

Youth directors also serve the volunteers who contribute their gifts, time, energy and love to the children. Their needs include training for their specific responsibilities, encouragement as they work with children and teens, prayer support and fellowship opportunities. Additionally directors network with church staff and the board of directors.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIRING A DIRECTOR

Why hire a Youth and Family Ministry Director?

A vital youth program:

- Is critical to a successful ministry.
- Serves some of the needs of families thus strengthening the church community.
- Provides for nurturing of youth and family programs that foster church growth.
- Engages a trained professional in manifesting the vision.

Having a Youth and Family Ministry Director increases:

- Stability in ministering to youth, their families and youth ministry volunteers.
- Spiritual presence in upholding the mission/vision of the church.
- Consistency in structure of Unity educational components.
- Professionalism and effectiveness in the youth program.
- Effectiveness in recruiting and training of volunteers for youth ministry.
- Growth in this sector of the congregation through the support and nurturing of youth and youth volunteers' spiritual lives.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DIRECTOR

The youth director's primary objectives are to plan and guide the spiritual education for children and teens, to support the volunteers' success in mentoring the youth, and to create a safe environment in which the young can grow through spiritual self-discovery. Although the director may occasionally teach or assist with a lesson, s/he must remain available to attend to the unexpected needs of a child, their parents, a teacher or other volunteer, as well as to attend to the administrative details involved in managing a Sunday morning experience.

The responsibilities of a youth director include a great breadth of possibilities. An accompanying table details what are realistic expectations for various size programs. The church's vision for youth and family also guides the decisions about the director's responsibilities. As you define the position for your church, consider these options.

Children and Teens

- Provide consistency, predictability and structure for children.
- Provide safety in a welcoming, colorful environment.
- Provide loving, trained volunteers to support them, answer their questions, guide their inquiry process, and have fun with them.
- Provide materials and resources that guide and support their experience.
- See the Christ in each child.
- Encourage them.
- Pray with them.
- Be the hands and heart of God with them.

Curriculum

- Identify and provide Unity curriculum or curriculum that is in alignment with Unity's teachings.
- Provide materials and resources for lessons.
- Adjust non-Unity curriculum to ensure it parallels Unity Principles.
- Adjust all lesson plans to meet the needs of the age, interests and abilities of the young people in the program.
- Create classroom environments with appropriate enrichment resources.

Volunteers

- Insure ample volunteers are available each week.
- Clearly define volunteer expectations and provide an organized structure for them.
- Oversee applications, references and background checks of volunteers to insure suitability.

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RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUTH DIRECTOR BASED ON PROGRAM SIZE

Program Size	Director Hours Needed	Director Responsibilities
One Room Classroom	10 hours/week for the Sunday program Special Events & Holidays –another 10-20 hours each	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal spiritual reflection • Lesson preparation on a weekly basis • Serve as one of the teachers • Coordinate lessons & support other teachers • Schedule & plan events & yearly calendar • Communicate with volunteers & parents • Meet with the minister to keep them informed
5-25 Youth Program	20 hours/week for the Sunday program Special Events & Holidays –another 20 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal spiritual reflection • Lesson preparation on weekly/monthly basis • Possibly serve as one of the teachers • Coordinate lessons & support other teachers • Recruit & train new volunteers • Schedule & plan events & yearly calendar • Communicate with volunteers & parents • Meet with the minister to keep them informed • Purchase and sort supplies or delegate this
25-50 Youth Program	20-30 hours/week for the Sunday program Special Events & Holidays –another 20-30 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal spiritual reflection • Lesson preparation on monthly basis • Coordinate lessons & support other teachers • Act as a substitute when the need arises • Recruit & train new volunteers • Schedule & plan events & yearly calendar • Communicate with volunteers & parents • Meet with the minister to keep them informed • Purchase and sort supplies or delegate this

Program Size	Director Hours Needed	Director Responsibilities
50-75 Youth Program	30-40 hours/week for the Sunday program Special Events & Holidays –another 30-40 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal spiritual reflection & continued education • Lesson preparation on monthly basis due to yearly planning • Coordinate lessons & support other teachers • Recruit & train new volunteers • Act as a substitute when the need arises • Coordinate volunteers & coach them • Facilitate team meetings, trainings, teacher retreats • Offer parent workshops • Schedule & plan events & yearly calendar • Maintain supplies, expense log, budget requirements • Communicate with volunteers & parents • Contribute to newsletter, website, etc. • Meet with the minister & others as needed to keep them informed • Provide reports as requested
75 Youth and over	40 hours/week for the Sunday program Special Events & Holidays –included	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal spiritual reflection & continued education • Lesson preparation on monthly basis due to yearly planning • Coordinate lessons & support other teachers • Recruit & train new volunteers • Act as a substitute when the need arises • Coordinate volunteers & coach them • Facilitate team meetings, trainings, teacher retreats • Offer parent workshops • Schedule & plan events & yearly calendar • Maintain supplies, expense log, budget requirements • Communicate with volunteers & parents • Contribute to newsletter, website, etc. • Possibly provide parent support services • Meet with the minister & others as needed to keep them informed • Provide reports as requested • Supervise additional staff in youth ministry

