



Teen Ministry Manual



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Project Coordinator: Rev Dr. Jane Simmons
Editor: Bernadette Swanson, LUT
Cover Design and Layout: Joanna Carrell & Laura Carl

Creators

Rev Joanne Burns, CSE, LUT; Ytonna Dyess Finnegan, CSE; Jacquie Hardesty, CSE, LUT
Rev Kathy Kellogg, CSE, LUT; Rev Dr Jane Simmons; Rev Diane Venzera, CSE, LUT

Reviewers

Anna Andes, Ed.D. CSE, LUT; Rev Joanne Burns, CSE, LUT
Ytonna Dyess Finnegan, CSE; Bethany Hannon, CSE; Rev Francie Potter, CSE, LUT
Marygrace Sorensen, CSE, LUT; Maggie Wagner; Trish Yancey, CSE

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Feel free to call us for more information.



P.O. Box 610, Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063
816.524.7414

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Section One: Getting Started—Basic Considerations

Section One, *Getting Started: Basic Considerations*, provides information about the mechanics of creating a teen group.

Welcome to the new *Teen Ministry Manual*! You are beginning an exciting adventure into the world of teen ministry that can enrich your life immeasurably. It is our intention to support you in any way possible so that your time with the teens is rewarding and inspiring. Because of this, we have put great care into developing a *Teen Ministry Manual* that will continue to evolve.

It is designed for Youth and Family Ministry Directors (YFMD), Uniteen leaders and Youth of Unity (YOU) sponsors to support, educate and guide all whose heart and work is in providing our teens with excellence in ministry.

Teen ministry in Unity encompasses Uniteens (11–13 years—6th, 7th & 8th graders) and YOUers (14–18 years—9th–12th grade). It is an integral part of several age-appropriate components offered to serve the different populations within it. There are times when the entire congregation can be together but different age-appropriate youth programs are usually offered simultaneously to meet the various developmental needs of these Truth students.

The goal is to provide a safe and nurturing environment that recognizes each youth as a whole spiritual being, promotes spiritual growth, physical and emotional health, and positive self-esteem. This guide is a support system designed to help create that environment, support ongoing teen programs and serve as a resource for best practices in teen ministry.

Whether you are a veteran or a newcomer to teen ministry, we know that you are a very important contributor to the awakening consciousness and life transformation that takes place during Uniteens and YOU. Our prayer is that your time spent in teen ministry will be a benefit for you as well as a blessing to your spiritual community.

The life, intelligence and creativity of God's expression in, through and as you, in your service as a facilitator, teacher, and mentor for the Uniteens and Youth of Unity are beautiful gifts. We are richly blessed because of you!

Benefits of Teen Ministry

Adolescents need a dynamic youth group that is as important to them as these teen years are to their lives. Young people who come to a teen group may do so for many reasons. Regardless of the reasons they do come, our part as leaders and/or sponsors is to help them gain a sense of belonging along with helping to facilitate the spiritual growth they seek. The group can provide a

spiritual atmosphere where young people can meet new friends, be joyful, feel safe and supported, give, share, receive, grow, learn new skills and have fun. It is a complex balance of study, prayer, service, social activities and skill building that involves, motivates and stimulates young people to demonstrate what they are in reality—Spirit in expression. Unity’s beliefs and principles help youth to discover the Truth and know that they can make a difference. It also helps prepare them for a meaningful future adult life. We want to provide youth ministry in our centers because:

- **Youth bring a vibrant energy to the ministry.** Our young people of all ages are here to contribute. They are important members of our congregation regardless of their young age. They may be the future adults but their energies contribute to the beauty of our ministries right now.
- **Teen ministry offers an opportunity to serve, learn and grow.** Teen ministry is an excellent place for congregants to serve as volunteers and to gain leadership skills. Adults can learn from youth and young adults. Teaching strengthens each volunteer’s personal learning and provides a place to put that which they have learned into practice.
- **Changes in family structure have created a change in the needs to support youth and families in loving, healthy ways.** Taking time to have a positive impact on young people is a vital responsibility of adults. This contributes to the future of our existence by countering the programming of the material world.
- **Our youth face a rapidly changing world with many varied and frightening potential challenges such as gangs, drugs, violence and abuse.** As YOU sponsors and Uniteen leaders, we have the opportunity to provide preteens and teens a balance to the external circumstances of their lives and facilitate their spiritual self-discovery. Rather than having our youth find the connection they seek through gangs, drugs or violence, they can discover their sense of belonging in our spiritual communities. Our spiritual communities can be the stabilizing force that assists in helping our young people find out who and what they truly are in the ever changing world in which they live.
- **Teen Ministry can become the place where our youth grow into great leaders**—where they learn to draw forth their divine gifts and practice their skills in order to face obstacles in a positive and spiritual manner. We are here to love and to challenge them to grow into their true Selves. Self-questioning of their motives and beliefs will assist the preteens and teens to gain clarity of their persona, beliefs and values. Teen Ministry benefits not only the teens, their families and the ministry. It is good for the planet!

Never underestimate the value of teen ministry; it is important and significant. The Unity movement has a message that can transform lives one heart at a time and we have the opportunity to make the difference in the life of a young person.

What Might Our Teen Program Look Like?

Objectives

- Introduce the individual to Unity's 5 basic Truth principles
- Involve the individual in actual prayer and meditation experiences
- Promote the ideal of individuals working together in service and enjoying fellowship
- Facilitate spiritual self-discovery
- Practice putting spiritual principle into expression

Function

- Provide a weekly opportunity to explore a concept in Truth
- Provide an environment of security and safety for the sharing and exploration of feelings and ideas
- Create an atmosphere of total acceptance to help young people establish their own identity, self-worth, confidence and a feeling of "belonging"
- Assist young people in exploring and seeking a set of values
- Help students define their own purpose for living and develop a method of finding answers to life's complexities
- Aid students to develop a sense of interdependence through working together in a supportive, accepting environment
- Introduce new ways of communicating with self and others based on the principles of affirmation, denials and beholding the Christ in all people and situations
- Expose YOUers to their own personal power through creative self-expression, service activities and youth leadership empowerment
- Provide opportunity for relationship building

Because teens attend for more than one reason, keep in mind their various needs as you develop your program. The following are some diverse opportunities your program can offer:

To facilitate spiritual self-discovery you can meet with your teens for:

- Sunday morning classes
- Mid-week classes
- Regional and/or sub-regional events
- Occasional off-site classes
- Overnight events

- Meeting with minister
- Discussion groups
- Spiritual retreats
- Holiday programs
- Super Saturdays
- Family-style service
- Interfaith visits
- Light of God/Fillmore Youth Award program

To practice Truth principles, teens can participate in:

- Service projects
- Assisting in services
- Life skills workshops
- Ropes course/rock gym
- Assisting in the youth program
- Fund-raising
- Experiential games

Possible social outings providing group-building, fellowship and fun can include:

- Amusement park
- Miniature golf
- BBQ's
- Holiday events
- Birthday parties
- Fun dinners
- Movie/video
- Billiards
- Pool parties
- Bowling
- River trip
- Hiking
- Sports competitions
- Horseback riding

- Teen-parent softball games
- Ice-skating
- Zoo

Note: This list is provided as a variety of possible suggestions to choose from. The expectation is not that you need to incorporate all of the ideas into your teen program.

What Is a Uniteen Group?

Uniteen groups meet each Sunday in Unity centers for spiritual self-discovery. They provide a safe place for youth in their preteen years, ages 11–13 (grades 6–8) to connect with others and explore what they believe. Most groups also participate in occasional evening outings or evenings together for fun and games in order to socialize and develop healthy relationships. Some regions offer weekend retreats for Uniteens called “Unitreats.”

What Is Youth of Unity?

The Youth of Unity (YOU) is a youth group called a “chapter” for high school students, ages 14–18 (grades 9–12). On the local level, teens gather at a Unity center, usually on Sunday, to explore and discover spiritual truths, learning how they relate to their lives. Most chapters meet at other times to do service in their ministry and community, have a social event, attend training events to learn and practice skills or attend regional and/or international events. Officers, or a leadership team, are often elected from within the group to help plan for the local group. YOU provides youth the opportunity to learn, develop skills and demonstrate Unity principles and other truth teachings in their daily lives.

