan, for all participants

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Write the two reflection questions below on newsprint.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Tell participants that they will spend some time reflecting on what they have learned, how it changes how they think about youth ministry, and what they will do moving forward to

strengthen youth ministry in their congregations. Say that they will have 15 minutes to review and reflect on their youth ministry philosophy statements using the following reflection questions:

- What part of my personal philosophy of youth ministry was strengthened during this training?
- What part of my personal philosophy of youth ministry has been changed by this training?

Distribute Handout 11-1, Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statement and Action Plan. Encourage participants to use this time to make any changes they would like to make to their philosophy statements, and then transcribe their statements onto Handout 11-1.

ACTIVITY 2: Creating an Action Plan (45 minutes)

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY
After participants reflect on their philosophy statements, ask them to pair up with someone in the group. Ask the pair ask to take 15 minutes to do three things:

1) Share their youth ministry philosophy statement with their partner
2) Discuss with their partner what they learned over the course of this module
3) Identify up to three actions they would like to take in their congregation and write these actions on Handout 11-1, Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statement and Action Plan.

Invite them to take the next 15 minutes to fill out the rest of Handout 11-1, Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statement and Action Plan. What steps do they need to take to accomplish each action? What resources will they need?
Who will be their allies? When will they accomplish these steps?

After 15 minutes, regather the large group and invite participants to share their philosophy and action plan. If there is time after everyone has shared, lead a short discussion guided by the following questions:

- What are the similarities and differences among the action plans?
- What good ideas did you get from others to add to your own plans?

Handout 11-1: Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy and Action Plan

Personal Youth Ministry Philosophy Statement:			
Actions	**Steps**	**Resources / Allies**	**Timeframe**
1.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
2.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
3.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		

SESSION 12: Closing (30 minutes)

GOALS

This workshop will:

- Address any remaining questions that participants have
- Direct participants to additional resources on youth ministry
- Give participants an opportunity to review module expectations and evaluate the training
- Synthesize and integrate participants' learning in this module.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Participants will:

- Feel a sense of confidence, collegiality, and support
- Possess renewed commitment and energy to bring back to their congregations.

ACTIVITY 1: Wrapping Up (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Blank paper
- Pens/pencils

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Look at the questions and topics on the bike rack/parking lot, and think about how you will respond to them. If some have already been addressed, put those aside. Prepare your responses so that the exercise will take 10 minutes or fewer.
- If the worship/centering table has been moved to the side, move it back into the center so participants can reclaim their joys and questions.

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

This activity concludes the module by revisiting the questions shared in the gathering worship, and addressing remaining questions in the bike rack/parking lot.

Read or summarize the following:

> Over the course of this module we have explored numerous topics related to ministry with youth. Yet it is impossible to delve into *all* of the issues and topics one might encounter in ministry with youth. The bike rack/parking lot captured questions and issues which we have not yet addressed.

Take 10 minutes to address unanswered questions. You may need to refer participants to resources that they can explore on their own. In addition, encourage them to use the resources included in this module's Reader.

Invite participants to find the index cards they placed on the worship table during the gathering worship.

Read or summarize the following:

> During this module, our joys and questions related to youth ministry have been with us in this space. Hopefully, you have been reminded of additional joys of working with youth and engaging with your colleagues. Some of your questions may have been answered, but new questions may have been born.

Distribute blank paper and pens/pencils, and give participants three minutes to reflect and write new questions they have. After three minutes, invite them to turn to someone next to them, so that each person can share their new or lingering questions and discuss how they plan to continue exploring and learning when they go home.

Remind participants that module evaluations should be completed online as soon as possible after the module, but no later than one week. No credit is given for the module without an evaluation. Participants will receive their certificates via email from the Renaissance Office. Leader and Leader-in-Training evaluations are also online and should be completed within one week.

ACTIVITY 2: Closing Worship (15 minutes)

MATERIALS FOR ACTIVITY

- Ball of yarn
- Scissors
- *Singing the Living Tradition*, one copy for every two participants

PREPARATION FOR ACTIVITY

- Familiarize yourself with Hymn 361, "Enter, Rejoice, and Come In" in *Singing the Living Tradition*, so you can teach it to participants without using the hymnbook. After they learn the first verse, just call out the next verse, e.g., "Open your ears to the song."

DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITY

Teach the participants Hymn 361, "Enter Rejoice and Come In" from *Singing the Living Tradition*. Teach the first verse, and then call out the words of the next verse each time you finish singing the refrain. Encourage a *joyful* spirit of singing by clapping, tapping your feet, or dancing.

Light the chalice (if not already lit) and share these words by John W. Brigham from *Singing the Living Tradition*:

Go your ways,
knowing not the answers to all things,
yet seeking always the answer
to one more thing than you know.

