ADMINISTRATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Leader's Guide

THE RENAISSANCE PROGRAM
Unitarian Universalist Association

2004

Administration Module
Table of Contents

APPENDIX

THE RENAISSANCE PROGRAM CORE MATERIAL

The Renaissance Program Overview

The Renaissance Program is a major component of Unitarian Universalist religious education leadership development and the Religious Education Credentialing Program of the Unitarian Universalist Association. Each 15-hour module provides basic education in a specific area for religious educators in local congregations and resources for continuing development. Modules focus on religious education for all ages, although some may be more geared to a specific age group (example: Ministry With Youth). The modules may be taken in any order:

- Administration of Religious Education Programs
- Curriculum Planning in the Local Congregation
- Developing a Philosophy of Religious Education
- Ministry With Youth
- Teacher Development
- Unitarian Universalist Identity
- Unitarian Universalist History
- Worship for All Ages
- Multicultural Religious Education

Participation. Modules can accommodate between 12 and 20 participants. The target audience for Renaissance Program modules includes Directors of Religious Education, Religious Education Committee Chairpersons, ministers who are responsible for overseeing Religious Education programs, and theological students preparing for Unitarian Universalist ministry. Participation in the entire module is required for credit to be received. Each module is an unfolding process. Group dynamics and learning are enhanced when everyone is present for all sessions. The head leader does have discretion to allow credit, whether through asking for makeup “homework” to be done, or by other means, but only when a minimal amount of the time has been missed and the part that has been missed is amenable to alternate arrangements.

Modules are usually offered on weekends, 2-3 day seesion, or as part of weeklong conferences. Each setting has different characteristics. Weekend modules are intense with a definite momentum; weeklong modules allow more time between sessions, but scheduling must consider other conference activities. Neither is better or worse than the other, but the settings are different.

Recognition. When a participant has completed five modules, or a minimum of 75 hours of Renaissance training, the Renaissance Program Office will send a Letter of Recognition of the time that has been given in continuing education.

The Renaissance Program Office maintains a record of participant attendance at a module based on the returned module evaluation forms. It is important that each participant complete and return an evaluation.

Scholarships. It is strongly recommended that congregations give financial sponsorship to a religious educator who is attending on their behalf. Some scholarship help is available from the Unitarian Universalist Association through the Beatley and Earle endowment funds, whose interest is annually available in modest amounts for religious education grants to individuals. This and other options are available through the UUA Religious Education Credentialing Office in the Ministry and Professional Leadership Staff Group. Some District Religious Education Committees have funds available for Renaissance Program scholarships. Summer conferences may offer financial assistance.

Resource: For more information on Renaissance Program modules, including the Planning Guide and Request Form, see the web page at http://www25.uua.org/re/landscp/renaissance.html

Renaissance Leadership

The Rev. Norma Veridan

People come to the Renaissance Program for reasons and with a variety of experiences in religious education in general and worship in particular. It is important for leaders to recognize that no one module and no two leaders can meet all the needs and interests of all participants. It is also important for the leaders to keep in mind the limitations of the module and the clearly stated module goals—and to restate the goals as necessary.

Module leaders need to be familiar enough with the material to know if and when a topic will be covered. It is also appropriate to be flexible when both leaders are agreed and open to changing the order or to involving people who have contributions to make, always keeping the goals for the entire group as the measure. It may be helpful to talk about resources with some individuals outside of group time in order to answer their needs that are not covered in this module

This suggests that the leaders need to get to know one another and to be aware of each other's strengths and skills, using resources such as the Myers-Briggs or other such leadership/learning styles inventories. It is important to be intentional about shared leadership, to plan what you will do, demonstrate it, and describe it for the group. Plan carefully to cover other styles of learning and leading if the co-leaders have only a narrow range of styles between them.

Each Renaissance module experience will be different because of the wealth of experience that both participants and leaders bring to it and the richness of who they are. Each experience will be enriched by the careful and thoughtful preparation of the leaders.

Leader Preparation

- Module leaders should be thoroughly familiar with everything in the Leaders' Guide and in the Reader.
- Leaders should be prepared to lead an opening worship service (an example is included, but something personal may be just as good), a closing ceremony, and various worshipful openings to each day's work.
- Leaders should be sensitive to the needs of the group for breaks and should make sure that there are plenty of opportunities for movement—even brief movement, like getting paper and markers for a team task.
  - A good stretch or two minutes of yoga can be a welcome antidote to an overdose of sitting. Physical stretching is also a good complement to the mental stretching the module requires. There may be some participants, however, who are physically or psychologically uncomfortable about body action, so it should be encouraged but not pushed.
  - A non-threatening cooperative game can have all the benefits mentioned above and also be fun.
- Scheduling of working sessions can usually be adjusted somewhat according to the wishes of the participants, special opportunities offered by the location, and the weather. Certain conference schedules pose problems for fitting in the whole 15 hours and will need special arrangements.
- Leaders should take their own favorite resources: books, readings, songs, tapes, tablecloths, chalices, worship props (whatever that might be, from fossils to feathers). They should also try to find out ahead of time what resources the host location has or can get, in any of the categories mentioned, as well as arts and crafts supplies and sources of music.
- The instructions for conducting the module often contain suggested ways of expressing the ideas. These are not meant to "put words into your mouth" but are simply one possible way it could be said. We do not recommend readings these sections verbatim. A "conversation" coming off the printed page can never sound real. Please feel free to use the suggested words or phrases to whatever extent is comfortable for you.

Getting Ready Before the Conference

Read the Materials

Go through the module and the materials in the Reader. Take notes on anything you want to check out with your co-leader or the conference host.

Prior Planning

Renaissance Program modules are offered in a variety of settings and either as part of a weeklong program or as a weekend retreat. Be clear from the beginning with the sponsoring group how this module will fit into their plans and what your time and space needs will be. Providing the sponsoring/hosting group with your schedule ahead of time will allow them to work closely with you to coordinate meals and other plans. If, for any reason, you will be unable to send a letter to participants, ask the volunteer registrar for the module to include items you wish the participants to bring with them in the confirmation letter that he or she is sending out. Please provide such a list of items to the registrar or your contact person as early as you can.

Preliminary Correspondence: It is important that each participant receive a letter before the module from the leaders (see sample, following), saying, “We are looking forward to seeing you.” The letter also gives you an opportunity to request anything you want the participants to do, to prepare, or to bring with them—including things to share. If you get your information to the conference registrar in time, it can go out in the mailing with the Readers. The participants should bring at least the following basic items: Three-ring notebook (to hold notes as well as handouts); paper; pens/pencils; and the Reader they got in advance. There should also be a confirmation letter from the registrar of the module, acknowledging registration and giving details of time, place, overnight accommodations, costs, etc. This letter should also remind registrants that they will need to participate in the full 15 hours and complete the official evaluation form if they would like to receive credit.

The Reader: It is not realistic to assume that the participants will all have read their readers before the module. In general, Leaders’ Guides do not assume prior reading, though in their letter the leaders may encourage participants to read as much as possible and may wish to specify sections of the reader which are particularly important to read beforehand. The guide includes references to the reader for (1) items participants will look at or use during working sessions of the module, (2) items they should read or re-read afterward, now that the participants understand why these readings are recommended.

Sample Welcome Letter From Leaders to Participants

To all the participants in the upcoming Renaissance Program module_______________, beginning on _________ at ____________ in the _____________.

Greetings!

We are looking forward to meeting you soon and to forming some sincere bonds of friendship and commitment, as we share our hopes and experiences in the field of ____________________________.

Our Unitarian Universalist congregations today are in great need of religious leaders who are skilled in the area of ______________________ to help them reach their goals. This tells us that as a religious professional who achieves competence and skill in _____________________, you will play a crucial role in the future of our movement..

If you are a brand-new at _______________, we hope to take you gently by the hand and guide your steps toward confidence and joy in contributing to your congregation in this important expression of our religious faith.

If you are already an experienced leader in the area of ___________, you know that there are no limits to our needs for growth in this area. You probably have much to share, and you are probably looking forward to the handouts that our generous colleagues bring to share at these gatherings. Perhaps you would be willing to make 15 to 20 copies of two of your most effective _____________________to share, or one or two copies of ___________________ to place on our sharing table.

We hope you will make time to finish the Reader you received in the mail. It will make a difference in the quality of your experience during the module. It is particularly important that you cover _____________________. In addition, before you begin the module, you may find it useful to consider how _____________________ is handled at your current congregation so that you may ________________________. Finally, be sure to bring your copy of the Reader with you and a three-ring binder, writing implements, and paper for notes.

We plan to schedule our time to so that you will have time both to digest content and to make friendly connections with the people attending your module. Experience shows that these relationships will be important to you.

Looking forward to making memories together,
Names (Leaders of the module)

Comfortable Leadership

(Excerpted and considerably modified, with permission, from *Parents as Resident Theologians,* by Roberta and Christopher Nelson)

- Be clear to the participants about how the leadership will be shared. They need to know your relationship to each other as leaders.
- Make sure materials and supplies will be available when needed.
- Plan to arrive before the participants. Not being there at the time the group is forming raises anxiety as to time and place, as well as anxiety for the leaders' well-being.
- Let the participants know, early, what space is available to them at the module site, where toilets and telephones are, what the policy is about smoking.
- Help the group get to know one another and develop trust and rapport. They will be able to learn more readily and to feel more confident in a group of friends than among strangers.
- Watch for side conversations that can be disruptive to the group. Invite those involved to state their comments to the rest of the group and proceed accordingly. This is a basic requisite for building trust and rapport.
- Strive to keep an individual or a small group from dominating a conversation. What's really going on? Is someone afraid of where the discussion may go? Are there individuals who feel threatened and who see no other way to keep control? Uncovering a hidden agenda can be a key to a new understanding.
- Help the group to keep focused. A side topic may be added to the agenda at a later time if it is of general interest and relevance.
- Encourage people to share ideas and experiences. This is not a demand but an invitation. A nonparticipating member can sometimes passively control the group as others become suspicious of that person's silence.
- Listen to the group and encourage clarification. Try to hear the questions behind the ones you posed. Pay attention to new ideas.
- Carefully monitor your own participation. In the early sessions, encouraging others' participation is usually far more fruitful than being the one everyone turns to for the "expert" view or answers to tough questions. As the participants build assurance and develop greater respect for themselves, the leaders can often share more freely from their own personal experience.
- Trust your own combined judgment rather than being enslaved to the Leaders' Guide. You may need to make some changes to bring out the best the module has to offer.
- Relax and enjoy the group.

Renaissance Display Box Materials

Be sure that the Display Box from the Renaissance Program Office has been arranged for and that the on-site coordinator inventories the materials when it arrives. Be sure that tables will be available on-site for these items and any materials that you and your co-leaders decide to bring from your own resources. Communicate in advance with the on-site coordinator to have any suitable local resources available as well. All items should be well-labeled and inventoried to ensure that everyone ends up with his or her own materials at the end of the conference.

Suggestions

- Begin and end each session or significant block of time with an opening and closing activity, such as a reading, song, game, story, responsive reading, etc. Enlist participants in leading these activities by inviting them to sign up on the volunteer sheets. Also recruit volunteers to lead movement activities, such as stretches, games, yoga, etc., whenever the group needs a quick energizer. Involving participants greatly increases the variety of ideas shared and recognizes the experience and leadership present in the group.
- Each time the group re-gathers, take about five minutes for a check-in on questions left over from previous sessions. If these cannot be addressed at the time, put them on the Parking Lot (see below), to be addressed at another specified time. Giving participants regular opportunities to express their questions or concerns helps bring the leaders and the participants together.

  Parking Lot: Pass around 3x5 cards, and ask participants to write down two or three expectations they have of this module. It's helpful if they sign the cards so that if you get an expectation that is off base, you can deal with it individually and in person. Let participants know that you will place these items on the Parking Lot poster created to keep topics or issues that need to be discussed until each of them is handled. Leaders will check Parking Lot at the end of each module session, removing items as they get dealt with.

