

MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

Leaders' Guide



**THE RENAISSANCE PROGRAM
Unitarian Universalist Association
2000**

Ministry With Youth

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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 session, 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:

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Help Wanted!</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Persons to Lead Singing</i></p> <p>Qualifications: Ability to sing on pitch Tolerance for those of us who can't</p> <p><i>Sign here to apply:</i></p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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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 MODULE LEADERS MINISTRY WITH YOUTH

The Reader for this module is an extensive collection of materials addressing many aspects of ministry with youth. We highly recommend that leaders read the entire collection and that participants become familiar with its contents and read as much of it as possible before attending the module.

Goals

The philosophy of this module is that youth will be ministered to by Unitarian Universalist congregations when they are respected as community members. As youth are empowered to be full members of Unitarian Universalist communities, both they and the community will be strengthened. Youth empowerment does not mean that adults are disempowered or should abdicate responsibility. It is not either/or. Youth empowerment means that the more empowered youth are as youth, the more appropriately empowered adults will be as adults.

See “Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module Overview”, Reader, pp. 5-7.

Materials

Provided by the host church: newsprint and easel, markers, masking tape, 3x5 cards, chalice/matches/chalice table, chimes, name tags, post-it notes, brown papers lunch bags, stapler

Provided by leaders: schedule for the module, sign-up sheets for worship and break volunteers, a “Parking Lot” poster where leaders and participants can write topics or issues to be discussed after each module session, words of any song not in the UU hymnal (*Singing the Living Tradition*), worship resources

Provided by the Renaissance Program Office: Readers, module Display Box, evaluation forms

Suggested for participants to bring: Reader, hymnal, musical instruments, activities to share. Leaders may want to include these items in their letter of welcome to participants.

SESSION 1

Getting Started (3 hours)

LEADERS: Use the “Mixer Activities” and “Getting Started” from the Renaissance Program Core Material at the beginning of this Leaders’ Guide

Beginnings (1½ hours) including:

- Gathering Activities
- Bond-building
- Welcome, “Baggage Check,” Introductions
- Logistical Details of the Weekend
- Housekeeping Time
- Covenanting

Overview of the Ministry With Youth Module (20 minutes)

Activity: What do we mean by “Ministry With Youth”?

NOTE: If you would like a visual for this activity, write each word of the module title on newsprint before discussing that word, until the whole name of the module is spelled out.

1. Lead a short discussion on what the word *ministry* means.

NOTE: The word ministry implies that what we are about is of the utmost importance, that it deserves care, thought, and prayer. Each of us, youth advisors and Directors of Religious Education, who interacts with youth has a ministry.

2. Lead a short discussion on what the word *with* means.

NOTE: This word expresses our view that youth ministry is a mutual ministry, that we do it with the youth. It is not a one-way flow of ministry. We are ministered to even as we minister. The words ministry with imply a particular theology of power relations.

3. Write the word *youth* at the very top of the sheet on a newsprint stand. Underneath that, record a brainstorming of all the words used to refer to this age group (basically 14 to 18). When the word *kids* is mentioned, write it very large in the middle of the paper. When the brainstorming is finished, draw a large circle encompassing all of the words and make a slash through the middle (the universal NO sign).

NOTE: Youth is the word of choice for the people we are talking about. We honor people by using the terms they prefer. Suggest that the group help to support one another throughout the module by using this term.

Discuss the age range implied in the term *youth*. Some congregations use *youth* to mean anyone under 18 years of age. The UUA Young Religious Unitarian Universalists include ages 14-20 years. If this is the focus of the discussions in this module, understand that some districts include middle school, or grades 6-12, in the definition of *youth*.

Review “Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module Overview” in the Reader (p.1). Also draw attention to the Reader material related to disabilities, which is background for all discussions, particularly Session 2.

Hopes for the Module (5 minutes)

NOTE: This activity will help put participants at ease about expressing the issues or concerns they came to the module with. The activity will also give the leaders a sense of what the participants’ needs are so that they may determine which sections, emphasis, or time might most suit the participants needs, thus making for a successful experience.

Activity: Writing our hopes

NOTE: Have the newsprint stand ready with the label “Hopes for the Module.”

1. Pass out post-it notes, and ask participants to write down things that they hope to learn in the module. They may wish to write them in the form of a question.
2. Ask participants to come up when they are finished and stick their post-it notes on the newsprint stand.

NOTE: Advise participants that the leaders will go over these hopes before the next Session. Leaders will be mindful during the module of which topics carry a heavier concern to the group. If there are particular topics that this module does not address, leaders can inform the group later and suggest that they use meals and free time to discuss these topics with one another.

Revisiting Our Youth (30 minutes)

NOTE: This activity will help participants to remember their experience of being a youth. It will allow participants to share more about their own lives in what is called an opening-up activity. Leaders may refer back to this activity during the Session on the “Five Steps to Building Community in Youth Groups.”

Activity: Continuum questions

For the purpose of this activity, you will need an oblong space in which people may move around. You may choose to move to a different area of the room, to move chairs to create this space, or to move into a hallway if necessary.

Tell the group that for this activity, there will be an imaginary line lengthwise across the space, with the opposite ends labeled either None/Many or Yes/No. Direct participants to stand closest to the point along that line that best describes their experience or response in answering certain questions.

After posing the questions, allow time for participants to move around. Once everyone is in place, ask for volunteers to share why they are standing where they are.

NOTE: There are usually extroverts who are very willing to share their experiences. Of course, call on them, but also encourage others to share. You may ask particular people if they would feel comfortable sharing their reasons for standing in a particular place on the continuum.