Goals of the Youth of Unity Chapter

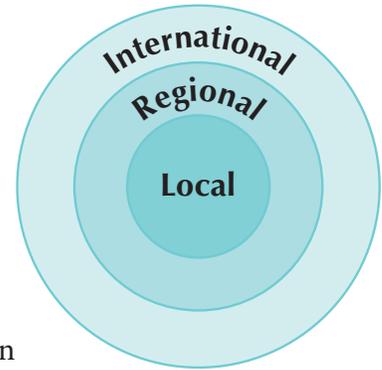
Concept:

The purpose of YOU is to encourage and assist in the spiritual growth of all young people who are seeking to express their indwelling spiritual potential in accordance with the principles of practical spirituality as taught and interpreted by Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Setting Policy

Local:

Policies set for a local YOU chapter are governed by the local center's board of trustees, minister and youth ministry department. YOU sponsors and officers may make recommendations for changes of policy, which then need to be approved by the board of trustees, minister and Youth and Family Ministry Director (YFMD). Sometimes a change in policy may simply be made and then the YOU chapter informed. Generally speaking, in order to avoid unknown policy changes, be sure to keep clear lines of communication open with the YFMD.



Regional:

Each of the seven regions have their own regional board of trustees, who set policy for their own regions and sub regions, specifically regarding regional and Sub-Regional YOU events and officers.

International:

Policies are set at many different levels in the Youth of Unity. The International Youth of Unity, through Unity Worldwide Ministries, sets policies regarding International YOU, specifically, policies which effect the International Youth of Unity Event and International Leadership Team.

Getting Started Checklist

Getting Started Checklist for Head Sponsors/Uniteen Leaders/Teen Ministry Directors to Start a New Group

Action	Directions
1. Explore facets of teen ministry to see if it is right for you.	
Go into prayer and hold the space for the vision of teen ministry.	Let Spirit's guidance direct the process.
Examine current beliefs.	What are my beliefs about teens? What are the ministry's cultural beliefs about teens? What are society's beliefs about teens? What do I believe about the leader or sponsor's role? What are my beliefs about Unity principles?
Meet with the Youth & Family Ministry Director (YFMD) and minister to share your current beliefs, objectives, goals and dreams for teen ministry as well as learning the policies and expectations of the ministry. Set up regular monthly or quarterly meetings to report updates.	What ministry requirements must be met for adults wishing to work with the youth? Whom will the program serve? Is there enough support to start a group? What is the current mission and vision for the program? What training is available for leaders and sponsors? What curriculum is used? What is the working relationship with the Youth and Family Ministry Director? What role do teens play in leadership? What Sacred Safety procedures are in place? What kind of budget/resources does the teen ministry have? What is the process for creating a budget? What strategies do we have to recruit new teen leaders and sponsors? What are the time requirements for teen ministry? How will we promote the group?
2. Create the foundation for support	
Review each section of the <i>Teen Ministry Manual</i>	www.unityworldwideministries.org/our-products/youth-family-education
Take the YFM Assessment and discuss results along with any necessary follow up actions with the YFMD.	www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-and-family-ministry-assessment

Contact your regional education consultant to find out about regional support.	www.unityworldwideministries.org/regional-education-consultants-overview
In collaboration with the YFMD, prepare a budget including personal expenses.	See Section Eight: Finances . Discuss with YFMD ways expenses can be met.
Sign up for The Path e-newsletter and <i>Unity Leaders Journal</i> .	www.unity.org/enews www.unityleaders.org
Visit the UWM Website and Facebook pages.	www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org www.facebook.com/YouthofUnity www.unity.org/iyouevent www.facebook.com/UnityWorldwideMinistries
Purchase teen curriculum based on the Living Curriculum	www.unityworldwideministries.org/curriculum
Promote the program and continue holding the space for the teen program to be established.	In collaboration with the YFMD, announce the forming of the group from platform, bulletin, website, Facebook page, newsletter, etc.
3. Begin meeting	
Begin meeting weekly with your teens—with adult sponsors or leaders	In order to protect insurance liability, UWM highly recommends having background checks for all adults working with youth and using the “two adult” rule. www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources
With the teens, create a mission/vision statement if there is not already one in place, or update current statement if needed.	See Section Ten: Creating a Vision and Mission Statement .
After teen group has been established, explore possible social events, service projects, regional events, IYOU event, youth training.	See Section Seven: Events .
4. On going Training	
Attend regional training opportunities	Contact your regional education consultant or consult your region’s website for details
Attend Unity Worldwide Ministries’ training <i>Unity National Youth Ministry Training</i>	www.unityworldwideministries.org/unity-national-youth-ministry-training
Above all, have fun!	