Getting Ready On-Site

Plan to arrive early so that you can become familiar with and set up the space in which you will be working and allocate leadership roles for particular segments.

Workshop Area Organization

- Set up the curriculum and resources display.
- Post the workshop schedule on newsprint.
- Post volunteer sign-up sheets (notebook paper) for openings, closings, and energizers.
- Post newsprint sheet for “Parking Lot” (see below).
- Prepare the leaders’ table with all necessary materials and supplies.
- Set up a circle of chairs for the group.
- Make sample “baggage claim” checks (directions later in this document).
- Make sample nametags. Write the following (unless you prefer to describe the *five-part nametag* described in a later section of this document) on a sheet of newsprint: Make your nametag with your full name, but writing your first name in LARGE letters that can be seen from across the room.

Leaders’ Guide Walk-Through

- Having read the Leaders’ Guide, decide on the division of leadership responsibilities.
- Be prepared to make adjustments to schedule if necessary.
- Envision the movements of participants and their use of the space. Are any adjustments needed? Is there any information to be shared at the beginning of the workshop?
- Be ready to identify and recruit storytellers, song leaders, movement and games people, and readers to sign up for each session’s opening, closing, and breaks.
- Identify the space to be used by breakout groups if you will have any. (Separate rooms or spaces are ideal.)
- Be relaxed and ready to welcome participants as they arrive.

Posters and Charts

Prepare signs, lists, instructions, etc.—anything that will highlight individual activities and make things easier for you and the participants—before the conference begins. You will probably think of other things you want to post, but reduced-size posters are included in this notebook; you can have these enlarged at most any copy shop.

Conference Schedule: Prepare and post a copy of the schedule for the conference, showing work periods (including breaks), times for meals, free time, and if appropriate, departure time for home hospitality.

Volunteer Sign-up Sheet: To help recruit people to lead singing, play a musical instrument, read for worship, or whatever, make a sign-up chart and give participants an opportunity to volunteer during the registration and browsing time or between sessions.

Information Chart: Prepare and post a sheet on which participants can enter information that it would be useful for you to know, and for them to compare, such as:

Name
Home phone
Birthday
Home church
Church phone
Minister
District
Your role
Hours/week you are supposed to work
Hours/week you *do* work
Salary, if any
Do you have a clear idea of what is expected of you?
Do you have a contract?
Do you have a mutually agreed-upon job description?

Participants' Displays

1. Set up a table for materials the participants have brought to share. Participants are responsible for marking materials that are only for display and for indicating which are take-home items. (See suggested poster, p. 11.)
2. Set up a table on which to display the books listed in the Bibliography or included in the Renaissance Display Box.
3. If there is space, set up a table for supplies you want to have available for both you and the participants: tape, markers, scissors, glue, etc.
4. Decide on a place where you will be able to arrange handouts, posters, and other materials to which you'll need access during sessions so that it is conveniently accessible to you, but obviously *not* part of the display.
5. (Optional) If this is a District conference, arrange for someone to bring the District's RE Loan Library. They will need space to display that, and you can avoid confusion and maintain your planned use of space if you designate a suitable area for that purpose in advance

SAMPLE CHARTS AND POSTERS

Volunteer Sign-up:

Help Wanted!

Persons to Lead Singing

Qualifications:

Ability to sing on pitch
Tolerance for those of us who can't

Sign here to apply:

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

Information Exchange Chart

This useful chart gives people a place to trade ideas and information. Ask people to cross off their requests for help when they have been met, either by the workshop or consultation with another participant. (One of the goals of every Renaissance Program module is to establish and/or maintain support networking among colleagues.)

I need help with...	Name:	I can help with...	Name:

Items to Share Poster

If you can provide only one table for the materials people bring, this poster can help to prevent any confusion about their intentions in bringing it:

> This table is for things you brought to share.
>
> Please put your name on items you want to display only and take back home.
>
> Put prices on copies that are for sale.
> Leave giveaways unmarked.

Mixer Activities If Needed

LEADER: Invite people to help you with any preparations still in process. Try to be free by the scheduled arrival time. Along with the on-site coordinator, welcome folks and introduce them to each other. Show them where to put coats and luggage and where to register. Encourage them to browse through the displays. Sometimes, when arrivals are unavoidably strung out, it's wise to introduce some sort of mixer activity. Here are some suggestions.

Coat of Arms

Participants are asked to draw a shield, divide it into four parts, and draw pictures or designs in the quarters representing four aspects of their life story, role, or whatever the leaders choose to assign. This can be done simply or elaborately, depending upon the supplies you furnish and the time. Ask people to show their shield to other individuals and talk about what the symbols signify.

Visual Representation of how they came to this leadership position

On a piece of paper, have the participants draw a visual representation of the journey they took to arrive at this leadership position. Have them include educational experiences, jobs, and volunteer roles that lead them to where they are today. This may be all "job" related or may include part of the faith journey that brought them to Unitarian Universalism. Ask people to share these journeys as they introduce themselves to each other.

Five-Part Nametag

On a large nametag (5x8 card, for instance), participants are asked to center their name and then write in the corners four items you suggest (such as their home congregation, their childhood faith communities, a person they admire, or how they got started in RE leadership) and then compare the name tags with others.

Questionnaire

A prepared form that requires participants to find people who are wearing specific colors, have lived certain places, etc., and to ask them to sign an allocated space on the form.

Orientation Game

This gives you, as leaders, a sense of the make-up of the group. The fun is in reeling off the items fast enough to keep people hurrying to keep up with you. Of course, the leaders participate too! Before you begin, ask if anyone has difficulty hopping up and down [change the response to raising hands, if appropriate].

"Stand up (or raise your hand) **if**:

...your title is DRE

"You may sit [or put your (hand) down."

...your title is RE Coordinator
...you are the RE Committee Chair
...you belong to a church
...it's called First Church
...you come from a Fellowship
  ...other, e.g., Society, etc.
...you work with a minister
  ...an administrator
  ...a church secretary
  ...a sexton/janitor
...*you* have a secretary
...you are from ____ District
...this is your first module
...this is your fifth module
...you've been in your role for five years or more
...you're in your first year
...you have a birthday this month
...you're tired of these questions!

Getting Started

Welcome

Leaders should welcome the participants and thank them for the dedication to our Unitarian Universalist religious education programs that brought them here to work with us in this learning and growing community.

Logistical Details of the Weekend

Introduce the host/registrar. Ask her/him to share with the group any information about bathrooms, home hospitality, meals, owed registration fees, do's and don'ts at the church, and other logistical concerns.

Allow the group time to ask any questions that concern them. Make sure to give the host/registrar and cook a lot of appreciation and attention during the conference and thanks at the end.

Housekeeping Time

Consider beginning each session of a module with Housekeeping Time, an opportunity for leaders, on-site coordinators and/or participants to make announcements about physical arrangements, requests for schedule shifts, suggestions for a smoother *modus operandi*, or whatever. Announcing in advance that this will be part of the overall plan reassures people that they will be heard if they have a concern and minimizes the time spent on details in the long run. If you choose to adopt this approach, remember to write a reminder about housekeeping time at the beginning of each session in your schedule to take care of it.

Introductions and "Baggage Check"

LEADERS:

- Introduce yourselves and explain why you are enthusiastic about leading this module.
- Pass out one brown paper lunch sack and two 3x5 cards to each participant, one to serve as a "claim check" and one to hold a description of their "baggage"
- Ask participants to take the first card, color it however they like, and then fold the card over and tear it in half. This will be their "claim check."
- Ask participants to take the second card and write on it any "baggage" they would like to leave behind in order to be totally present at the module. This may be related to the program left behind ("Someone else is running the program while I'm here, and I want to let go and trust that they can handle it") or to personal issues ("My daughter is sick, and I'm worried about her"). Leaders do this as well.
- LEADER: Say aloud your name, congregation, what you do in your congregation, why you are here, and what "baggage' you want to check (reading it from your 3x5 card). Remember that by going first, you set the tone and example for length of time and depth of disclosure. Staple half of the "claim check" to the bag, keep the second half of the claim check until the end of the module, when you will want to use it to reclaim your "baggage."

- Then pass the stapler to the participant next to you, and ask him or her to please state his/her name, congregation, what he/she does in the congregation, why he/she is here, and what “baggage” he/she wants to check. Continue until everyone has participated.

The “baggage” bags should be placed somewhere inside the group that is not in a highly visible place, i.e., under the resource table, on the piano behind the group, etc.

NOTE: It’s important to be aware of needs of the group and to keep up momentum. It may also be helpful for one of the leaders to take notes during check-ins.

Bond-Building

NOTE: Often the first session of the module is held in the evening. If this is the case, you may find participants arriving late due to travel after a workday. This activity gives latecomers an opportunity to join in the group before important work begins. It is always a fun way for participants to get to know one another.

> ***“Spill the Basket” or “I Like People Who**…”*
> Chairs are placed in a circle, with one fewer chairs than participants. One person stands in the middle and says, “Hi, my name is__________.” Everyone responds by saying “Hi ________!” Then the person in the middle says “I like people who ---- (choose something you want to know about others in the group, e.g., “run a successful ‘Coming of Age’ program”).”
>
> Everyone who identifies with that item gets up and runs to a different chair. Participants may not take the chair directly to their right or left.
>
> Then the person left in the middle without a chair says, “Hi, my name is ___________.” The other participants say, “Hi ___________.” The person in the middle says, “I like people who__________.” And so on.
>
> (This is also a good way to learn things about the participants, i.e. if this is someone’s fifth module, which can be celebrated at the end of the module.)

Covenanting

"Covenant for Our Time Together," by the Rev. Helen Zidowecki

(*A powerful trust-building activity, this also sets a wonderful tone for the conference. Have copies ready so that participants can each read a section aloud, and all can join in the unison ending.*)

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 making judgments 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 that 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 you have to leave for any reason.

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

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

OVERVIEW FOR ADMINISTRATION MODULE LEADERS

The Reader for the Administration of Religious Education Programs module includes an introduction, followed by copies of documents and instruments used by religious educators throughout our association. These will provide depth and background for the participants and give them examples to take back and adapt for use in their congregations. It is not critical that the participants study the Reader before they arrive, but it will give them a sense of the material to be covered. It is important that as leaders you be familiar with the materials in the Reader so that you can refer to it as applicable in your sessions and be ready to answer questions.

Goals for leaders and participants

- To recognize the scope of administrative duties in each participant's own situation.
- To become more aware of the components of the administration of RE programs.
- To recognize that in a congregational setting these are often shared responsibilities.
- To recognize and acknowledge the various individuals and entities who share these duties and responsibilities and to build skills in developing relationships and alliances.
- To become aware of new skills and techniques for information storage and retrieval and for decision-making.

Materials and Supplies

Nametags
A newsprint pad
Markers
Masking tape
Three-hole punch
Colored paper (12x18 or larger) for posters
Scissors (several pairs)
Glue sticks or white glue in dispensers
Stapler, staple remover
Pencils
Three-ring notebook paper
Chalice / candles / matches
Magazines for collage
Supply of most-recent Renaissance Program brochures
Cassette tape player
Cassette tapes—optional (e.g., music for worship services)
Table cover for worship service
75-foot clothesline (for Blind Polygon)
Strips of fabric for blindfolds (for Blind Polygon)
A rubber band for each participant
Post-it Notes, one small pad for each participant
3x5 cards
Books not available on-site or favorites you think would be of interest to participants
Timer, to help you keep small group processes moving / Bell, to help participants do the same

Background Information for Module Leaders

The word *administration* comes from the same root word as *minister*, to serve. An administrator is one who plans, organizes, and controls the activities of an organization to accomplish its objectives in the long run. Knowing the roots and definitions of these words can help us to understand the supportive role of a religious educator in her or his administrative capacity and the scope of what is involved in administration.

The three primary functions within the area of RE administration are data management, volunteer management, and risk management, all of which fall under the umbrella of structure and communication. This module will assist directors of religious education (DREs), which for purposes of this module will include RE coordinators, RE leaders, etc., in recognizing the existing structures and communication processes in their home congregations. Understanding these structures and processes can help avoid miscommunications and assumptions that can cause problems. We will assess the scope of the administrative tasks of each individual, as well as discuss related information and practice specific skills.