The questions:

1. As a 14-year-old, how many friends did you have? (None/Many)
2. As an 18-year-old, how many friends did you have? (None/Many)
3. As a 14-year-old, did you feel good about yourself? (Yes/No)
4. As an 18-year-old, did you feel good about yourself? (Yes/No)
5. As a 14-year-old, did you belong to a religious community? (Yes/No)
6. As an 18-year-old, did you belong to a religious community? (Yes/No)
7. During your youth, did you have an adult whom you trusted to share your feelings with? (Yes/No)

Moving Into a Break (10 minutes)

Before the break, advise participants that:

1. You will be modeling the transforming of a meeting space into a sacred worship space and would appreciate everyone's leaving the room in order to do so.
2. Worship service will include a guided meditation to help them remember their teenage years. Acknowledge that the leaders are aware that such meditations may bring up uncomfortable or painful memories for many people. State that it is your intention that only memories that are safe to remember should come up during that guided meditation. Ask anyone who is concerned to talk with one of the leaders during the break.
3. Entry into the worship space will begin with a song, so please gather at the announced meeting space on time to learn the song.
4. You will be discussing "The History of the Unitarian Universalists Youth Movement" in the Reader (p. 37) during Session 2. If participants have not yet done so, they should read this before Session 2.

Begin the break by telling participants the time of the next gathering.

NOTE: At this time one of the leaders should set up the worship space. It is recommended that the meeting space be transformed into a youth-worship type atmosphere for this module. This will help participants learn ways to transform youth meeting space in their own congregation into a worshipful environment.

The co-leader should take responsibility for (1) touching base with participants, and (2) seeking out participants to help with readings for the worship service.

Closing Worship (30 minutes)

The idea of this worship service is to create a worship service similar to those created by youth. The worship service will model an "Opening Up" experience and an "Affirmation" experience. Leaders may refer to these later during the Session on the "Five Steps to Building Community," Session 2, p. 31.

Activity: The worship service (suggested order of service, p. 23)

NOTE: Remembering teenage years is not easy for many people. There are good reasons why people block the memories of these years. Remembering may bring floods of images long buried, related to sexual, physical, or emotional abuse by parents or other “trusted” adults; anxiety about sexuality or acceptability by peers; pain and loneliness; spiritual despair; and other “cans of worms.” That is why it is extremely important to preface the guided visualization with words that create safety.

Use words that are comfortable for you and convey the same sense. All words in the visualization should be paraphrased so that you are at ease saying them. If you as a leader are not comfortable with guided visualization, make sure that the person who leads this one IS.

About the reading: Options:

1. Make enough copies of the reading (p. 23) for all, and highlight specific sections for several readers. The leader may then ask for volunteers to share the reading during the service.
2. Have the reading done by one or two people.
3. Have one of the leaders do the reading.

Sample Outline for Worship Service

Atmosphere:

The room should be semi-dark.

Altar options:

1. A low table with an altar cloth
2. A cloth on the floor (for protection from possible wax dripping, place paper between the altar cloth and floor). A taper may be used for lighting the smaller candles during the service.
3. Place a chalice in the middle of the altar surrounded by enough tea lights or votive candles for everyone

Seating options:

1. The chairs are arranged in a circle around the altar.
2. The chairs can be moved out of the way for people to sit on the floor (be mindful that some may need to use a chair, so keep a few close by).

Learning the song:

NOTE: To help empower the transformation that we ask of adults working with youth, it is helpful if they become a “lover of leaving” any negative preconceptions of youth or of working with youth (see song lyric for the Song of Gathering, in the YRUU Songbook in the Display Box). Although some adults have a difficult time with this concept, youth feel that it is important to be a “lover of leaving” in order to accept change in their lives and seek out new journeys.

Order of Worship

The leaders guide the group in by holding hands and singing “Come, Come, Whoever You Are” (*YRUU Songbook*, second edition; *Singing the Living Tradition*, Hymn 188).

Song of gathering:

“Come, come, whoever you are, wanderer ,worshipper, lover of leaving.
Ours is no caravan of despair, Come, yet again come.”

Chalice lighting and words:

“We light this chalice for the youth of our movement, and as we light the chalice, may we invite the spirits and voice of these youth with us tonight.”

Music:

“Dancing Circles in the Night” (from the YRUU song tape in the Display Box)

Reading:

READING

by Lisa Rubin

Please listen to me. Don't tell me that I shouldn't feel the way I am feeling. Recognize that these feelings are mine and that they are REAL.

Please listen to me. Don't do the dishes, fuss with the papers, straighten the pillows, clean your glasses or pick at the lint on your clothes. Let your eyes meet mine and be with me. Even if it seems insignificant to you, my problems are important to me.

Please listen to me. Don't tell me your story, or the story of someone else you know who has been in the same situation. When you spend your time thinking of what to say next, I know you are not listening when I speak.

Please listen to me. Don't daydream or think about where you have to go and what you have to do. Look me in the eyes—and nod, slightly.

Please listen to me. Don't get defensive; this isn't about you. It's about what I am going through. It's about my struggles, my successes, and my journey.

Please listen to me. Be with me. And when you ask, I will listen to you.

Meditation on teenage years:

LEADERS: Ask participants to find relaxing positions. Give them time to take some deep breaths. Speak slowly, allowing time for participants to do the mental work.

I'd like you to take a mental journey with me to retrieve your adolescence in your mind. You will have an opportunity to share the experience at the end, as you wish.

As you sit in your chair or lie on the floor, become aware of the parts of your body that are now being held by those surfaces (the chair, the floor). Allow your weight to sink into those surfaces and to be held by them. Just as the chair or the floor can hold your body now, your mind and our community can hold your memories of your teenage years. Allow yourself to know in your deepest heart and mind that only memories that are safe for you will surface now. All of us in this room are traveling together back to selves we may have forgotten or left behind along the way.

Sink, sink, deep into yourself, back through your adulthood, your young adulthood, until you come into yourself as a teenager.

Picture yourself sitting in the bedroom of your youth. You are sitting on your bed. Feel yourself in the body of your youth. How big or small is your body? What is your hair like? What are your clothes like? Look around your room; think about how you feel in your room.

Listen to your feelings. Is there something you would like to tell someone? Is there something you would like to hear from an adult?