Joining an Existing Teen Group to Assist?

Getting Started Checklist for Assisting Adult Sponsors and Leaders

Action	Directions
1. Explore facets of teen ministry to see if it is right for you.	
Go into prayer and hold the space for the vision of teen ministry.	Let Spirit's guidance direct the process. Trust!
Examine current beliefs.	<p>What are my beliefs about teens?</p> <p>What are the ministry's cultural beliefs about teens?</p> <p>What are society's beliefs about teens?</p> <p>What do I believe about the leader or sponsor's role?</p> <p>What are my beliefs about Unity principles?</p>
Meet with the Teen Ministry Director (TMD) or Head Sponsor (HS) to share your current beliefs, objectives, goals and dreams for teen ministry as well as learning the policies and expectations of the ministry.	<p>What ministry requirements must be met for adults wishing to work with the youth?</p> <p>Whom does the program serve?</p> <p>What is the current mission and vision for the program?</p> <p>What training is available?</p> <p>What role do teens play in leadership?</p> <p>What Sacred Safety procedures are in place?</p> <p>What kind of budget/resources does the teen ministry have?</p> <p>What are the time requirements for teen ministry?</p>
Following Sacred Safety procedures, attend a weekly teen group to see if it is a fit.	<p>In order to protect insurance liability, UWM highly recommends having background checks for all adults working with youth and using the "two adult" rule.</p> <p>www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources</p>
Have a follow up meeting with the YFMD or HS to share your experience.	
2. If you and the TMD or HS decide it is a good fit:	
Review each section of the <i>Teen Ministry Manual</i> .	www.unityworldwideministries.org/our-products/youth-family-education
Sign up for <i>The Path</i> e-newsletter.	www.unity.org/enews

Visit the UWM website and Facebook pages.	www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org www.facebook.com/YouthofUnity www.unity.org/iyouevent www.facebook.com/UnityWorldwideMinistries
Following Sacred Safety procedures, begin attending the meetings with your teens, adult sponsors or leaders.	In order to protect insurance liability, UWM highly recommends having background checks for all adults working with youth and using the “two adult” rule. www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources
After regular attendance has been established, explore possible social events, service projects, regional events, IYOU event, youth training.	See Section Seven: Events .
3. On-Going Training	
Regularly attend YFM or Teen Ministry meetings and/or training opportunities at your center	
Attend regional training opportunities.	Contact your regional education consultant or consult your region’s website for details.
Attend Unity Worldwide Ministries’ training, <i>Unity National Youth Ministry Training</i> .	www.unityworldwideministries.org/unity-national-youth-ministry-training
Have fun!	

Section Two: Developmental Stages

Section Two, *Developmental Stages*, discusses the unique developmental needs of preteens and teens.

Unique Needs of Teens

In Unity we recognize every person as a child of God. We respect each person's dignity and value through our thoughts, words and actions. We celebrate the diversity of God's children by practicing tolerance of individuals or groups regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, sex, physical or mental disability, political or religious ideology. —Unknown Author

In working with preteens and teens, we are blessed to see each individual grow and develop at their own unique pace, unfolding gradually with each life experience that arrives. As you share yourself and your wisdom, you have many opportunities to guide and illumine the youth you serve as they navigate the path to their best life. Your understanding of the various patterns of growth and development is crucial in making the most of these opportunities.