- Provide training so volunteers can gain confidence and skills in working with youth and presenting all aspects of the lesson. (See Chapter 14 “Volunteer Training and Recognition.”)
- Motivate, coach and mentor volunteers as they do the work.
- Express appreciation of all volunteers’ efforts and service, formally and informally.
- Provide additional staffing when attendance is above normal or a highly detailed activity is planned.
- Pray with them and provide an example of a prayerful life based in principle.
- Support them in their individual spiritual growth.

Parental Support

- Model warmly welcoming new families and visitors to encourage their return.
- Involve families in their children’s spiritual program by offering handouts about the lesson and by encouraging parents to assist some Sundays.
- Offer programs that build family and community relationships among families.
- Be available to parents to answer questions, to listen to their concerns, and to pray for and with them.

Minister, Church Staff and Board

- Advocate with the church leadership about the needs and activities of the youth program.
- Educate and provide resources about the needs of the youth.
- Prepare and submit a budget based upon the guidelines provided.
- Work with the minister, board and risk management team to create policies as needed.
- Maintain communication with all through appropriate channels.
- Prayerfully develop ideas and strategies for the growth of this ministry in relation to the church’s mission/vision.
- Communicate with minister or other appropriate staff member the spiritual or human needs when a family is in crisis.

Congregation

- Create opportunities for children to share and be present with the congregation.
- Be a child advocate to the congregation and community.
- With minister, plan as-needed worship experiences and holiday events that actively involve all ages (intergenerational), or that are child-friendly in length and content.
- Plan intergenerational gatherings and service projects involving all ages.

Community

- Be a child advocate to the community.
- Promote the church's Youth and Family Ministry program appropriately in the neighboring community.
- Consider the neighboring community when planning service projects.
- Serve as a resource to regional and national youth and family programs within the Unity movement.

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DIRECTOR

- Experience in working with children in areas of education, counseling, daycare, etc.
- Experience in working with adults in an organizational or managerial position.
- Aligns well with Unity philosophy and agrees to undergo a Unity training program if needed to provide a solid foundation in Unity teachings.
- Shows strengths in the areas of:
 - Teaching skills
 - Educational planning skills
 - Organizational skills
 - Ability to set priorities and follow through
 - Ability to develop a plan and carry it out
 - Ability to delegate tasks
 - Clear communication
 - Reliability, positive attitude, considerable energy and enthusiasm
 - Motivating others (children and adults) and promoting teamwork

- Working within an organization to accomplish a common goal
- Availability for travel to training events and youth rallies
- Ability to stay centered in spiritual principles in times of stress
- Creativity and innovation

At the end of the chapter are director job descriptions to assist the ministry in creating a job description and in hiring a director. Requirements will vary according to the needs of each church. Having a completed job description prior to interviewing potential candidates enables the church leadership to clarify the expectations, duties and number of hours for the position. If a job description already exists—review it thoroughly. Make any updates necessary to accurately reflect your current needs and future growth.

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Education of the congregation and board about the importance of the spiritual education of our children and teens is a joint responsibility of the minister and the advocates for youth in the church. Compensation to the director of any size youth program lends a level of quality and importance to the program. In a very small program, compensation for the leader can be accomplished in ways other than monetary. Chapter 11 “Financial Foundations” provides helpful questions to answer as you plan your program. First consider these guidelines.

- The church leadership needs to be clear that the youth ministry program is a budget line item of the church and should not be expected to be self-supporting.
- Supporting our youth and family ministries contributes to the spiritual well-being and lifting up of consciousness of all people, the entire Unity movement and the world; one person at a time.
- Trust and affirm that the universe is partnering with you in providing what is needed to hire a quality professional to serve the spiritual needs in your ministry.
- Budgetary plans must include financial resources for director and volunteer training as well as curriculum and supplies for the children and teens.

In a large ministry, give consideration to benefits such as insurance, retirement plans, and professional development.