Under your bed there is a journal and a pen. Reach down and pick them up. Take some time now to write in your journal about those things that you want to be able to say and those things that you would like to be able to hear.

After you finish writing in your journal, put it back under the bed. Someone has come into your room. It is the adult you. The adult you reaches out to hold the youth that you are and say the things you want to hear.

LEADER: Don't hurry through this. Allow a few moments for this process to happen.

Remember that this adult and youth are always accessible when they need one another.

Now I invite you to return to this space and to be here with us tonight. Feel yourself where your body touches the floor/chair. When you are comfortable, open your eyes.

LEADER: Provide a moment of silence to digest the meditation.

Candlelighting: (Invitation to share, as you light a candle)

Feel free to light a candle, in honor of the youth you were, a youth of today, or another youth whose life you would like to make a difference in.

Song:

“How Could Anyone Ever Tell You?” (excerpted, words by Libby Roderick, from *The YRUU Songbook*, second edition, Display Box)

NOTE: One leader can begin singing, looking into the eyes of the other leader, who joins in. Then participants are encouraged to join in and to look into one another's eyes. It's nice if leaders stand up and take the hand of the person near them, encouraging them to stand also. Participants may put their arms around each other's waists as they sing.)

“How could anyone ever tell you, You were anything less than beautiful?
How could anyone ever tell you, You were less than whole?
How could anyone fail to notice That your loving is a miracle?
How deeply you're connected to my soul.”

Closing words:

NOTE: Use something easy to remember or impromptu so that the leader does not have to be holding paper and separate herself/himself from the circle.

Suggested words: (by Lisa Rubin)

Go well now into your days, embrace the journey, even in its most difficult time. And if you struggle along your way, remember these hands. Reach out, if even in your prayers; we will be with you, this circle of friends.

SESSION 2

Bond-Building (10 minutes)

LEADERS: Role-model a YRUU bond-building activity for the group. Have this on the sign-up board, or ask someone who is familiar with bond-building activities to lead this. This is another opportunity for participants to experience a level of the “5 Steps to Building Community.” You may refer to it later. Participants appreciate learning new games to take back to their youth.

Activity options:

1. A name game.
2. A short Step One bond-building game from *Deep Fun*, the YRUU games book edited by Sienna Baskin.

Revisiting Our Hopes (5 minutes)

LEADER: This activity will help participants understand that you are aware of their concerns and let them know which ones will be addressed during this module. Participants are great resources for each other. You will usually find that participants are ready and willing to share experiences and understandings with one another. This is a great way to begin building a network of support in a district.

Do ahead of time:

1. Look at the “hopes” people wrote on post-it notes during last Session.
2. On the newsprint stand, place the “hopes” in categories.
3. Label the sessions of the module that will address those items.
4. On the display table write down resources that may address concerns.
5. Have another newsprint stand for “topics to be addressed”
6. If there are some areas that are not addressed by the module, suggest that folks use free time and meal times to discuss these issues.
7. Advise group that you will revisit unanswered questions during the visit to the “topics to be addressed” in the last Session. Encourage participants to add issues, concerns, or questions to the newsprint throughout the module.

History of the UUA’s Youth Movement (30 minutes)

NOTE: You will often find that people who take this module include new DREs, new advisors, and advisors with no attachment to UU youth programming outside of their own congregation.

UU youth and the adults who work with them both benefit when the adults have an understanding of Unitarian Universalist youth and their movement today. Therefore, it is important to take time to reflect on our youth movement’s past to better understand our vision for their future.

It is also helpful for adults to understand why their role is detrimental to the existence of YRUU.

Activity:

Ask participants for reflections from their reading assignment (“History of Unitarian Universalist Youth Movement” on p. 37 in the Reader). Ask what struck them most about

the history of our youth movement.

NOTE: Participants generally love to “get into” discussing issues revolving around the history of the UUA’s youth movement. Many times there will be old LRYers at this module who will also have reflections of their own experience of the movement. It is important to stress that a major difference between the two youth organizations is that LRY was based on youth autonomy, whereas YRUU is based on a philosophy of youth empowerment and collaboration between youth and adults.

Who Are Youth? (15 minutes)

This exercise will help participants to:

- Draw from personal memories and experiences about what is going on with teenagers
- Think about youth as whole persons, with physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and intellectual aspects
- Focus on the lives of the people with whom we will minister
- Realize the diversity and wide-ranging experiences that are true of all adolescents

Activity: Brainstorming

Leaders may be creative about using words or drawings.

Have group members brainstorm words that come to mind when they think of various the aspects of youth: physical, emotional, social, intellectual, and spiritual. Record the words on the newsprint stand. Create one sheet for each word.

NOTE: There will inevitably be words that are exact opposites on these lists. If members feel the need to “convince” each other, emphasize that adolescence is a long bridge between childhood and young adulthood and that it is perfectly natural for that bridge to contain all aspects. Note that we adults happen to contain many opposites.

Youth With Disability: What Would It Be Like?

NOTE: This activity increases awareness of implications of a disability for the person with the disability and for those who are planning programs to be inclusive.

Activity: A Guided Visualization, by Sally Patton

- Have each participant pick one of the disabilities from the accompanying list and become familiar with the description. Try to make sure that each disability is picked at least once.
- Copy the descriptions and give participants the description for the disability that they selected.
- Explain that the participants are to imagine what it would be like to be a youth around age 15 who has this disability.

LEADERS say: Take a few minutes and imagine yourself as this 15-year-old with the disability you picked. Imagine you are coming new into your church to participate in the youth group. In your mind, walk through a typical youth group experience in your church, and try to visualize it through the eyes of this 15-year-old. How are you greeted? Is there someone there to help you through the first youth group experience? How does your youth leader react? How do the youth react to your disability or to your behavior—especially behavior that seems strange to them?

Can you easily participate in the activities that are planned, or are they too complicated or so much like school that they scare you? Are you confused? Do the youth talk to you or ignore you? Do you feel as if everyone is staring at you or as if they are comfortable with your presence? Does the youth leader pay too much attention to you or not enough? Do you feel included? At the end of the group session, do you feel as if you want to return?