Invite everyone to gather in a circle, as close together as possible, and explain that this ritual using a ball of yarn will show the connections between each of us. Wrap the yarn a few times around your wrist, and share a piece of your action plan that you are most excited about or that you will need the most support to achieve. Then throw the yarn to someone across the circle. This will continue - they will wrap it around their wrist, share a piece of their action plan, and then throw it to a person across the circle.

Once everyone has spoken, say:" We have all made commitments, and we are all connected in this web of youth ministry. With these commitments and connections, may we support each other in this incredibly important and sacred ministry with youth."

Pass around the scissors so that each person can cut the yarn, keeping the part wrapped around their wrist as a reminder of this web when they go their separate ways. Leave the web on the floor for the remainder of the worship.

Invite participants to rise in body or in spirit, and sing Hymn 318, "We Would Be One" from *Singing the Living Tradition*. Before you begin the song, share that this song has roots in the Unitarian Universalist youth movement. It was written by Rev. Samuel Anthony Wright for Unitarian and Universalist youth at their Continental Convention of 1953-1954. At this conference they merged to form the Liberal Religious Youth, setting a model for the Unitarian Universalist denominational consolidation in 1961. We sing "We Would Be One" to remember and honor the visionary leadership that youth have brought and continue to bring to our faith community.

Close with these words by Rev. Wayne Arnason from *Singing the Living Tradition*:
Take courage friends.
The way is often hard, the path is never clear,
and the stakes are very high.
Take courage.
For deep down, there is another truth:
you are not alone.

Extinguish the chalice.

Handout 12-1: Personal Renaissance Module Record

TEXT

This form is for you to keep. If you enter each module as you take it, you will have a record of your module participation. If you cannot remember all the relevant information about past modules, you may ask Renaissance staff at the UUA to see if it is on file there.

Module	Date	Location	Leaders
Administration	_____	_____	_____
Curriculum	_____	_____	_____
History	_____	_____	_____
Identity	_____	_____	_____
Multicultural RE	_____	_____	_____
Philosophy	_____	_____	_____
Teacher Dev	_____	_____	_____
Youth	_____	_____	_____
Worship	_____	_____	_____

Additional Resources: Tapestry of Faith Programs for Youth

Youth (Junior High and High School)

A Chorus of Faiths
By Renee Ruchotzke and Hannah McConnaughay; 8 workshops
Part of a joint venture of the UUA and the Interfaith Youth Core (founded by Eboo Patel) and funded by the Shelter Rock congregation, these sessions develop UU youth as interfaith leaders. Youth explore values of service to our community and religious pluralism through stories from our Sources and personal storytelling, and coordinate an interfaith service.

Exploring Our Values through Poetry (high school)
By Karen Harris; 15 workshops
Youth engage with and respond to poems concerned with elements of the spiritual life: acute observation, conscious; inquiry, the unveiling of reality, hope and hopelessness, the afterlife, and the tenderness of the human condition.

Families (junior high or high school)
By Helen Bishop, Susan Grider and Tracey Hurd; 12 workshops
Family diversity is the norm. This project gives youth a leadership role in creating a multigenerational look at the congregation's families through photography and oral testimony. Youth also explore the meaning of family in their lives.

Gather the Spirit (multigenerational)
By Richard S. Kimball and Christine T. Rafal; 8 sessions
With a focus on water, explores stewardship in many forms: donating money to causes we care about; volunteering; helping to meet the needs of others and working to protect our shared local and global community resources.

Heeding the Call: Qualities of a Justicemaker (junior high)
By Nicole Bowmer and Jodi Tharan; 12 workshops
Youth are encouraged to view themselves as agents of change in the world as they develop qualities crucial to justice work.

A Place of Wholeness (high school)
By Beth Dana and Jesse Jaeger; 12 workshops
"We are part of this living tradition. Through it we become whole, and through us it becomes whole." This program nurtures youth as inheritors and co-creators of our Unitarian Universalist faith tradition and supports them to live their faith with integrity.

Sharing the Journey: Small Group Ministry with Youth
By Jessica York and Helen Zidowecki
Many UU congregations have embraced small group ministry, or covenant groups, for adults. Yet congregations are only beginning to use small group ministry with youth. This resource has guidance and encouragement for congregations seeking new ways to engage Unitarian Universalist youth.

Resources

Tapestry of Faith also includes *The Coming of Age Handbook*, the Toolkit book series to support effective leadership of faith development programs, and the UUA series of Our Whole Lives sexuality education programs, currently being updated—all available from the UUA Bookstore.

www.uua.org/tapestryoffaith