People in religious education often think of themselves as being outside the realms of “politics” and “power” and therefore fail to see themselves as leaders. An important thing to understand when working in religious education is that this role is one of leadership in a congregation. Accepting that role is critical to being able to function well in the position, whether volunteer or staff, and will best serve the congregation as a whole

Accepting the power of this position and learning to work politically need not imply either strident aggressiveness or underhanded manipulation. By helping DREs look at these words squarely, we may not only increase the effectiveness and comfort in their roles, but also help them avoid the discouragement and depression that too often lead people to resign their positions prematurely.

There is a quiet power that comes from being comfortable in one’s role, which means understanding the environment in which you are operating, what you are trying to do, and why you are doing it. Power also comes from the position itself. Acknowledging this power and learning to use it wisely to fulfill the congregation’s and the program’s mission and vision is part of becoming an effective religious educator.

Coordinating an RE program takes a lot of doing, and learning on the job can be stressful. Many of our DREs, having come into their roles by the volunteer route, expand responsibilities without examining patterns and get bogged down by a maze of detail compounded by the varying and often unrealistic expectations of both themselves and their congregations. Religious educators usually have positions in which congregational members are both employer and client. In this situation religious educators find themselves working in various types of complicated relationships. This module is intended to give them an opportunity to get some perspective on their role and to help them get more satisfaction from it.

The political dimension of congregational life is a reality. The RE program cannot exist in a vacuum. If you are the DRE of your congregation, it is important to:

- Make sure there is definition of the vision, mission, and goals of the RE Committee and that there are clear responsibilities for the DRE.
- Understand the lines of authority, responsibility and communication within your congregation and work with, rather than outside them.
- Communicate well with the Board and committees and other staff members as well as with the congregation.
- Prepare appropriate, accurate, persuasive, and effective reports and budgets, and submit them on time.
- Know the policies and procedures of your congregation and its committees, follow them, and be able to communicate them to others.
- Know how to create win-win situations.
- Pay attention to how you use time and learn how to get help with duties that are necessary to the success of the program but are beyond what you can do in the time for which you have contracted.
- Understand how your own personality operates and how it affects your leadership style and your relationships to others—and vice versa.
- Provide for your own well-being by asking for both feedback and support and using them.
- Know where to turn for information and encouragement.

SESSION 1

Focus on the Individual
(2 ¾ hours)

Leaders' Goals for Participants in Session I

- To get to know one another and begin the process of building a community
- To understand and articulate the nature and scope of their work as religious educators
- To see the administrative tasks of the Director of Religious Education (DRE) within the context of his or her overall responsibilities
- To articulate their vision of the place of education within the religious community
- To experience the setting of priorities

Materials: posters, tape, Renaissance Program brochures, Handout #1

Getting Started (30 minutes)

Welcome and Announcements (10 minutes)
SITE HOST: Greet the participants and welcome them to the site. Then go through the most immediate housekeeping details, such as space use, location of dining room and bathrooms, the meal schedule and home hospitality arrangements, plus any special rules and/or requests about fitting harmoniously into the conference site.

Introductions (15 minutes)
LEADERS: Introduce yourselves and give your credentials. (This is important; participants are eager for this information.) Make any additional announcements, and explain that each subsequent session will begin with "Housekeeping Time" for announcements, requests, and a general check-in.

Then start the participants on their self-introductions, using the "circle introductions" routine:

My name is… My home congregation is… My title is…

Continue the getting-to-know-yous by doing a mixer activity such as the Coat of Arms, Visual Representation of Journey, or the Five-Part Name Tag. You may also have them do one of the following exercises:

Something I was glad to leave behind when I came here is. . . .

OR One of the nicest things that happened to me during the past week was. . . .

Overview of the Module (5 minutes)
Post the module schedule in outline form, with times.
Describe the general rhythm of the sessions, and explain the focus of each one.

The Administrative Role (45 minutes)

Major Areas of Responsibility
LEADER: Ask how many participants are taking this as their first module. Briefly explain how other issues are covered in other modules—use the Renaissance Program Overview from the Core Materials.

The responsibilities and skills of the DRE generally fall within four major areas: theological, educational, administrative, and philosophical. [Co-leader puts up a poster of each of the four words as they are mentioned.] Refer to Handout #1.

LEADER: Say something like this in your own words**:**

Theological

- Worship for children and intergenerational groups and for committees and teachers
- Spiritual growth

Educational

- Training teachers in the companioning and educating of Unitarian Universalist children
- Leadership school (e.g., Midwestern Leadership School (MWLS) or New England Leadership School (NELS), UU identity, heritage, and history

Administrative

- Administration of the religious education program in the local congregation
- Implementation of the program

Philosophical

- Developing a philosophy of religious education
- Curriculum planning for the local congregation
- Interpretive—Explaining the importance and methodology of the work

In this module we will be concerned with the *administrative* role.

Coordinating a program and managing things are the basic functions of a DRE. No matter how part-time a DREs job is, the congregation that hires or appoints a DRE expects that somehow things will be organized and run smoothly. No matter how large or small a program, there will be information to be collected, stored, and retrieved; there will be volunteers to recruit and coordinate; and there will be safety and liability issues to deal with.

The amount of time DREs have for the other roles depends largely upon how well they understand and organize administrative procedures.

If you are a DRE, it is important to:

- Be sure there is a clear understanding of the vision and mission or religious education program within the congregation.
- Make sure there is definition of the goals of the RE Committee and the responsibilities of the RE Chair and of the DRE.
- Pay attention to how you use time and learn how to get help with duties that are necessary to the success of the program but are beyond what you can do in the time for which you have contracted.
- Understand the lines of authority, responsibility, and communication within your congregation and to work with rather than outside them.
- Communicate well with the Board and committees and other staff members, as well as with the congregation.
- Prepare appropriate, accurate, persuasive, and effective reports and budgets, and submit them on time.
- Know how to create win-win situations.
- Understand how your own personality operates and how it affects your leadership style and your relationships to others, and vice versa.
- Provide for your own well-being by asking for both feed-back and support and using them.
- Know where to turn for information and encouragement.

We hope to provide you with some new learning in those areas and to help you become aware of your needs to seek out information, assistance, and opportunities to develop skills that will make your work more rewarding in the future.

Listing RE-Related Tasks (35 minutes, total)

Materials: newsprint, markers, tape, poster

Brainstorming the Tasks (15 minutes)
Participants are invited to list all RE-related tasks. Effective administration involves the grouping, delegation, and/or elimination of all specific tasks. This activity provides experience in clarifying tasks that need to be accomplished, responsibilities, and scope of the administrative duties involved.

LEADER: Say something like this in your own words:
Now we'd like you to break into small groups of ______ persons. As a team, list on newsprint all the tasks you associate with the running of an RE program. Look at the program in your own congregation and include tasks that are delegated to other people, as well as ones done primarily by the DRE. Also list important tasks that aren't being done and may not even be "owned" by anyone.

[Co-leader puts up poster, distributes newsprint and markers, indicates where tape will be when it's needed.]

List tasks that are involved in creating and maintaining a successful RE program.

LEADER: "You can go anywhere in this room or nearby where we can call you back easily. You'll have _______ minutes to make your lists. When it's time to return, choose one person to report to the large group. Does everyone understand the assignment? We'll be available in case you need to ask questions after you get started."

Number per group: ____________
Minutes for small group discussion: _____________

[Call the small groups back.]

Creating a Master List (10 minutes, or so)
Materials: newsprint, markers, tape

- While one leader records responses on newsprint, the other invites contributions.
- Accept one suggestion from each small group in turn until all have been recorded without duplication.

NOTE: Were there any surprises? Are there some areas that some people find particularly troublesome? The recorder or alternate leader might mark the latter with a distinctive color and then copy them onto working sheets so that anyone who has helpful suggestions ("This works for me...") can sign the appropriate sheets and be sought out as a resource person during breaks, meals, or other free time.

Categorizing the Tasks (10 minutes)
LEADER: Assign a page (or part) of the master list to each group, inviting them to separate the tasks into the categories discussed earlier (theological, educational, administrative, and philosophical) by marking T, E, A, or P in front of each task listed. There will be areas of overlap. If there is time, the groups can also categorize the administrative duties into Data Management, Volunteer Management, or Risk Management by using the letters D, M, and R.

Tell participants you will be returning to these lists later in the module.

BREAK (10 minutes)

Prioritizing Tasks (35 minutes)

Materials: handouts, poster, newsprint, markers, tape

LEADER: "The next activity is designed to help you observe how you, individually and collectively, go about organizing your use of time. Line up on a continuum by the size of the congregation in which you work. The smallest societies should be at one end of the room and the largest at the opposite end."

[Divide into groups of four or five people by counting them off from the continuum, paying attention to the size of the congregation they represent. If you have seven from tiny societies, for instance, put them into two groups rather than having one or two working with people from much larger congregations.]

Handouts (distribute appropriately by size of congregation)
Prioritizing of Tasks: Medium-Size Church Handout #2
Prioritizing of Tasks: Fellowship Handout #3
Prioritizing of Tasks: Large Church Handout #4

Put up poster:

<u>Prioritizing Tasks</u>

10 Minutes: Personal prioritizing
10 Minutes: Small groups discuss why

<u>Large Group</u>
10 Minutes: How did you set priorities?
Discuss and evaluate the process you used?

Reassemble the large group. Ask each small group to comment on the *process* it used.

LEADER: Stress the importance of delegation as part of the solution to managing many tasks. This is also a time for the Leaders to contribute their own tips, distribute additional handouts, and indicate good resources, such as the Work Time Log from the Reader or from the display area.

Pie Chart   (20 minutes)

Materials: Pie Chart Handout #5, three copies for each participant

LEADER: This exercise is to be done quickly, more intuitively than thoughtfully. It is included as a consciousness-raising experience, a private way to image something that may be otherwise ignored, e.g., the possible difference between our perception of our role and the way others may see it. It is also to inspire motivation for appropriate change in how one spends time and in how one educates others to see the reality of one's role. And it is used to acknowledge the percentage that administration is of a DRE's whole role.

[Co-leader distributes three charts to each participant, two to use and one to take home.]

Instructions (10 minutes**)**

- Quickly divide the first pie into proportional pieces, representing the way you spend your working time, and label each one appropriately (theological, philosophical, educational, administrative) (5 minutes)
- Do the same with the second chart, but allocate time the way you think your RE Committee assumes you spend it. Are there any discrepancies? (5 minutes)

Discussion questions (10 minutes)

- How would you like to change the way the pie is divided?
- What would it take to balance it?
- What would be ideal?
- Is this the best way to use your time?
- Were there any surprises for you in this activity?
- Any insights?

LEADER: Suggest that when people get back home, a good RE Committee/DRE discussion might involve such an exercise around:

- How does the RE Committee spend its time?
- How could it spend it more creatively?

Journal Writing (10 minutes)

Materials: poster, loose-leaf paper, pens

Journal

What have I learned about myself and my role?
What do I need to handle differently?
Are there areas where I will ask for help at home?
What do I need from this conference?
What can I take home from this evening/morning/afternoon?

LEADERS: Ask participants to take out their notebooks and find a comfortable place to think/meditate and write after asking these questions of themselves:

- What have I learned about myself and my role?
- Are there things I hope to handle differently or areas where I will ask for help when I get home?
- What learning do I want to be alert for throughout the rest of the conference?

Tell participants: "What you write in your journal is for your eyes only. We may occasionally ask if anyone wants to share what s/he has written, but that is optional."

3x5 Cards (5 minutes)

Materials: 3x5 cards, poster

LEADERS: Distribute 3x5 cards and ask participants to address the question:

"What do I now perceive myself needing from this conference that I didn't perceive when I came?"

Explain that you, as leaders, will consider these needs in shaping subsequent sessions. Be clear, however, that the module has its own focus and that the best you may be able to do is refer people to other resources.