Now take a few minutes and imagine what the best, most ideal experience for you would be like. How would the youth experience look, how would the youth act, how would the youth leader act? Create the best possible religious education experience for yourself.

LEADERS: Have the participants share what they felt while attending their RE program as a youth with a disability. Talk about ways the RE youth experience works well in your church and ways it could be improved to be welcoming to all youth.

Please draw attention to the additional items in the Reader, namely, “Welcoming People With Disabilities Into the YRUU Community” (p.28).

Disability Descriptions

A youth in a wheelchair. (You have a spinal injury so that you have use of your arms with braces, but no use of your legs. Sometimes you involuntarily jerk forward. You like sports and reading poetry.) “The last church I went to did not have any ramps, so I had to be carried everywhere. It was humiliating. After bringing my chair upstairs, I could not move around much because there was furniture everywhere. The youth leader was nice and the youth were curious, and I do not mind that because I am different. But they had this circle meditation and talk, and all the kids and youth leader sat on pillows on the floor, and I sat in my chair and had to look down on everyone. People have a tendency to think I am stupid just because I am in a wheelchair, so the youth leader and youth talked to me as if I were 6 years old. I wish I had been made to feel more welcome. I hope my experience in the new church is better.”

A youth with Down syndrome. (You have the visible physical attributes of a Down syndrome child, and so you know that anyone who does not know you looks at you funny. Sometimes you cannot follow what is going on, but if someone explains it to you, you feel more comfortable. You like caring for small children and singing.) “The last church I went to did not think I belonged with other kids my age, so they gave me a special tutor who invented activities for me. I missed being with the other kids. I know I look different, and some kids think I am dumb and fat and make fun of me, but still I’d rather be around other kids. Sometimes I am clumsy and too loud and I do not understand what is going on. This upset the youth leader and the kids, so they gave me my own special tutor. I hope that I get to be with kids in this new church.”

A child who has ADHD. (You have always had a lot of energy and can’t stand to sit still. You like to talk about everything. You know adults think you are often disruptive and uncontrollable, but you do not understand why everyone gets so upset. Kids think you are odd, and when things get a little out of hand, they think you are deliberately trying to be bad. You like to build things and climb mountains.) “It was awful at the last church. I got kicked out of the youth group three times. They kept doing these boring discussion groups, so I invented stuff to do to keep me busy, which is when I got into trouble. Some of the other youth liked doing things with me, and then they also got into trouble, and then they could not hang out with me anymore. I do not understand why this happens, and it makes me so angry. No one understands. I do not think this new church will be any better. No one ever likes me.”

A child with Aspergers (high functioning). (You know you are different, but you do not know why. You do not understand people; they are alien objects. It makes you so uncomfortable to be touched or for someone to try and make eye contact. You focus on one thing at a time but not for long. You like dinosaurs and know everything about when they lived, what they ate, what the different species are. You wish they still lived so that you could have one as a pet” My parents are making me go to another church and try out another youth group. I would rather stay at home, read books about dinosaurs, and research dinosaurs on the Web. I hope to become a paleontologist. I do not understand why the other youth are not interested in dinosaurs like I am. The youth annoy me; anyway, I would much rather be by myself. At the last church, they would not let me talk about dinosaurs, and they wanted me to share my feelings. I am not sure what that means; it makes no sense. In the new youth group, I hope I can lead a discussion about dinosaurs.”

A child with a learning disability. (Sometimes you feel as if you must be from another planet, because when you talk, people look at you funny as if you are strange and not making any sense. You try so hard to understand, but evidently you do not because you are always screwing up. You think you are creative and intelligent, but you have such difficulty reading the words and doing the math. But you can invent things in your head and you love to draw.) “I hate school, everyone there thinks I am dumb except for my tutor. I have all these special classes, so the kids know I am stupid. In the regular classes I get so anxious I am going to screw up, I almost always have a stomachache. The last church we went to was not much better than school. They kept having these reading and discussion groups. It would take me so long to read the material. The discussions were interesting, but whenever they asked me for my opinion, I would get so scared that I couldn’t say anything. I always had an answer afterwards, but then it was too late and they’d be talking about something else. I do have good ideas. It would be great if I could share what is inside of me in the new youth group.”

Five Steps to Building Community in Youth Groups (20 minutes)

[The five steps: Bonding, Opening Up, Affirming, Stretching, Deeper Sharing]

NOTE: This activity will help participants gain an understanding of the structure of building community in a group. Adults sometimes jump right into stretching activities before a safe environment is created within the group. Understanding the Five Steps to Building Community in Youth Groups will help adults who work with youth create safe, affirming situations that help individuals and groups to prosper.

Activity:

On the newsprint stand, draw a set of steps. Have people refer to the “Five Steps to Building Community in Youth Groups” *Deep Fun* or “Building Intimacy” in *Youth Advisor Handbook*, p. 20. These are based on a model developed by Denny Rydberg in *Building Community in Youth Groups* (Group Publishing Inc., 1985). A summary of these steps is on p. 39 of the Reader.

1. For each step: Ask someone to read it aloud as you write the name at the top of each appropriate step.
2. Then have a short discussion on that step, and ask the group to give you some ideas of activities that are associated with that step (for example, for Bond-building—making pizza, making mail bags, eating; for Opening Up—Spill the Basket game). Remind people about the difference between bond-building and opening up. People often get mixed up and think

bond- building is like a check-in. Check-ins require an experienced sense of familiarity and safety.

NOTE: Leaders should highlight the following aspects of each step or refer to “Building Community in Youth Groups” in the Reader p. 39.

Step One: Bonding

- Begin to identify as part of the team
- Break down cliques and barriers
- Establish a relationship of trust within the group
- Problem-solving tasks/activities that require members to work together with specific instructions and cooperation is the goal.
- Each person’s input is accepted and welcomed by others
- Low-risk activities, so that participants reveal only as much as they are comfortable with, such as interests and hobbies.