All humans grow in fairly predictable stages—physically, mentally, socially-emotionally, morally and spiritually. Yet each develops as a unique individual following his or her own inner timetable. External influences such as personal care, environment and culture can greatly impact the development within each stage. Many kinds of development are occurring at the same time, but the age groupings for the various stages are not identical. Development is ongoing, from the simple to the more complex, throughout a lifetime. In some kinds of development the sequence is unclear, but clearly recognizable levels have been identified.

In this section, several developmental theories are briefly summarized to assist you in understanding what is typical for each age. More information about teen development can be obtained by visiting www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/childdevelopment/positiveparenting/adolescence2.html.

Types of Development

Physical Development

Physical development can easily be seen. The size of the body and the acquisition of skills in using it are generally visible as the changes occur. Physical size and skills impact choices in youth ministry relating to furniture and supplies that can be used safely and easily by the age group using them. For the very young child, the lack of skills also impacts the adult/child ratio as they require more assistance in meeting their physical needs.

Physical development varies through each age in adolescence.

Girls	Early	Late	Average Age
Onset of puberty (begin breast development)	8 years	13 years	10.5 years
First menstruation	10 years	16 years	12.8 years
Peak rate of growth	9.5 years	15 years	12 years

Boys	Early	Late	Average Age
Onset of puberty (appearance of pubic hair)	9 years	14 years	11 years
Onset of reproductive potential (production of sperm)	11.5 years	15 years	13.4 years
Peak rate of growth	11.5 years	16 years	14 years

(data from *Encyclopedia of Adolescence*)

Early Adolescence (14-15)

- Physical changes have slowed for girls; boys may still be changing rapidly
- Start to develop sex drive (particularly males)
- Active and energetic
- May experiment with alcohol and/or drugs

Late Adolescence (16-18)

- Physique almost fully developed
- Most have reached adult height
- Boys have caught up with girls in their physical development
- Usually express strong interest in personal health
- May fall victim to eating disorders (both under- and overeating)
- Increasing numbers are sexually experienced and at a younger age

During these years of rapid rates of growth and change, teens are extremely sensitive to appearance. At no other time in life are feelings about the self and body so closely tied. These physical changes affect social relations and emotions. This is why being ahead or behind a classmate in physical growth can be so stressful to teens' emotions. They are concerned with their physical and hormonal changes, as well as fitting in with their peers. They now can imagine what other people may be thinking, so teens feel as if they are living in a display window and everyone is watching them.

Physical Development Characteristics

Rapid physical growth:

- Begin rapid increase in height, weight and size
- Increase muscle growth
- Motor skills well-developed

Reproductive system develops:

- Capable of conceiving (and bearing) children
- Girls begin menstruation
- Boys experience genital growth and first ejaculation (nocturnal emission)
- May not recognize or understand changes in other sex or self

Hormonal and other changes:

- Body hair and body odor
- Acne
- Fatigue easily, may need more sleep or better diet
- Extreme appetite variances
- Experience sexual urges
- Boys' voices change

Differences between genders:

- Girls tend to reach physical and spiritual maturity earlier than boys.
- Boys are more active and have more endurance.

Variance in onset and duration of puberty:

- Those who enter puberty at an early age tend to go through the changes quicker.

Mental or Cognitive Development

Mental or cognitive development refers to the increasing ability of the mind to process and use information and language. Knowing more about how the brain works can help us create an environment where teens can experience optimal learning.

Teen Brain Development

- The human brain is the behavioral command center.
- Research tells us that the teenage brain is different than the adult brain and is a work in process. Understanding this helps to guide our work with youth.
- Even though 95% of the brain's structure has been formed earlier in life, structural changes appear relatively late in child development.

- Abstract thinking develops.
- Begin to cultivate possibility thinking “what if” and “what might be.”

The area of the brain just behind the forehead, called the prefrontal cortex, acts as the CEO of the brain. It controls:

- Impulse
- Planning
- Judgment
- Working memory
- Organization
- Regulating emotional reactions
- Understanding others

This is the last part of the brain to develop, perhaps as late as the mid 20s. Because of this late development, it is challenging for adolescents to:

- Organize tasks
- Keep track of multiple thoughts
- Recall past experiences instantly in order to assist in decision making

The late development of the cortex may help to explain certain teenage behavior when it comes to poor decision-making, recklessness and emotional outbursts.