Option (10 minutes)

If you have extra time, ask participants what stood out especially in the Reader. What was most valuable and important to them?

Closing (10 minutes)

Invite the participants to join together for a short closing worship. Light a chalice and either read or abbreviate the following story, written by Jan Evans-Tiller in Summer 1991.

Compost Story

Our compost heap sits in a cul-de-sac formed by the angle of neighbors' fences and our garage wall, the one that's on the side away from the house. Daylilies hide it from the street and the critical eyes of passers-by, who might not approve of such necessary (and necessarily messy) aspects of gardening. It catches the full rays of the sun almost all day, all summer long.

The Heap is really three heaps: one of "raw" garbage and yard waste, a "working" pile, and a pile of rich, "finished" garden topsoil—this last the end result of the composting process after the rotted stuff has been put through a coarse mesh sifter. Transferring raw waste onto the working pile to make room for fresh material is my husband's job, while the task of sifting the finished stuff is mine. And I love it! The visibility and tangibility of sifted soil is satisfying to one accustomed to days of nothing to show for eight hours' work but phone calls.

My satisfaction as participant in the process of transforming garbage into valuable soil is no surprise, nor is the notion that the physical effort in the fresh air is good therapy for a desk jockey. But that the heap, the soil, the process might have educational value....that was a surprise!

There came a fine afternoon in early summer, with sunshine, a cool breeze, and butterflies to keep me company as I sifted. The pile of topsoil was growing at a good pace, and I already had in mind using some of it to fill an uneven spot in the front lawn and the rest to re-cover privet roots bared by the last hard rain.

Just as I spread the last pitchfork-full onto the sifter, my husband came around the corner of the garage with a full bucket of fresh garbage from the kitchen! "Good grief!" I said. "I'm never going to get done with this stuff. I no more than finish when it's to do all over again!"

I stood with arms folded, staring at the coffee grounds and eggshells, the kitchen scraps at my feet. The words echoed in my mind's ear, and I began to laugh at my own obtuseness.

Of course I'd never be finished! Were I really to come to the end of the compost pile, with no more working stuff and raw garbage to follow along, the route of change would mean not a finished process, but an interrupted one, in which potential worth is left to spoil. Such a pile is not the sign of a job well done, but of a gardener with no vision and no understanding of the real nature of her work.

So it is with our work as religious educators. There are always finished projects that we eye with satisfaction, but there are also tasks and programs “in the works” and a stack of new, exciting jobs to begin working on as well. There are always “finished” people whose development we had a hand in—competent, confident teachers and committee members, young people who have done their growing in our programs. Yet just paces away are children, men, and women whose potential we are just beginning to notice and nourish and “raw” newcomers whose qualities, gifts, and talents are still completely unknown to us.

Though at times the stacks of work on our desks and the ranks of people in our charge are as daunting as the sight of my compost heap, let us hope never to see the end of them! They are at once fulfillment and promise, and when there are no new projects to take the place of finished ones, no new people to move through the process of becoming, it will mean not that our job has been completed, but that we have lost our vision and our sense of what our real work is.

Close by inviting the participants to sing together “Go Now in Peace.” The words and music are included in the Reader, p. 65.

SESSION 2

The Religious Education Committee
(3 hours)

Goals

- To recognize the primary relationship with the Religious Education Committee
- To examine the functions of a religious education committee and their relationship to such a group
- To gain clarity about how their professional time is divided

Opening (5 minutes)

Circle name activity, *or,* Worship led by group members

"I Itch Here" Circle Name Activity

The first participant in the group circle states her/his name and then says "and I itch here," indicating the place by scratching it (nose, arm, back, etc.).

The second person's task is to repeat the name, information, and action given by the first participant, then state his/her own name and indicate in words and action where s/he itches.

Example:

1st participant: "My name is Mary, and I itch here (scratches nose).

2nd participant: "Her name is Mary and she itches here (scratches nose). My name is Mark, and I itch here (scratches shoulder).

Continue around the circle, ending with the first participant.

Housekeeping/Check-In (15 minutes)

Materials: agenda, 3x5 cards from previous session

- Announcements from the on-site coordinator, if necessary
- Observations, comments, or questions from the previous sessions
- Comments by leaders about the group profile from Session 1 charts (begins/supports networking)
- 3x5 card report back: What will be addressed explicitly? What implicitly? What *not at all*?
- Post agenda for this session
- On the “I Need Help With” chart, post the appropriate 3x5 cards from the end of the first session. Remind people with similar concerns that they may wish to sit together at mealtime.

The RE Committee Within the Congregation (80 minutes)

The Big Picture *(adapted)* (20 minutes)
Materials: newsprint, markers, tape

LEADERS:

- Invite each participant to make a creative representation of the organization of his or her congregation. Be sure to include the Religious Education Committee and themselves. (10 minutes)
- Have people form groups of three in which to show and explain their depiction. (10 minutes)
- If you have time, the small groups may report to the whole group any insights they had.
- Have the participants save this representation for later in the module.

Religious Education Committee Checklist (30 minutes)
Materials: Reader for RE Committee Checklist, poster

LEADERS:

- Invite participants to turn in their Readers to Beth Ide and Liz Jones's RE Committee Checklist (p. 1).
- If the group is large, divide it in half, each half to hold a discussion led by one of the leaders. Such division makes it possible for each group to have a slightly different focus in the discussion, such emphases being Big Church / Small Church and Long-Tenured DRE / Short-Tenured DRE. It also gives each participant more "air time."
- *Make these points:*

1. There is no *right* answer to most of the questions on the checklist, but there are *better* ones, especially in light of the size and complexity of duties of any one RE committee. What matters is that the questions be asked occasionally and that a committee reconsider its policies and procedures once in a while. This is healthy in order give the committee an opportunity to adapt to change and to orient new members. As a congregation grows, shrinks, or finds itself serving a different group of people, it sometimes tries to go along with a leftover organizational pattern that could be improved if it stepped back and looked with a critical eye at what is happening.

2. Some of the people who study how boards and committees best function believe that it is essential that a responsible group be clear about the policy before it can be successful. The procedures will help the group after it is clear about its basic responsibilities and resources.

3. [The co-leader] and I will take turns making comments on the items on the checklist. Feel free to interrupt when you have a question or information to add. This might be a good time to take notes; there may be more details popping at you than you can retain, though we hope the checklist will serve as a reminder of what we have covered. [If the leaders have decided in advance which areas each will address and have marked their copies accordingly, they can move in and out of active roles without explanation.]

- When you get to Finances, you can present a poster that quotes Norma Veridan: "Design a program-planned budget, not a budget-controlled program."
- When you get to the section on Vision, point out to the participants the vision mission process in their Reader (p.3). This process can be adapted as needed for use in their congregations.

Additional questions that may be asked:
- Who is ultimately responsible for the RE Committee meetings?
- To whom is the RE Committee accountable?
- Whom does the DRE serve?
- Who established the agenda for an RE Committee meeting?
- Who calls the meeting and conducts it?
- When is it held? Where is it held? How does it feel?
- What happens during the meeting?
- What goodies are there for the committee members?
- How does the RE Committee come into being? (elected? appointed?)

How Does a Healthy RE Committee Function? (10 minutes)
Materials: Reader, "The Profound Committee" (p. 11)

It's important for both the DRE and the Religious Education Committee Chair to understand how a healthy committee operates. Refer participants to the appropriate portions of the Reader, including "The Profound Committee," by Vern Barnet.

LEADERS: Say something like this in your own words.
"The Profound Committee," by Vern Barnet, is a reminder of the value of having a shared spiritual experience at the beginning and/or end of a committee meeting. It is a refreshing reminder of why the group is meeting and of the values it is trying to implement. Such an experience can be as simple as a minute or two of meditation or a favorite reading brought by one of the members. But it is effective.

It is also of great value to provide time at the beginning of a meeting for people to share something of what's happening to them in their personal lives. Not only does that deepen awareness of one another as individuals, but it helps people keep to the agenda once the committee meeting starts. We know these things about kids, but we sometimes forget that adults need nourishing too.

Suggested Discussion Questions:

- What are some of the ways the spiritual is manifested in the work of your committee?
- How can we balance the needs to accomplish our necessary tasks as well as pay attention to the spiritual and interpersonal needs of individuals?
- What might be the role of the DRE and the RE Chair in creating "The Profound Committee"?

The Blind Polygon: Experiential Learning About Leadership Styles and Communication (20 minutes)

An active and fun teaching game on the value of cooperation

Materials: blindfolds, 75-foot to150-foot rope
Object: For a blindfolded group of any size (a smaller number allows more discussion of leadership styles and communication) to form a perfect square, triangle, pentagon, etc., with a piece of rope tied at its ends to make it continuous.
Rules: All participants must have at least one hand on the rope at all times and remain blindfolded.
Procedure: In a large, relatively flat, cleared area, ask participants to form a circle and put on blindfolds. Give them the rope. Ask each person to grab hold and, as a group, to form a perfect square, for example. When they believe the task is accomplished, they are to stand in position and remove their blindfolds.

Norma Veridan says: "This is usually a lot of fun. It can also evoke confusion and tension, conflict and disagreement, shouting and nonlistening. People finally get the idea that they have to listen to each other and develop trust and cooperation. It usually provokes a lively discussion."

Suggestion: Blindfold only half the participants and let the others enjoy their struggle. Then give the second group an opportunity to discuss strategy (in a "fishbowl" so that the others can hear) for a few minutes before they try it, and see if they do any better.

Beth Ide comments: "We did this indoors. (We didn't want to take the time to go outdoors and then shoo everyone back in.) We measured, cut, and tied the length of rope we needed on the evening before the exercise. Since space would be limited, the group could stretch into a shape without bumping into chairs and people

"That was smart. What wasn't smart was that we didn't give people who didn't want the physical exercise or to be blindfolded an opportunity to opt out. I also failed to set a firm time for the first group's attempt, so I didn't have a basis for interrupting them. I let them go on so long that they solved the problem brilliantly, but there wasn't much point (or enough time) for having the second group try it.

"It was a good demonstration of the value of cooperation, and we could easily observe how leadership emerged and shifted, etc. It's a good exercise and was novel for this particular group, and certainly provided a change of pace."

BREAK (10 minutes)

Who Does What? RE Task Breakdown (35 minutes)

LEADERS: Say something like this:
Once a committee has formulated its policies and procedures and the groups have learned to work together, they still have all the work to do! One area that is usually of concern, and can be a muddle because of differing but unexpressed perceptions, is the one of responsibilities. The DRE and RE Committee Chair may each take on too much and let the committee members become utterly bored because they are so uninvolved. Or a Chair who thinks the DRE will do "everything" may not even think it necessary to convene the committee. There are all kinds of variations, some great and some just awful.

[Distribute Handout #6, Religious Education Task Breakdown]

A good tool to use is the one we're passing out now, the Religious Education Task Breakdown Sheet. Ideally, it would be given or mailed to committee members and the DRE before the meeting at which it is to be discussed so that everyone could come with it filled out. Chances are, most of them won't find time to do it, but they may at least have thought about the implications of the form.

LEADERS:

- Divide the group into smaller groups, based either on the size of their congregation or on the number of work hours (more than or less than 20) per week.
- Have each group use the Breakdown chart to choose a focus, such as recruitment/training, special events, parent education, or worship for children and you (each group should take a different topic).
- Then ask them to divide the general subject into smaller tasks and to assign the tasks to the DRE, RE Committee, RE Chair, or others. (10 minutes)
- Have the small groups share their work with the large group. (5 minutes per group)
- Remind the participants that finishing the checklist is NOT the goal during the module; it is good "back home work." The goal is to experience the process so that they are able to use it when needed.
- If time permits (it rarely does!), ask participants to use the process to subdivide and assign a general area of the work that is a stickler for them back home. If there isn't time, suggest that they try it with their committee when they are with their home congregation.

- It is usually appropriate during the large-group discussion following this activity to invite participants to talk about the difficulties they see and experience around breaking down tasks and delegating them. (10 minutes)

[Distribute Handouts #7 and #8 as examples of two committees' task breakdown agreements. They are offered as examples of efforts to get the tasks done while preventing burnout.]