Step Two: Opening Up

- Can realize personal imperfections and uniqueness, knowing that group loves them
- Show genuine interest in others, leads to trust
- The more sympathetically the group listens, the greater the trust.
- Activities allow sharing to the degree that people are comfortable.
- Participants feel enthusiastic about deepening friendships.
- Move toward revealing hopes, fears and dreams.

Step Three: Affirming

- Share appreciation of and affirm each other
- Participants leave with warm and fuzzy feeling
- Can disagree but respect diversity.

Step Four: Stretching

- Occurs in response to a situation that is beyond usual daily events.
- Realize their importance to entire group
- Going beyond normal comfort level, actively care for each other
- Sharing more of self, and still cared for, affirmed

Step Five: Deeper Sharing

- Share deeply; set goals and visions
- Group sharing of problems; willing to take risks together.
- Help individual work through problems, but still hold the person accountable

Notes for discussion:

- Not all sharing is appropriate for the group, especially if it makes others uncomfortable. There needs to be an ongoing understanding of individual and group boundaries.
- If a new person enters the group, the group will have to go to the first steps and orient the newcomer. You can do this by sharing traditions, explaining group “culture” as references arise, and having a game or activity that makes the newcomer feel part of the group.
- The focus is an understanding of where the group is, rather than a race to Deeper Sharing!

Leaders should explain that it is important to keep in mind the process of these community-building steps before they go on to more detailed work in the module.

Break (10 minutes)

Balanced Youth Programming (see Reader, pp. 40-54) (45 minutes)

NOTE: The Five Components of Balanced Youth Programming were introduced to people involved in ministry with youth in the Five-Year Review Report of the YRUU activities (1989). They were then incorporated into the first version of the Ministry With Youth module. The YRUU youth introduced the Five Components during the Youth Focus at the UUA's General Assembly in 1996. Although some participants may be familiar with the Five Components of Balanced Youth Programming, this activity will further help participants understand the need for balanced youth programming in their own congregations.

This activity will help those unfamiliar with the Five Components of Balanced Youth Programming to (a) conceptualize youth programs as being related to and determined by congregational programs for all ages, and (b) begin to think of the congregation as a whole system. Allow participants the opportunity to recognize and verbalize strengths and weaknesses of their congregation's perceived commitment to its youth.

Activity:

Review the "Balanced Youth Program, SWAFLI Overview" by the Rev. Helen Zidowecki (Reader, pp 40 ff.).

Step One (15 minutes). Draw a large circle on newsprint, and divide it into five parts (pie pieces). Add a label to a pie piece as that topic is reviewed, and record on newsprint the discussion of each of the five components of a balanced youth program.

Step Two (5 minutes).

1. Fold the handout at midline. Draw a circle under the space marked "Your Congregation."
2. Think about your congregation's commitment to each of the five components. Draw a pie chart that assigns one of the five components to each of the pieces of the pie. This is based on the relative amount of time and congregational energy (adults) allotted to this component.
3. Note some of the activities in the respective areas.

Step Three (5 minutes). Instruct participants to turn over the paper. Repeat this activity based on the relative amount of time and youth programming energy allotted.

Step Four (2 minutes). Instruct participants to unfold the page and compare the distribution of time in the two parts.

Step Five (8 minutes). Have participants divide into pairs and take four minutes each to share their revelations. (If there are folks present from the same congregation, they may wish to do this together.)

Step Six (10 minutes) Have participants return to the large group and share about this activity and their revelations.

NOTE: To reiterate, our premise in beginning here is that the similarity between the priorities of the congregation and the youth programming will influence how the youth activities are implemented. For example, a congregation that doesn't have a strong social action program will not be effective in modeling social action and therefore might have difficulties launching a social action program with their youth group. However, the congregation may also welcome the youth activities in this area as a way to energize the congregation.

Inventory and the Five Components of Balanced Youth Programming (20 minutes)

Activity: Small-group work (one for each of the five components). Each group will prepare a 10-minute presentation on newsprint, answering the questions related to their component.

Have participants refer to the following questions in the “Five Components of Balanced Youth Programming,” which are in the Reader section on Balanced Religious Education Program.

1. What is the focus of this component? What do you want to accomplish?
2. What are some examples of this component?
3. What kind of organizational structure of a congregation would support the focus of this component?
4. What are some of the resources for youth for this component? See the Reader and the display table.
5. How can youth be involved within the congregation?
6. What quality-control and safety considerations would you have in planning an activity for youth in this area? (e.g., time to prepare, transportation, etc.)

Small Groups Report Back (50 minutes)

This activity will give participants time to:

- Share revelations about how congregational structure for the five components can be used in youth programming
- Share information with others about resources available through the UUA to support each component

Activity: Each small group has 10 minutes to make a presentation on its work.

NOTE: At the end of this activity, leaders should take a moment to acknowledge the amount of work that the group is doing. Thank them for their focus and participation. Acknowledge their efforts and intentions in working with our youth.

Sign-Up Time!

Now is the time to ask participants to sign up for a specific activity on the newsprint sheets that you have placed strategically in the room. The newsprint should have places for volunteers to sign up to lead the group in:

- a bond-building activity, for the beginning of Session 3

- an opening-up activity, for the beginning of Session 4
- an affirming activity, for the beginning of Session 5
- a 30-minute youth like worship service, for the end of Session 5

Inform the group of the starting time for the next Session.

SESSION 3

Bond-Building (15 minutes)

Now participants understand “It’s not just a game!”

Activity:

Have volunteer participant(s) lead the group in a bond-building activity of their choice. Suggested reference: *Deep Fun, Step One, Youth Advisor Handbook*.

Remembering Mentors (20 minutes)

This activity will help participants think about the people who have empowered them to be leaders. The activity will help participants remember the value of being supported by someone involved in their development as a leader.

Activity: “Remembering a Mentor” (5 minutes)
and “Sharing the Memory” (15 minutes)

Step 1. Ask participants to think back to one of their first leadership positions. (State an explicit assumption that you would not be at this module if you were not a leader, because this is a leadership training weekend.) Use these questions to provoke memories:

- How did you come to be in that position?
- Who supported you in your work?
- What was difficult?
- How did you overcome those difficulties?

Focus on people who supported you in being successful.

Step 2. In groups of 3 to 4 people (who are sitting nearby), have participants share their first leadership experience and discuss the people who were supportive.

Step 3. Whole-group sharing.

The emotional quality of remembering mentors is not to be underestimated. As the group comes back together ask people to describe the qualities that are present as they remember their mentors.

NOTE: A deep love and respect is present for people who had strong mentors, and a deep sadness may become evident if there are people there who feel that they did not have mentors.

Working Toward Stronger Youth/Adult Congregational Connections

To recognize the long-term extended value in youth programming.

(30 minutes)

Activity:

1. Ask participants to think about how youth programming can strengthen the life of their own congregation.
2. Have participants write about this for 5 minutes.
3. Ask participants to share their reflections
4. In the reader, refer to “Five Ways to Work Toward Stronger Youth/Adult Congregational Connections” from the Youth Advisor Task Force. (Reader, p. 59). Ask participants to think about which of these ways may work in their own congregation.

References: In the Reader:

Youth Involvement in the Congregation (p. 55)

Intergenerational Programming within Congregations (p. 56)

Local Religious Education Committee and Youth Adult Committee (p. 56)

Advisors: Selection Training Support (40 minutes, including 10-minute break)

This activity helps to engage participants in critical thinking about working with youth advisors. It will give participants the opportunity to practice building programming that values and supports youth advisors.

Activity: Small-Group Discussion

Read the descriptions of the small-group tasks (below). Have participants self-select into the three groups, and allow for 30 minutes plus a minute break.

If a large number of people want to be in one group, consider dividing that group. For example, have two groups meet about selection/recruitment, one meet about training, and another meet about support. Give group representatives their tasks.

Group 1: Recruitment and Selection of Advisors

Task: It is time to find new advisors in your congregation. Design an ideal recruitment technique. Decide in advance how many advisors you need, what kind of commitment they need to make, and whether they will be junior high or senior high advisors.

Group 2: Training of Youth Advisors

Task: Design a training session for advisors in your congregation/clusterdistrict.

Group 3: Support of Youth Advisors

Task: Design a support system for the advisors in your congregation.

LEADERS: Photocopy or print the group tasks that follow onto paper. Laminate the paper, three-hole punch it, and add it to this section of your leader's guide binder. This allows for a nice "presentation" and will help to cut down on your preparation time.

Group 1: Recruitment and Selection of Advisors

Task: It is time to find new advisors in your congregation. Design an ideal recruitment technique. Decide in advance how many advisors you need, what kind of commitment they need to make, and whether they will be junior high or senior high advisors.

If you need further structure, consider the following:

1. Who should be involved in the process? Youth? Adults? DRE? RE Committee? Parish minister?
2. What are some pros and cons of:
 - announcements in the church newsletter?
 - written job descriptions for advisors?
 - the youth finding their advisor?
 - the RE Committee recruiting the advisor(s)?
3. How will you approach matters of sexual ethics and abuse with potential advisors?
4. Where will you find good pools of potential advisors in your congregation?

NOTE: These are just suggested considerations. Don't panic if you can't deal with them all in the next half-hour!

Reference: *Youth Advisor Handbook (Display Box)*

The Reader: *Youth Advisor Selection Process* (p. 60)

Group 2: Training of Youth Advisors

Task: Design a training session for advisors in your congregation/cluster/district.

1. What issues are most critical to address?
2. Who might be appropriate for leading a training?
3. Besides at UU trainings, where might youth advisors be trained?
4. What written materials could provide training?

Group 3: Support of Youth Advisors

Task: Design a support system for the advisors in your congregation.

1. In what ways can you ensure that the youth advisors are supported in her/his their work?
2. How can you give a loud and clear message that this work is important?
3. Besides the work itself, what are some "rewards" that could be offered to the advisors for her/his their dedication and commitment?

Reference: *Youth Advisor Handbook*

Reader: Support for Ministry with Youth (p. 60)

Acknowledging Youth Advisors (p. 61)

Youth Advisor Advisory Committee (p. 62)

Parish Ministry Supporting Youth Advisors (p. 63)

Networks of Mentors for Youth Advisors (p. 64)

Small Groups Report Back (60 minutes)

Giving time for small groups to share what they have discussed allows participants to deepen their understanding of and commitment to the ways they may support the work of youth advisors. Allowing time to hear from each group widens others' understanding of the areas their group did not cover.

Activity: Small groups report back to whole group.

Each group has approximately 10 minutes to share with the large group the design they have created. Members of the groups learn from one another's knowledge and experience. We therefore recommend adding 10 minutes extra after each group's report for feedback and discussion.

NOTE: Participants will frequently want written copies of the designs. Ask the group if a participant would like to transcribe the designs from newsprint and send them to the other group members.

Notes for facilitating large-group discussion

Group 1: Recruitment and Selection of Advisors—

Key points to mention in this section:

- This should be a highly respected position. It is important to encourage respect for this position within the congregation.
- After an advisor search, the same recognition given to committee chairs by your Nominating Committee and Board should be given to the advisors.
- For enhanced visibility, the parish minister could speak from the pulpit about the critical importance of this position.
- Placing newsletter ads can be inadvisable if you do not have a plan for dealing with volunteer candidates who are not appropriate for the job! What would you do then?

Group 2: Training of Youth Advisors—Notes for facilitating large-group discussion

Key points to mention in this section:

- District Youth Advisor Trainings should be offered for advisors in all UUA districts. If one does not exist in your district, support one to take place.
- DREs should contact District Program Consultants for the most updated information on Advisor Trainings.
- Advisors are encouraged to attend leadership-development conferences for youth and adults working with youth.
- UUA written resources for advisors include articles in *Synapse* and a section in *REACH*.
- Religious educators should photocopy the youth section of *REACH* when they come to each of our congregations in August and January of each year.