LEADERS: Point out the pages in the Reader on Sharing Responsibility. This tool includes the role of the minister and acknowledges that many responsibilities are shared. It is important when agreeing on shared responsibilities that the specific tasks be clarified and the specific responsibilities for those tasks be assigned to avoid assumptions that someone else is doing it. Communication in these specific areas also becomes more important.

NOTE: Remind participants that their notes on these decisions will be useful when renegotiating contracts or rewriting job descriptions.

An RE Committee Job Description and Calendar (30 minutes)

Materials: handouts (from the last activity), "Responsibilities of the Religious Education Committee" (Reader, p. 7)

LEADERS:

- Discuss for 10 minutes how the consideration of these program elements (and the setting of policies regarding them) are the responsibility of the RE Committee, while their implementation may well be the responsibility of the DRE.
- Having considered and perhaps added to the task list, divide into groups according to number of hours worked.
- Have each group create a 12-month calendar and determine which monthly RE Committee meeting would be the most effective for reviewing, reaffirming, or revising the policies related to each item. (20 minutes)
- Each group should also determine the most useful month for planning each program, such as UNICEF collection and teacher recognition.
- Might there be things that should be dropped from or added to the task list. Remind people of the importance of evaluating the scope and contents of a program against the mission on a regular basis.

Journal Writing (10 minutes)

Invite participants to address these questions in their journal:

Poster:

> What work do I want to keep for myself and what do I want the RE committee to do?
> What do I want to be spared?
> What do I want to spare them?

Alternative Poster:

> How can I best use my gifts and those of the committee members of our congregation's RE program?
> How can we reward and support each other?

Closing (5 minutes)

LEADERS: Invite two or three people to share a thought from their journal writing.

OR

Read the following:

"I feel that we all must live, so that when we are gone everyone will miss the work we did, but someone has learned by watching us, how to take up the banner and go forward."—*Debby Rainey, Site Manager*, Meals-on–Wheels, Tennessee

SESSION 3

The Whole Church
(3 hours, 5 minutes)

Goals

- To understand how RE directors/leaders relate to the whole church in their position as religious educators.
- To recognize the variety of ways in which they can communicate with individuals and groups within their congregations.
- To acquire competence in managing information.

Opening/Check-In (15 minutes)

LEADERS: Ask participants to go around their circle, completing the sentence, "When I first arrived at this conference, I ________________, and now that we're halfway through, I _________."

This is sort of a midpoint check on how participants are coming along with the module, how well their issues are being addressed, and whether there are concerns still to be dealt with.

"Where Do I Fit?" (75 minutes)

Materials: The representation they created in the Big Picture activity or a half sheet of newsprint and markers

The Big Picture's Picture (10 minutes)
LEADERS: Ask participants to take a good look at the representation of their congregation they created earlier. Does it show the organizational structures of their congregation? Does it indicate the groups to whom they are connected? Ask them to amend their drawing if necessary or to create a new drawing that includes what's missing.

Small-Group Discussion (15 minutes)
Divide participants into groups of three. Each person in the triad has 5 minutes to share his/her drawing, answering these posted questions:

> How are you connected?
> Is it a mutually responsible relationship?
> Is one supervising the other?
> Where are the reporting relationships?
> Where are the lines of communications, and how is the communication made?

Some conflicts may come up for discussion because of unrealistic or at least unshared expectations concerning the relationship of the minister and the DRE. At best, it is a working relationship, not to be expected to include:

- social relationship outside church activities
- theological agreement (although methodological compatibility is important)
- one being the other's confidant or counselor

Large-Group Discussion (30 minutes)
Share insights, questions, and comments from the drawing task. This conversation should also include some discussion about:

- lines of responsibility
- the DRE's relationship to the minister, the RE Committee, and the Board of Directors/Trustees
- what a good staff relationship includes
- what a good staff relationship does *not* include

Also use some of the material in the Reader on pages 23-25.

NOTE: Having detailed discussions of individual job descriptions is not the point here. What we are aiming at is a clear understanding of responsibilities and relationships. The formal relationships, supervisory positions, and accountability should be clear in a job description. If there is a desire to talk about specific issues relating to job descriptions encourage individuals to discuss this over a meal. Also refer individuals to the RE Staffing Guide (on the UUA website in the RE Pages as of 11/2000) and resources within their districts (District Executives, LREDA Chapters or Good Officers, District Program Consultants for Religious Education, and District Compensation Consultants, as well as Personnel Relations Committees in their congregations).

Staff Meetings and Other Ways to Communicate
If you work in a church that has a staff, you are lucky. All staff members (minister, DRE, administrator, music director, sexton) will meet regularly to discuss areas where responsibilities overlap. For example, you will probably go through the calendar about use of the building, deciding who will do what and when so that all needs will be met without duplication or confusion. This saves endless circular discussions and misunderstandings. When that part of the meeting is over, the minister and DRE may remain to talk about program concerns. The pattern will vary from place to place, of course. If your staff does not meet, you might find a tactful way to suggest it to the minister. In a fellowship, where you may be the only employed person, how will you keep in touch with the people responsible for scheduling space use, cleaning, repairs, etc.? (Through the RE Committee or, if there isn't one yet, perhaps by taking someone to lunch?)

Remember that the other people you work with, paid or volunteer, are real people, with their own concerns and pressures. Know their procedures and their deadlines, and co-operate with them. If you are entitled to secretarial time, submit what you need done a day or two ahead of time, and say when you'd like it ready—never on a newsletter day or when there is some other major workload descending on them. If you are considerate about such things, you'll probably get wonderful cooperation when you have a crisis (if you don't have them too often!). If, on the other hand, you find you never seem to get the help you were promised, you need to talk that out and see if you can negotiate for more than an empty promise.

Take a few moments to share what "staff meetings" are like in your congregations and invite others to share. This does not need to include the merits of different styles, but will give an example of the variety of styles especially from those who feel their system is working well.

Lines of Responsibility
LEADERS: Say something like this:
To whom do you report? In many congregations, the minister (if there is one) is the head of staff. In other situations (no minister), the person you report to is the president of the congregation or the board. What are this person's assumptions about you? What are your assumptions about him or her? Discussing each other's role might prevent or clear up any misunderstandings.

If your supervisor asks you and/or the RE Committee to do something (take on a responsibility, plan a program, take part in a Sunday service, or whatever), make certain you know what that means and what expectations lie behind the request before rushing off in all directions.

If the minister or some other individual is an ex officio member of the RE Committee and never attends, make sure to send minutes, notices of meetings, and perhaps a written or telephoned invitation from the chair; be sure s/he knows s/he is welcome and informed.

If your supervisor does not have set meeting times with you or appointments to talk with you, ask if there is a way to schedule them for mutual convenience. Ask advice before launching new ideas or programs, and take any advice seriously. Keep your supervisor and other pertinent staff informed without being pesky about it.

One DRE tells a story about having written out (and left on her desk) a list of little things she wanted to ask the minister. He noticed it and jotted down his response to each item: Yes, No, Great idea! Let's talk about that, etc. That accidental exchange marked the beginning of an easy way for them to clean up details, leaving more meaty matters for conferences.

A DRE is probably the person most deprived of attending services and hearing the minister’s ideas. Have you ever thought of asking if s/he would like to meet with you (and perhaps neighboring ministers and RE coordinators) for a study group? Recognize that you have the opportunity to learn; a mentor relationship can be enriching and politically smart.

NOTE: Handout #9 has been included for discussion. Originally developed for use by committees on ministry, it can be a useful tool for DREs to use in avoiding triangulation among congregants and other staff.

Why a Job Description? (10 minutes)
LEADERS: Draw people's attention to the task breakdown sheets created previously. In your own words, say something like the following.

A job description is a way to clarify what you will be responsible for as DRE. When you look at all the tasks involved in running a religious education program, it can be overwhelming. An appropriate job description will take in the scope of the program, the hours contracted, and a reasonable expectation of what can be accomplished. Job descriptions should clarify the authority the DRE has to carry out particular duties, the tasks that need to be done in consultation with others, and the tasks to be done under the direction of a supervisor.

A clearly written job description that is up-to-date with the way the position actually functions in the congregation is important when it is time for evaluations. If you are being evaluated against a job description that no longer reflects the way you or the congregation operates, the evaluation will not reflect how you are truly doing your job.

LEADERS: Facilitate a short discussion on whether people feel that their existing job descriptions are clear and reflect the current reality of the way the congregation operates.

Revising a Job Description (10 minutes)
Materials: Reader, page 27, "Sample Job Description"

Refer to the "Sample Job Description" from the Reader.

Note that the DRE sometimes writes the job description in practice, but that it is wise to involve the RE Committee in the process. An excellent way to do that is to do the Religious Education Task Breakdown together and to use that as a guide in writing the job description.

The DRE's job description should be reviewed annually or biannually and is useful in an evaluation process. Is the DRE living up to the agreement? Is the RE committee? Has the situation changed, or do the DRE and committee now have a more realistic understanding of it? The job description should be revised to reflect such changes or understandings.

Advise participants to read their job description over every month or so, checking their performance against what they've contracted to do. Are they forgetting some responsibilities or taking more than is wise?

It is important to remind the participants that changing the DRE's job description in a way that is mutually agreeable to the staff person, RE Committee, and congregation is appropriate. A changing job description means that the program is changing and hopefully growing and that the congregation is carefully assessing its needs and the role of its staff members in relation to its ongoing mission.

BREAK (10 minutes)

Data Management (20 minutes)

LEADERS: In the large group, brainstorm a list of the various forms, methods, and styles of communication that are open to the religious educator in a local congregation. Consider which are appropriate for the different kinds of groups with whom the DRE communicates and the different situations about which the communication takes place.

NOTE: It is also important to cover how material that is communicated to the religious educator is used, stored, and retrieved.

Other subjects to address in the discussion are staff meetings, creating and using an agenda, newsletters, bulletin boards, pulpit announcements, fliers, registration forms, letters, brochures, and so on.

Distribute Handout #10 (2 pages) and suggest that participants take it home.

Handling Paper With the TRAF System (20 minutes or less)

Materials: one 9x12 envelope of TRAF materials from the UUA Display Box

NOTE: This activity has some merit, but sometimes seems to be a busywork project to participants. Even new DREs can get the idea quickly and experienced DREs find it unnecessary. Check out the interest in this activity and do it quickly as a group if you need it.

LEADERS: There are several systems for effectively dealing with all the paper that comes across your desk. Here is one method. Kay Aler-Maida extracted this material from Stephanie Winston's *The Organized Executive* [*The Organized Executive : A Program for Productivity: New Ways to Manage Time, Paper, People and the Electronic Office*, Warner Books, 1994, in paper and on audiocassette.] <u>Say something like this in your own words</u>:

What to do with all that paper? Try the TRAF system. Try to get the paper off your desk by deciding what to do with it now. Try to handle each piece of paper only once.

Toss — If you know you don't want to use it, may never use it, it's out of date, toss it. (e.g., order form for tapes on fundamentalist Bible Study?)

Refer — Delegate to someone else anything you want someone else to look at, decide about, act upon. (minister? secretary? RE chair? newsletter editor?)

Act— Move it into one of your standing files, pencil it onto your calendar, put it onto your To-Do list. If it will take only 5 minutes to do, take care of it immediately. Otherwise, write it down and put a date on it.

File — Have a folder in the standing file marked "Filing." Put everything that needs to be filed here, and later file everything at one time (or make a new file for it).

Display poster:

T OSS R EFER A CT F ILE

LEADERS: Take the folder of TRAF items from the Display Box, and as a group quickly assign each item to one of the four categories. Let the group make the decisions, and then assess together what the process was like.

Invite them to share their surprises, insights, and learnings about how they presently deal with paper and how they might like to change that. Provocative questions include:

- What was hardest/easiest to deal with?
- What kinds of dilemmas did you experience?
- What other systems have you used that you find effective?