- UUA on-line resources include the Youth Office Web site, which has most of the resources that are available from the youth office. There is also an advisor list on-line (see Reader, p. 66, for online addresses and web sites).
- Planned Parenthood, Christian and Jewish training centers, YMCA, etc., may provide youth advisor training seminars.
- When planning an advisor training, allow plenty of time for networking. Successful advisors are often part of some kind of youth advisor support network.

NOTE: The Youth Advisor Task Force presented its report at General Assembly 2000. There will be many new and continued supports for advisors. We suggest that this module's leaders and participants keep abreast of new materials and trainings being offered for advisors.

Group 3: Support of Youth Advisors—Notes for facilitating large-group discussion.

Key points to mention in this section:

- Facilitate regular communication with parents, congregation, Board, RE Committee, and youth advisors.
- Be generous about money and space. Work out a supportive budget.
- Consider a stipend for advisors.
- Encourage advisors to write for the church newsletter, speak to the congregation, and maintain a high profile.

Display Table Time (30 minutes)

Participants often find that they do not have enough time during a module to look over the display table in depth. This assignment builds time into the module to explore the display table and the reading material required by this module. The follow-up activity gives participants an opportunity to share what they have found, thus giving each participant a wider view of the resources available.

Activity:

1. Worship Planners. Direct the people who will be leading the worship service at the end of the next session to find resources that will help them in their planning.

Display Table Time.

- Direct participants to find one or two resources on the display table or in the Reader. Participants will be given 30 minutes of session time to read these materials. They may continue to read during break time.
- Participants should plan to report back to the group about pros and cons of the resource they chose. (Session 4)

BREAK (10 minutes)

SESSION 4

Opening-up Activity (15 minutes)

Group that signed up for “Opening Up” leads participants through an opening-up activity.

Suggested reference: *Deep Fun*, Step Two (Display Box).

Reporting Back on Resources (30 minutes)

Participants who have done this in the past greatly appreciate the reading time and the feedback portion of this module. They enjoy the opportunity to share the resources that they have reviewed, and the thoughtful critiques of the other participants.

Activity:

- Participants give details about the resource they chose.
- Encourage participants to think about how they might use this resource in their programs.
- Also ask them to think about others in their congregation who might benefit from the information in this resource.
- Ask for the pros and cons of the resource.

Creating a Safe Group (15 Minutes)

Activity:

- Review “Creating a Safe Group” in the *Youth Advisor Handbook*. (Display Box)
- Review the UUA’s Code of Ethics for adults working with children and youth in the Code of Ethics portion of the reader. Discuss how this can be used at the congregational and district levels, such as requiring anyone who is working with youth to sign the Code of Ethics or an alternative established policy that includes the essence of the Code.
- If the leaders are from the workshop site’s UUA district, it will help to be aware of the state’s mandates and procedures for reporting abuse.

If the leaders are not from the district, there are usually participants who are aware of the mandates and procedures in their state. If there are none, advise participants about the benefits of acquiring this information.

Additional Reference:

“Behavior Guidelines” in *How to Be Con Artist* (Display Box)

Advisor and DRE Role Plays (75 minutes)

In a “tag” role play, participants have an opportunity to experience various ways of handling a situation. Participants may be surprised and even offended by someone’s attitude in a particular position. Tag role plays provide opportunity for more of the group to participate than standard role play, and to observe various ways of handling a situation. The most valuable part of this activity is the discussion and feedback period following each role play.

Activity:

Two chairs face each other in the middle of the circle. One chair is labeled A and the other B. A situation that begins with two people is described. The group first decides what roles are needed and which seats represent each role.

The two “actors” may “tagged” at any time by another participant, who will then switch places with the actor and proceed with the role play.

This may happen because (a) an actor is struggling with a response to the situation and asks for help or (b) someone else thinks he/she has another prospective on the situation.

NOTE: Ask participants to be creative. Actors may draw a participant from the circle into the role play (e.g., a youth from the group, the minister, a parent).

Suggested timing: 15 minutes for role play and discussion of each situation, followed by discussion of the process.

Situation One:

The DRE of a church with a highly successful youth group doesn't have a clue what the group is doing. The advisor has been distant and incommunicative throughout the year. Parents are asking the DRE what's going on, and he/she doesn't know. Finally the last straw occurs: The advisor schedules a camp-out without telling the DRE, and it will be on a night when the RE Committee has plans for an intergenerational party at the church, which the DRE hoped the youth would attend.

Situation Two:

A youth comes home from a conference upset because an advisor had started tickling the youth and did not stop even after he/she was asked by the youth.

Situation Three:

One youth of a congregation's youth group has made an unwelcome pass at another youth group member.

Situation Four:

You have a very homogenous youth group. A young person from a distinctly different culture has come to church with her/his parent. What will help your youth group welcome this new person?

BREAK (15 minutes)

This time will allow the people planning worship to set up the sacred space. They may let others know what either the planners or the participants need for the worship service.

Worship (30 minutes)

This service will be conducted by the group selected at the end of Session 2.

SESSION 5

Affirming Group (15 minutes)

This activity is lead by the people who volunteered to lead the group through an affirming activity.

Suggested reference: *Deep Fun*, Step Three.

Youth Groups and Youth/Adult Committees (20 minutes)

This activity will help widen the vision of the various ways of defining the structure of a youth group.

Activity:

1. Have participants take five minutes to diagram on newsprint the structure of their local youth group. Participants from the same congregation may work together.
2. Place the newsprint sheets around the inside of the circle.
3. Take five minutes for participants to move around the room and read the sheets of newsprint.
4. Leaders present a statement about the importance of youth leadership within their own youth groups. Refer to Youth Office publication, YACS to SACS (Display Box) for more information.
5. Discussion:
 - How does the youth program fit into the congregation's structure and programs?
 - Does—or how does—the youth program relate to the D.R.E? The Religious Education Committee? The congregations' Board?

District and Continental Structures (20 minutes)

NOTE: It is advisable for leaders to get the most current information about the youth programming in district(s) from which the participants come and about what is happening in continental YRUU from the UUA Youth Office and the Internet. (These may be made into handouts for participants.) If this module is not being co-led by an older YRUUer or a UUYAN member, we highly recommend that you have a youth guest at this time. Try inviting the District Youth Council Representative from this district.

If this module is taking place during a weeklong summer conference that is also attended by youth, invite some youth to this portion of your module, and ask them to share with the group about the structure of their districts.

Suggested Activity:

1. Have participants take 5 minutes to diagram on newsprint how their youth group relates to youth activities in the district.
2. Place the newsprint sheets around the inside of the circle.
3. Take 5 minutes for participants to walk around the room and read the sheets of newsprint.
4. Refer participants to the resources that discuss district and continental structure (Youth Advisor Handbook).
5. Discuss the relationship between the district and the continental YRUU, including the Youth Council.
6. Announce opportunities for UU youth and adults, including Continental Con, Social Justice Conference, and Youth Caucus.

Transition to Young Adulthood (15 minutes)

Refer to the section in the reader about recognizing the transition from teen years to young adulthood. Discuss the importance of this time in the lives of young people, and talk about how our congregations can help affirm and celebrate this bridging time.

Reader:

Young Adults and Unitarian Universalism (p. 65)

Bridging (p. 65)

How to Stay Connected (p. 66)

Visiting the “Concerns” or “Topics to be Addressed” List (45 minutes)

NOTE: Prior to this activity leaders should have taken notes about issues on the newsprint and divided them up between each other. This is another opportunity for participants to share with one another. Don't feel that you have to have all of the answers.

Activity:

1. Read the question aloud and ask if anyone has ideas/suggestions.
2. Wait to see if the information you were going to offer is expressed by someone in the group. If not, add your suggestion last.

Affirmations and Commitments to Action (10 minutes)

Activity:

1. Pass out sheets of paper and stamped envelopes.
2. Acknowledge to participants that they have taken in a lot of information during this module and that it may seem overwhelming to take it all home.
3. Ask them to choose at least one thing that they would like to take home from the module and put into effect in their own youth group.
4. Tell participants that they will now have 10 minutes of alone time (with gentle music) to write an affirming letter to themselves, appreciating things like their loving spirit, wonderful energy, and the light that they bring into the lives of others. Ask them to add that they have the ability to follow through with the commitment they bring home with them from the module.
5. When the letter is finished, each participant should put it in an envelope and address it to her/himself.
6. Tell participants they are to keep these letters and bring them to the closing worship circle.

Evaluations (10 minutes)

Participants appreciate having quiet, dedicated time to fill out their evaluation forms. The leaders also benefit from this by receiving evaluations from participants who have had time to reflect on their learning experience and give quality feedback.

Activity:

Pass out evaluation forms and play gentle music for 10 minutes. Encourage soft voices for asking questions at this time.

Break (15 minutes)

Option 1: The time may be used to set up for closing worship followed by lunch.

Option 2: Participants may eat lunch at this time and return for closing worship.

Closing Worship (30 minutes)

Once more the room is vacated. One leader may set up the worship space while the other takes the group out of the room and teaches the group “Yonder Come Day” from the YRUU Songbook in the Display Box.

Altar:

Chalice is set in the middle.

Beads: (Set beads—purple, blue, green, clear, red— and yellow string out creatively)

Option 1 Wrap string in a circle, and put the 5 beads inside. Set enough around the altar for each participant and leader.

Option 2 Put strings out around alter for each participant and leader.
Place all of the beads in the chalice.

Order of Worship

Ingathering song and spiral:

“Yonder Come Day” (from the *YRUU Song Book*)

Chalice lighting:

(Once again pick something easy to remember/or impromptu so that leader does not have to be holding paper and separate herself/himself from the circle.)

Sharing “Commitments to Action”

Leaders should say something affirming about the work that everyone has done during this module. Ask participants (if they would like) to share their commitments to action and place their envelopes around the alter.

Song: “Sing a Blessing” (*YRUU Song Book* and tape)

One leader sings the first verse of the song, the second leader echoes the verse lines and begins to join in the chorus. As the song continues the participants join in as they “get it.” (*Trust in the process, it really works.*)

Beading: (see words and process on following page)

The leaders explain the significance of the beads. As the meaning of each bead is described, participants thread the bead onto the string. When all the beads are strong, the string is knotted. Participants are asked to place the beads around the neck of the person next to them.

Song:

“How could anyone ever tell you” (excerpted, words by Libby Roderick, from *The YRUU Songbook*, second edition, Display Box—bringing it all around from Friday night.)

Ministry With Youth

Beads

When YRUUsers get together in large groups, such as conferences and camps, they divide into smaller groups called Touch Groups (because they touch base with each other daily). These groups are usually determined by trinkets that are worn on clothing, wrists, hair, or around the neck. Often, Touch Groups are distinguished by colored beads. The beads symbolize the intimacy of small-group participation in the whole community. They also serve as a reminder of a special experience, once the youth are home.

The beads we give you today may also remind you of the experience you've had during this module. There are five beads to represent the five aspects of Ministry With Youth.

The string keeps all the beads in one place. You are the string, which is yellow, the color of courage. May you have courage to hold these pieces in place.

The purple bead represents the color of royalty, leadership, and self-governance.

The blue bead represents intellectual growth. In some eastern philosophies blue is the color of intellectual growth.

The green bead represents social action and is the color for treating the earth and each other responsibly.

The clear bead recalls the transparency and openness of friends and community and the social aspect of youth programs.

The red bead represents worship, which is at our center, our lifeblood and our passion.