Computerized Data Management (30 minutes)

Materials: If either of the leaders or the site-coordinator has laptop or desktop computer that is accessible to the participants and is or can be connected to the Internet, it would be useful here for the additional activity.

NOTE**:** Most congregations today use computers for some form of data management. The extent to which it is used and the uses to which it is put will vary, depending upon funds available for purchase and maintenance, comfort of the staff and volunteers with the technology, and the technical sophistication of the congregation. Some congregations cannot afford the hardware and software needed; others have never really thought outside of the way they have always done things. As the members of our congregations become more computer sophisticated and our staffs become more comfortable and experienced with computers, we are seeing a rise in the use of computers.

LEADERS: Invite the group to share the extent to which computers are used in their congregations. The following are questions to guide the discussion:

- Does your congregation use computers in the office?
- To what uses are the computers put?
  - Membership data
  - Financial records
  - RE registration
  - Word processing
  - Desktop publishing
  - Communication (e-mail)
  - Other uses?
- Who has computers and are they networked?
- Is there one central, integrated, database, or do different programs maintain their own databases?
- What software programs do you use, and do you feel that you are adequately trained in their use?
- Are you connected to the Internet?
  - How do you use the Internet?
  - Are you familiar with the resources on-line at the UUA for religious educators?
- Are you on any of the UUA-related list serves? Do you know what a list serve is?

NOTE: This conversation should last about half an hour. It may go on longer, and you should invite participants to carry it on over a meal. Developments in this area are moving very quickly. It would be inappropriate to recommend here a specific program or system. The best resource they have at the moment is each other and your experiences. Encourage them to seek out members of their own congregation who can become tutors and resources in the area of computer technology. Often some of the most up-to-date people are our youth and young adults.

Additional activity if time permits and you have access to a computer: (30 minutes)
LEADERS: Use the laptop or desktop computer of the host church's DRE to demonstrate how things can be stored and retrieved through the use of computer files and folders. It might also be a good idea to explain how the "Find" tool works in case you cannot remember where you stored some information. Remind them that many computers work in the same way, but that some operate differently. Most can do the same things, but the process many differ.

If the computer can be connected to the Internet, provide a tour of the UUA site, particularly the RE and Youth pages. Other sites that are of interest might be the Beacon Press site that now includes study guides for some of their books. You might also access the Rec-Room (an independent UU site for collecting and storing religious education material), the LREDA Web site, and any other you think might be of interest and have time to discuss.

http://uua.org
http://uua.org/main.html
http://uua.org/re/
http://uua.org/YRUU
http://www.beacon.org/splash.html
http://www.beacon.org/guide.html
http://www.rec-room.org
http://www.uua.org/lreda

Journal Closing (15 minutes)

Journal question: How do my gender and my position in the congregation affect the way I make decisions and communicate?

SESSION 4

Decisions and Delegation
(3 hours)

Goals

- To learn about/review several styles of decision-making
- To practice some of these styles, and to evaluate their effectiveness in regard to specific situations
- To understand the techniques of good recruitment and delegation, and to have opportunities to practice and evaluate them

Opening and Check-In (15 minutes)

Materials: Reader or 3x5 card questions

Address a couple of quick questions from the 3x5 cards from Session 1

Practice in Decision Making (50 minutes)

Option A: **Budget Role Play**

Materials: newsprint, markers, tape, role cards (Appendix, pp. A-5 and A-7) , two copies of each church profile

- Brainstorm the elements of an RE budget on newsprint (5 minutes).
- Divide participants into Group 1 and Group 2 by size of congregation.
- Instruct each group on how to develop an RE budget for its theoretical church.
- Give each group 8 minutes to create its budget.
- Give members of Group 1 the role cards describing their Board of Trustee positions in Church A, which they then role-play while Group 2 presents the church budget to them. (7 minutes)
- Group 2 presents its budget to Group 1. (6 minutes).
- Invite Group 1 to debrief, regarding their roles, insights, etc. (6 minutes).
- Present role cards to Group 2 so that they can role-play the Board from Church B, while Group 1 presents its budget to Group 2. (6 minutes).
- Invite Group 1 to debrief, regarding their roles, insights, etc. (6 minutes).

Church A	Church B
40 kids	125 kids
400 in congregation	250 members
Board: Average age 50+	Board: High number of singles, including single parents
Mortgage paid	Mortgage
Thriving music program	Part-time secretary
Endowment	Weekly custodial care
2 ministers	Volunteer music
2 secretaries	$90,000 total budget
1 administrator	
Sexton	
Bookkeeper	
$250,000 total budget	

Role-Play Cards for Church A
(Board of Trustees)

President --- Board of Trustees	Board Member --- Portfolio includes Social Action Committee, as well as other program committees
Board Member--- Also Chair of RE Committee	Board Member--- Portfolio includes building use, maintenance of plant and grounds; oversees custodian; relates to office staff and management.
Board Member--- Portfolio includes finance committee, and pledge program; also memorial gifts and endowments.	Board Member--- Portfolio includes music program, and relates to Music Director; also includes Sunday Services and Worship Committees

Role-Play Cards for Church B
(Board of Trustees)

President of the Board-- Worried about what is happening at the church with so little custodial and secretarial help; older, long-time member.	Board Member --- Youngish; single; plays in local symphony; yearns to have a choir and a paid music director.
Treasurer of the Congregation--	Board Member--- Middle-aged; professional; worried about the mortgage; concerned also about social causes and the church's involvement.
Board Member-- Long-time church member; children are grown and moved away; spends many hours gardening in the churchyard.	Board Member-- Not been with the church very long; liaison to RE and other church committees; eager and full of newcomer zeal; married young adult with two children.

***Option B:* “Lost on the Moon”**
Materials: Prepared newsprint, tape

NOTE: This exercise is designed to demonstrate that group decisions are superior to individual ones and that consensus is superior to voting. Fifty (50) minutes is the minimal amount of time you probably need for this exercise. Plan to be directive in allocating the time. We suggest the following:

10 minutes:	Individual time taking test, handout #11
5 minutes:	Vote: i.e., compile an aggregate score for each item. Co-leader can tally during next part.
5 minutes:	Oral presentation of “Why Group Decisions Are Superior,” from Michael Doyle and David Straus’s *How to Make Meetings Work* (Appendix, p. A-1)
20 minutes:	Have the group come as near as possible to a consensus regarding the proper ordering of the 15 items, understanding that a true consensual process cannot be time-restricted.
5 minutes:	Post newsprint with four columns: 1. the named items 2. the voted rankings 3. the consensual rankings 4. the rankings provided by the experts
5 minutes:	Observations, comments, debriefing

See Appendix, p. A-3, for “Lost on the Moon” answers and information.

Decision Making (45 minutes total)

Who Makes Decisions, and How? (25 minutes)
Materials: Handouts #12 and #13

LEADERS: Distribute Handout #12, "How Decisions Are Made."

- Invite discussion of the differences among the various types of decisions named along the horizontal continuum.
- Interpret the chart:
  1. An *executive decision* is made by one person and may be made rather quickly, but risks having little ownership by people asked to abide by it.
  2. A *consultative decision* may involve two or three people, will require coordination of phone getting together, and will necessarily have somewhat larger ownership than calls or the executive decision.
  3. The amount of time, people involved, and sense of ownership among constituents all increase as one moves along the continuum toward consensus (assuming we're talking about a large group, such as a congregation, that will be affected by the decision in question). (5 minutes)

LEADERS: Distribute Handout #13, Ruth Herold and Ellie Morton's "Who Decides?"

- Have each participant note, beside each decision, which style of decision making would be the best to employ. (5 minutes)
- Discuss the following questions: (15 minutes)
  1. Which responses gave people pause?
  2. Choose several and ask, Who needs to be included in making this decision?
  3. Do people have insights to share regarding decisions they've been dealing with at home?
  4. Has anyone been running into difficulty by using an inappropriate style?
  5. Are there decisions for which they may wish to change the venue?

Cost/Benefit Analysis (20 minutes)
Materials: Handout #14, prepared newsprint

LEADERS: Distribute Handout #14, the Cost/Benefit Analysis Grid, and the poster drawn onto newsprint. Explain that the handout is to take home and is not a worksheet. Explain also that this approach to decision making is a good one to use on an issue that might cause polarization.

- To illustrate use of the technique, select a question such as: Shall we have all the children attend the first 15 minutes of the adult service each week? Shall we rent our space to a co-op nursery? Shall we allow the YRUU to meet without an adult sponsor?

- Have the group role-play an RE Committee (or any group in the congregation with diverse points of view). Establish the rules of procedure.
  (a) The entire group is going to focus on one quadrant of the grid at a time, filling it with notes on every possible reason for that choice. For example, first every benefit from deciding NO, then every possible cost of deciding NO, then every benefit from deciding YES, then every cost of deciding YES.
  (b) If a group discipline is maintained, there are no arguments, since everyone at a given moment is focusing on one viewpoint and supporting and expanding it. Everyone feels heard and affirmed, and all considerations get into the big picture.
  (c) Sometimes a very clear and easy consensus emerges. Sometimes not, but the process has its own rewards.

- A few additional pointers to use and pass along:
  (a) Sometimes, people will observe that a given outcome would be a cost to one interest group and a benefit to another, and so deserves to be listed in two quadrants, which it may, for purposes of later discussion.
  (b) Since the entire group is focusing on a given quadrant at any one time, participants will be better able to stay with the process if they are asked ahead of time to jot down ideas that come to them, which will need to be voiced during the focus on a different quadrant.
  (c) It is probably a good idea to make two or three complete circuits of the four quadrants, asking, "Are there additional costs/benefits people have thought of if we don't/do ___________?"
  (d) If anything less than a clear consensus emerges when people are finished naming consequences and assigning them to quadrants, the group as a whole can assign weight to each cost and benefit with a 1, 2, or 3, where 1 = minor importance, 2 = significance, and 3 = major importance. Each quadrant receives, thereby, a numerical score, indicating a preponderance of value.
  It is important, in any event, to consider the diagonals together, since, for example, the costs of NO and the benefits of YES reinforce each other.

Additional information if there is time (plus 10 minutes)
LEADERS: Another example of using a quadrant method for decision making is found in Handout #15. This is an appropriate tool to use when deciding which of many options a committee, Board, or individual might choose to accomplish a given task.

- Pass out the handout.
- Explain that when given an issue, there are often many ways to go about dealing with the situation. First brainstorm all the possible solutions to whatever the issue is. Then place each issue in whichever section of the quadrant is appropriate for that solution and that body.

An example: The Youth Adult Committee is trying to make youth more visible in the congregation's life.

Brainstormed solutions: Have an ongoing column in the newsletter, have youth usher at services, encourage youth to take part in other committees of the church, invite liaisons from other committees to the Youth Adult Committee, have liaisons from the Youth Adult Committee to other committees, have a Youth Service, ask that youth be used as liturgists in worship services, sponsor an all-church event, or have youth host the social hour.

The elements might be placed in the quadrants in this way to represent the control the committee has over the decision and the impact the solution might have on the issue:
High control and high impact: the newsletter column, and a Youth Service
High control but low impact: liaisons from the Youth Adult Committee to other committees, and sponsoring an all-church event
Low control but high impact: having youth usher or assist as liturgists, and inviting other committees to have liaisons with the Youth Adult Committee
Low control and low impact: to encourage youth to take an active role in other committees

- Allowing the group to decide what solutions they have the time and energy for, based upon their control and impact, can be very helpful when faced with a number of options.
- Have the group suggest other ways they might use this tool.

BREAK (10 minutes)

Volunteer Management (45 minutes)

NOTE: We suggest that you choose among alternatives regarding the following areas—after you determine which is most important for your participants, based upon their stated needs, and after they have familiarized themselves with the material in the Reader. Of course, you might divide the participants into two subgroups.

Recruitment (25 minutes)
Materials: Handout #16, "What Me!" from the Reader (p. 23)
LEADERS: Distribute handout #16, which begins "Lovely Letterhead."

- Invite participants to read the letter, imaging that all the blanks have been filled in appropriately for them.
- Invite them to share their responses.
- Tell them that Jerry Wright developed this format some years ago while serving a church as its MRE and received such responses to follow-up phone calls as these:
    1. "Yes!"
    2. "You know, when I first got your letter, I thought, No Way, but having had a chance to think about it, I'll give it a try."
    3. "I don't want to teach the class you suggested, but I would be interested in...."
    4. "No, I don't want to teach or even work in RE, but what I would like to do for the church next year is...."
- Share your own best recruiting techniques.
- Invite participants to share their own successes, or invite them to relate times they have been recruited for volunteer work and have felt good about being asked.
- Refer to the "What ME! Teach RE?" brochure from Howard County, (via REACH) included in the Reader, p. 23.

Care and Feeding (20 minutes)
Materials: Handout #17, two copies for each participant

LEADERS:

- Invite the participants to recall points from the Reader material on the nourishment and retention of volunteers.
- Invite them to recall their own experiences as volunteers—especially times they felt nurtured, supported, and cared for.
- Invite a few to name and celebrate ways in which they currently nurture and support volunteers who work under their supervision.
- Invite participants to jot down one or two things they would like to change in their own programs concerning the way volunteers are less well nurtured than they might be.
- Distribute Handout #17, "Personal Plan of Action Worksheet," as a journal activity on participants' own time, in which they begin with a goal they just jotted down. Since Handout #17 is a useful tool in a number of situations, provide participants with two copies so that they have a clean one to take home

Delegation Skills (45 minutes)

This material is adapted from a course on delegation offered by Cynthia Benson, Ph.D., industrial/organizational psychologist, Fort Collins, Colorado. It encompasses the following issues:

- What is delegation? (*Definition and small-group sharing of personal experiences surrounding delegation*)
- Why do we need to delegate? (*Brainstorming reasons, with leaders' input on the number1 reason we need to delegate in our RE programs*)
- How and when do we delegate? (*Steps in delegation and role-play*)

The material is rich enough to be expanded into a session by itself, but to fit it here, we have pared it to 45 minutes.

Introduction (5 minutes)
LEADERS: Say something like this in your own words:
Becoming an effective supervisor of an RE program includes learning *how* to delegate successfully and *when* to delegate tasks and responsibilities. Delegation means to *share* your workload so that you have *time to supervise* rather than actually performing the tasks yourself. Delegation also means to develop and motivate your members so that they can become fully committed to the RE program and church. Consider the following questions:

- Do you think that it's usually easier to do it yourself than to train and supervise others to do it?
- Do you find yourself doing almost everything to make sure that it is done right?
- Is your job so complex that it is difficult to explain to others precisely what you do, never mind having others do portions of it?

- Do you often feel angry or frustrated that you do more than others?
- Do you feel guilty because you delegate only tasks that a "trained monkey" could do?

If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then you need to start thinking about your delegation skills. And you are not alone! It is one of the most difficult parts of supervising other people.

LEADERS: Respond briefly to the above questions, pointing out the following:

- It is easier sometimes to do something yourself, but just as with a 2-year-old, "students" will never learn to do things themselves if you always do it for them.
- Training and supervising are difficult, but your program will never develop if you don't build commitment and satisfaction with learning opportunities.
- Delegation makes you take a hard look at your perfectionism. Do you feel OK about not always being in control?
- No job is too complex to start breaking into little pieces. If we buy into the myth that this job is only understood by us, then we start believing we are indispensable.
- If we feel angry or frustrated, we only have ourselves to blame if we don't start doing something about it.
- Are we good at delegating the boring tasks, and not sharing the fun projects?

LEADERS: Post the four criteria of delegation.
What is delegation? Delegation is an evolving, on-going relationship between a leader and a learner that satisfies four criteria:

Assignment—both leader and learner must understand that this is a delegation.

Authority—the delegate is given authority to ask for and receive resources needed, including time, money, equipment, and/or people to help.

Accountability—the delegation involves an obligation or understanding that is agreed upon.

Responsibility—the learner is usually responsible for the outcome, unless there is an understanding between the leader and learner. The leader is responsible for monitoring the delegation and giving feedback. The role of the leader is to give praise to the delegate and give the learner the glory when things are successful. But when things go awry, the leader should be ready to shoulder the blame and not leave the learner exposed.

Effective and Poor Delegation (15 minutes)
Materials: Handout #18

LEADERS: Your own experience is valuable in learning how to be an effective delegator. Perhaps you have worked as a volunteer in another program, such as Scouting or counseling, or worked as a volunteer in the ranks of an RE program.

We'd like you to divide into groups of 3 or 4 and share (1) a task that was delegated well to you, and (2) a task that was delegated poorly to you. Describe what made each example a poor or a good delegation, and if possible, include what could have made a poor example better.

Each group should select a spokesperson, who will then report back to the whole group on the characteristics of the poor and the effective examples of delegation described in their group.

LEADERS: After the list is generated, distribute and review Handout #18.

Why the Need to Delegate? (10 minutes)
<u>Materials:</u> newsprint, marker, tape

LEADERS: Brainstorm in the large group on why we need to delegate. Write answers on a blackboard or flipchart. Leaders may want to point out some of the following if not generated by the participants:

- Increases effective time management
- Taps other people's KSAPCs—knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics
- Shares responsibilities
- Decreases costs
- Avoid becoming indispensable
- Help church members develop
- Reduces stress and burnout
- Increases pro-active leadership, decreases reactive responses.

The No.1 reason that we as church staff and leaders need to delegate is that delegation helps increase the commitment to the RE program and the church. It is worth all the effort!

What and how to delegate

- In the large group, generate some examples in each of the following categories:
- Routine tasks, such as snack supplies, attendance
- Tasks you don’t have time for, such as brochure articles or call-backs
- Problem-solving tasks, such as how to make the hallway more inviting
- Tasks that are no longer really part of your job, such as nursery school liaison, social events
- Tasks that are developmental, such as attending Renaissance Program modules
- Tasks that will increase commitment and satisfaction, such as a presentation in front of a meeting, the last piece of a job, etc.

What not to delegate

- Tasks that are confidential
- Conflict management
- Responsibility for maintaining morale

Delegation Role-Play and Debriefing (15 minutes)
Materials: photocopy of this page, Handout #19

LEADERS: Photocopy the following role-play scenarios (or create your own), and place each one in an envelope for a group of two. (Depending upon the number of participants in your module, you may need several duplicates.) Also, supply each participant with a copy of Handout #19, “Steps in Delegation.”

- A new DRE comes to the District RE council or cluster meeting and says, “There are so few members on my RE Committee, I guess I’ll have to get some more.” Role-play how she might redefine her role and job and build commitment and satisfaction for the RE Committee. Portray an effective example of delegation.

- A longtime Sunday school teacher shares her ideas for articulating positive faith statements with the children in her class. She is excited about how successfully it works with the children. Role-play how you would delegate the task of sharing her ideas with other teachers and/or parents. Portray a good example.

- In an effort to help the DRE manage her time more efficiently, the RE Committee has suggested that you delegate the task of buying snack supplies in bulk to a willing parent or member. Role-play an effective delegation to the willing parent.

- Your minister and you have decided to share the planning of the children’s focus at the beginning of the service with interested members. Portray examples of effective delegation as you set up the Children’s Worship Committee.

- You would like to try delegating the organizing of the supply cabinets to some of the quieter, newer members. The cabinets haven’t been maintained as neatly as possible this year. Portray an effective delegation of the supply cabinet organizing.

Discuss role-play.

Journal Task (10 minutes)

Materials: poster for alternatives A and B, loose-leaf paper, pens

Alternative A:
LEADERS: Display poster. Have participants make a list of 10 major parts of their job. Now, jot down a way to delegate each part and why it would be valuable to delegate it. How would it help create community and commitment to delegate that job? Encourage drastic examples. The purpose of this exercise is to stretch out their minds. Ask them to even try being unrealistic and delegate everything they can think of!

Alternative B:
LEADERS: Display poster. Have participants make lists of what they want to delegate and what they want to keep for themselves.

Closing (5 minutes)

Materials: rubber bands, Reader for song (p. 65)

LEADERS:

- Invite participants to share some examples from their journal activity.
- Sing song from Reader: *From you, I receive*
  To you, I give
  Together, we share
  By this we live.
- Pass out the rubber bands and say: Take these bands as a symbol to remind you to delegate. In the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, “The mind stretched by a new idea never returns to its original shape.”

SESSION 5

Back Home Reality
(3 hours)

Goals

- To begin the transition from conference to regular life and job
- To experience problem-solving strategies
- To gain perspective about realistic and unrealistic attitudes about their jobs

Opening and Check-in (10 minutes)

A good sentence for check-in begins, "As I think about going home, I . . . ."

Preparation for Re-entry (2½ hours)

Stages of Disillusionment/Revitalization (30 minutes)
Materials: posters, newsprint, markers, tape

LEADERS: Say something like this in your own words:
All of us have heard people in our societies say they are burned out, and in fact, I as well as some of you have felt that way at times. After three years on the Board of Trustees, many of our active members just disappear. They are burned out!

The word *burnout* really applies to motors, electric elements, or rocket engines, but it can apply to people who work to the point of exhaustion. Occasionally, someone we know who is working in religious education abruptly resigns. Months later in talking with them they say, "I really liked the job, working with the children, being involved with other RE people, so I'm not sure why I quit except that I was just fed up with the whole thing!"

The subtitle of Edelwich's book *Burnout* is "Stages of Disillusionment." Edelwich points out that with any job, especially those that involve working with people, everyone will go through all or parts of four stages from Idealistic Enthusiasm to Apathy. These are not stages that one goes through in any set order, like Fowler's stages of Faith Development, but one could be experiencing some enthusiasm or discouragement in several ways at the same time. What Edelwich's stages give us is a way to look at ourselves and make changes before we are totally fed-up and quit.

LEADERS: To discuss the stages, prepare sheets of newsprint in the following manner: On the left half of the paper, in large letters, write the name of the stage and list the characteristics. On the right half of the paper, opposite the stage, write in the intervention in light pencil. After discussing the stage and its characteristics, have the participants brainstorm ideas of intervention. Have a list for yourself of important ones that they may miss. On the next page is a sample copy of the chart. Consider using contrasting colors, such as red ink for the stages and characteristics and green ink for the intervention side.

Stages of Disillusionment

IDEALISTIC ENTHUSIASM
- total job involvement
- ever available
- voluntary overwork
- high self-expectation
- high job expectation
- high energy
- perfection

REALISM
- delegation
- tomorrow
- time for self
- OK not to finish
- OK not to be perfect
- say NO
- OK not to work 18-hour days
- self-image - I'm OK
- job description
- job reality

STAGNATION
- results hard to assess
- job not everything
- thoughts on money
- hours are of concern
- career development
- no weekends
- no free time
- no family life

MOVEMENT
- schedule time
- priorities
- re-evaluate goals
- family life during week
- seek large salary
- talk to others in different fields
- talk with RE Committee
- address one problem at a time
- district involvement
- have life goals
- further education

FRUSTRATION
- question effectiveness
- is job worth doing
- nobody cares
- bad church politics
- procrastinate
- bored
- part time pay - large job

SATISFACTION
- support group
- three-person process to address concern
- find advocate
- reality check
- look for signs of success
- keep hours
- record activities
- involve others to solve problems
- call for help
- attend district and national events
- know there is need for change - do it

APATHY

well, it's a job
fits kids' schedule
give minimum time
minimum effort
avoid challenges
loss of creativity

INVOLVEMENT

attend workshops
read REACH
get on committee with other leaders
team
give self a push
get away for a while
spoil yourself
nurture relationships
identify results
contact with kids
work on own nutrition

Three-Person Process for Addressing Burnout Issues (60 minutes)
Materials: timer, poster, newsprint, markers

LEADERS: Say something like this in your own words:

> As you consider these lists, it may be easy or it may be difficult to position yourself in a particular stage. Reflect on where you might be, and take a moment to write a few sentences on the place that seems to match.
>
> Think about what issues come up for you now, and jot them down. See if you can identify three to five issues for yourself.

BREAK (10 minutes)

LEADERS: Form groups of three people, each with a different issue. Note that this is not to be a gripe session, but a chance to form creative solutions or strategies for maintaining, avoiding, or moving, etc. Avoid having two people from the same congregation in a triad.

The Three-Person Process

Step 1. (3 minutes) Person A states the issue, and Person B clarifies or actively listens. Person B offers no opinions and no solutions. After three minutes, ring bell.

Step 2. (5 minutes) Person B and Person C are consultants. They do not talk with A, who is silent and takes notes, if desired. B and C discuss what they heard and offer reflection. They do some brainstorming. After five minutes, ring bell.

Step 3. (5 minutes) Person B and Person C talk with Person A and help A form an action plan using the reflections and asking clarifying questions. After five minutes, ring bell.

Step 4. (1 minute) Person A writes down action plan that has been formulated. After one minute, ring bell.

Repeat steps 1 through 4 twice (30 min), so that each person gets to be person A. After each person has had such a turn, participants return to the large group.

Step 5. (15 minutes) Each participant briefly states her/his issue and action plan to the large group. Pass a watch around, and ask each person to speak for no more than *1 minute.*

Step 6. (5 minutes) Ask for large-group feedback on the process.

Step 7. Offer your closing thoughts for the session as appropriate.

LEADERS: Closing thoughts for the section:

> It is very hard to revitalize from the point of apathy. If the minister or congregation is in apathy, it is even harder. Apathy can be terminal or it can evolve into a growth experience. If one cares enough to be disappointed, there may be a way to turn apathy around. The focus should be on helping people, belief that the work is worthwhile, understanding the constraints of the job, getting some detachment from the job, and seeking balance in one's whole life.

Risk Management (30 minutes)
Materials: Handout #21

NOTE: An important role of an administrator is that of risk management. This is not to say that the Religious Educator should be responsible for all risk-management issues in a congregation, but that she/he should be aware of them. Dealing with our most vulnerable of our populations (children who are not verbal) and with groups of children can place us in risky situations. Most of us would not choose to avoid these situations, but we must enter them with open eyes and attempt to mitigate as many potentially dangerous situations as possible.

LEADERS:

- Give participants Handout #21.
- Go over these questions together. These questions are intended to make DREs aware of things that may not have crossed their minds as areas of concern. Some of our RE programs have been sued over issues brought up here.
- If you have examples to give in these areas, please elaborate, or ask the participants to share what they know.
- The goal here is to raise awareness and to invite DREs to go back to their congregations and ask these questions.

Back-Home Cautions and Journal Writing (15 minutes)

Materials: poster

LEADERS:

- Tell this story or another of your choosing:
  "One word of caution" It's easy to get excited about new ideas, especially if you think they will lead to improvements. In one church, the DRE talked with a new RE Chair about the desirability of asking each member of the RE Committee to volunteer to take on a specific area of responsibility, and she thought it was a great idea. She opened her first meeting as chair by handing out job assignments, and one valuable member immediately resigned!

- Suggest to the participants that they think through the best *process* for facilitating change and expect it to take time. They might want to make an appointment with the RE Committee chair or the minister to talk through their checklist privately and without pressure, then suggest to the RE Committee that a time be set aside for looking at its policies and procedures deliberately and at leisure. (A retreat would be an ideal setting, without the pressure of regular business items to consider.)

- Elicit re-entry wisdom from the participants. What previous lessons do they wish to remember from other growth experiences?

- Journal Writing: "The first thing I'm going to do when I get back to work is. . . ."

Closing the Conference (20 minutes)

Module Evaluation (10 minutes)
Hand out Evaluation Forms (from Display Box)

Closing (10 minutes)
Materials: prepared newsprint or Reader for song

LEADERS:
- Form a circle and invite participants to share a thought or feeling, such as, "Before I came here, I . . . ., and now . . . ."
- If you or a volunteer can lead the song, sing "From You I Receive, to You I Give," or do another song of your own choice.

Appendix

WHY GROUP DECISIONS ARE SUPERIOR

This claim is probably best supported by an extensive research project performed by Jay Hall, a social psychologist. He designed a test problem, which he called “Lost on the Moon,” and studied the results of group decision making under a variety of conditions. He found that “when a group’s final decision is compared to the independent points of view that the members held before entering the group, the group’s effort is almost always an improvement over its average individual resource, and often it is better than even the best individual contribution” (*Psychology Today*, November 1971, page 51). Hall discovered that the quality of a group’s decisions was significantly higher if group members followed these simple guidelines:

1. Avoid arguing for your own views. Present your position as lucidly and logically as possible, but listen to other reactions and consider them carefully before you press your point.
2. Do not assume that someone must win and someone must lose when discussion reaches a stalemate. Instead, look for the next most acceptable alternative for all parties.
3. Do not change your mind simply to avoid conflict and to reach agreement and harmony. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and be sure everyone accepts the solution for basically similar or complementary reasons. Yield only to positions that have objective and logically sound foundations.
4. Avoid conflict-reducing techniques such as majority vote, averages, coin-flips, and bargaining. When a dissenting member finally agrees, don’t feel that he must be rewarded by having his own way on some later point.
5. Differences of opinion are natural and expected. Seek them out and try to involve everyone in the decision process. Disagreements can help the group’s decision because with a wide rage of information and opinions, there is a greater chance that the group will hit upon more adequate solutions.

TRY THE “LOST ON THE MOON” TEST

We suggest you try the “Lost on the Moon” experiment for yourself (see Handout #11). Find four to seven other people, and take this test individually, without revealing each other’s answers. Then take the test as a group, first voting on the answers and then following the instructions above for making group decisions. The “right” answer, prepared by experts from the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, as well as instructions for scoring your answers, can be found in Appendix A3. Compare the total error score of your individual answers with the scores of the answers you developed in your group by voting and by consensus.

It’s obvious that group members will be more committed to a decision reached by consensus than to one settled by majority vote or mandated by one individual. A good decision isn’t of much value to a group if few people are willing to accept it.

"Lost on the Moon" Test: The Answers

Items	NASA's Reasoning	NASA's Ranks	Your Ranks	Error Points	Group Ranks	Error Points
Box of matches	No oxygen on moon to sustain flame; virtually worthless	15				
Food concentrate	Efficient means of supplying energy requirements	4				
Fifty feet of nylon rope	Useful in scaling cliffs, tying injured together	6				
Parachute silk	Protection from sun's rays	8				
Solar-powered portable heating unit	Not needed unless on dark side	13				
Two .45 caliber pistols	Possible means of self-propulsion	11				
One case of Pet milk	Bulkier duplication of food concentrate	12				
Two 100-pound tanks of oxygen	Most pressing survival need	1				
Stellar map (of the moon's constell-ation)	Primary means of navigation	3				
Self-inflating life raft	CO2 bottle in military raft may be used for propulsion	9				
Magnetic	Magnetic field	14				

compass	on moon is not polarized; worthless for navigation	
Five gallons of water	Replacement for tremendous liquid loss on lighted side	2
Signal flares	Distress signal when mother ship is sighted	10
First-aid kit injection needles	Needles for vitamins, medicines, etc., will fit special aperture in NASA space suits	7
Solar powered FM receiver-transmitter	For communication with mother ship, but FM requires line-of-sight transmission and short ranges	5
		TOTAL
Error points are the absolute difference between your ranks and NASA's (disregard plus or minus signs)	Scoring for individuals: 0-25 = excellent 26-32 = good 33-45 = average 46-55 = fair	56-70 = poor 71-112 = very poor, suggests possible faking or use of earth-bound logic

Role-Play Cards for Church A
(Board of Trustees)

President --- Board of Trustees	Board Member --- Portfolio includes Social Action Committee, as well as other program committees
Board Member--- Also Chair of RE Committee	Board Member--- Portfolio includes building use, maintenance of plant and grounds; oversees custodian; relates to office staff and management.
Board Member--- Portfolio includes finance committee, and pledge program; also memorial gifts and endowments.	Board Member--- Portfolio includes music program, and relates to Music Director; also includes Sunday Services and Worship Committees

Role-Play Cards for Church B
(Board of Trustees)

President of the Board-- Worried about what is happening at the church with so little custodial and secretarial help; older, long-time member.	Board Member --- Youngish; single; plays in local symphony; yearns to have a choir and a paid music director.
Treasurer of the Congregation--	Board Member--- Middle-aged; professional; worried about the mortgage; concerned also about social causes and the church's involvement.
Board Member-- Long-time church member; children are grown and moved away; spends many hours gardening in the churchyard.	Board Member-- Not been with the church very long; liaison to RE and other church committees; eager and full of newcomer zeal; married young adult with two children.

Suggested Schedule for Weekend Workshop

FRIDAY EVENING
Session I: Focus on the Individual (2 ¾ hours)

Segment: Beginning the Conference------------------------30 minutes plus gathering time
Segment: The Administrative Role -------------------------45 minutes
Break ---10 minutes
Continued ---55 minutes
Journal Writing ---10 minutes
3x5 Cards--- 5 minutes
Closing ---10 minutes

SATURDAY MORNING
Session II: The Religious Education Committee (3 hours)

Opening the Session --5 minutes
Housekeeping/Check-in --------------------------------------15 minutes
Segment: The RE Committee within the Congregation---80 minutes
Break ---10 minutes
Continued ---65 minutes
Journal Writing ---10 minutes
Closing---5 minutes

SATURDAY AFTERNOON
Session III: The Whole Church (3 hours, 5 minutes)

Opening/Check-in---15 minutes
Where Do I Fit? ---75 minutes
Break---10 minutes
Data Management---70 minutes
Journal Closing ---15 minutes

SATURDAY EVENING
Session IV: Decisions and Delegation (3 hours, 45 minutes)

Opening/Check-in---15 minutes
Practice in Decision Making---------------------------------95 minutes
Break---10 minutes
Volunteer Management--45 minutes
Delegation Skills---45 minutes
Journal Task--10 minutes
Closing---5 minutes

SUNDAY MORNING OR AFTERNOON
Session V: Back Home Reality (3 hours)

Opening/Check-in---10 minutes
Preparation for re-entry--------------------------------------90 minutes
Break---10 minutes
Continued ---35 minutes
Back Home Cautions and Journal Writing------------------15 minutes
Closing the Conference---------------------------------------20 minutes

Suggested Schedule for Week-long Workshop

DAY ONE
Session I: Focus on the Individual (2 ¾ hours)

Segment: Beginning the Conference------------------------30 minutes plus gathering time
Segment: The Administrative Role -------------------------45 minutes
Break --10 minutes
Continued ---55 minutes
Journal Writing ---10 minutes
3x5 Cards-- 5 minutes
Closing ---10 minutes

DAY TWO
Session II: The Religious Education Committee (3 hours)

Opening the Session --5 minutes
Housekeeping/Check-in -------------------------------------15 minutes
Segment: The RE Committee within the Congregation---80 minutes
Break --10 minutes
Continued --65 minutes
Journal Writing ---10 minutes
Closing---5 minutes

DAY THREE
Session III: The Whole Church (3 – 3 ½ hours)

Opening/Check-in---15 minutes
Where Do I Fit? --75 minutes
Break--10 minutes
Data Management---70 + 30 optional minutes
Journal Closing ---15 minutes

DAY FOUR
Session IV: Decisions and Delegation (3 hours, 45 minutes – 3 hours, 55 minutes)

Opening/Check-in---15 minutes
Practice in Decision Making---------------------------------95 + 10 optional minutes
Break--10 minutes
Volunteer Management--------------------------------------45 minutes
Delegation Skills---45 minutes
Journal Task--10 minutes
Closing---5 minutes

DAY FIVE
Session V: Back Home Reality (3 hours)

Opening/Check-in---10 minutes
Preparation for re-entry------------------------------------90 minutes
Break--10 minutes
Continued --35 minutes
Back Home Cautions and Journal Writing-----------------15 minutes
Closing the Conference---------------------------------------20 minutes