As the prefrontal cortex matures teens can reason better, develop more control over impulses and make better judgments. Therefore, it is difficult to expect teens to have adult levels of organization skills or decision making before their brains are finished being built. It is especially important to understand this so we can help guide the teens with assistance in organization, planning and prioritizing.

In a baby, the brain over-produces brain cells (neurons) and connections between brain cells (synapses) and then starts pruning back the synapses around the age of three. By age 11 for girls and 12 for boys, the neurons in the front of the brain have formed thousands of new connections. Over the next few years most of these links will be pruned. Similar to clearing away unused icons on computer desktops, the brain starts pruning unused synapses to make remaining ones more stable, strong and efficient.

This is exciting news because teens may actually have control over the brain’s wiring. Teens who “exercise” their brains by learning to order their thoughts, understand abstract concepts and control impulses are laying the neural foundations that will serve them for the rest of their lives.

Emotional Intelligence

We are being judged by a new yardstick: not just how smart we are, or by our training and expertise, but also by how well we handle ourselves and each other.

—Daniel Goleman, *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, 1998

Emotional intelligence is the ability to cope with both the inner and outer world. Just as a person's intellectual intelligence develops over time, a person's emotional intelligence develops also. Yet, one's intellectual intelligence is not necessarily an indication of one's emotional intelligence. The coping skills of a person at an early age are quite different from the coping skills of an adult. If a youth's emotional life is arrested or not encouraged, this can affect all areas of his or her life. Thus, as adults, some people may be unable to manage minor setbacks and may have exaggerated or inappropriate responses to life's situations. Emotional intelligence is now being recognized more and more as essential for high performance at work, at school, and at home and in balancing your commitments with what is important in your life.

No matter what happens in a person's life, an individual with a well-developed emotional intelligence has strong coping skills. These abilities include:

- **Self-awareness**—the ability to recognize one's emotions, one's strengths and limits and having a strong sense of one's self-worth and capabilities
- **Self-management**—the ability to adapt to changing situations, to exercise emotional self-control in group situations, to show initiative, to strive to do their best, to be trustworthy in values, emotions and behavior and to be optimistic
- **Social awareness**—the ability to show empathy, to have organizational awareness of political relationships and to recognize and meet other's needs
- **Relationship management**—the ability to provide inspirational leadership, help others improve performance, initiate or manage change, work toward resolving disagreements, influence others, and work effectively in collaboration and teamwork

As adults working with youth, we have wonderful opportunities to model emotional abilities to the preteens and teens we interact with in Youth and Family Ministry. Many of the lessons we facilitate invite them to increase their self-awareness, their social awareness as well as self-management abilities. In Unity lessons, we honor a person's thoughts, feelings and intuition thus connecting the head and heart. As we do so, we provide each person an opportunity to acquire skills in using their emotional intelligence. Our role may simply be helping the youth to realize that their expressions of empathy, self-worth and trustworthiness are expressions of the Christ within.

Social Development

Social development is frequently linked with emotional development. Social development is learning the rules and expectations for interacting with other people. Emotional development is the increasing ability to respond with feelings toward someone or something. These areas are

considered together because interaction with people results in a feeling response. As youth leaders, be aware that this is an area in which you have more opportunity and ability to influence our young people. Your every action and emotional state is observed, even more so than your words.

Relationally:

- Adolescence is the time teens are pushing away from their families, wanting independence.
- Peer friendships outside of the family increase in importance. Same-sex friendships are extremely important, sharing emotions, support, advice and intimacy.
- Girls are more likely to express friendships by talking and sharing their feelings—seeking trust, emotional support, mutuality, confidentiality and loyalty.
- Boys are likely to develop emotional support through sharing activities like sports. They are looking for someone with whom they can do things, showing less interest in personality as long as activities are compatible.
- In early adolescence friendships are almost exclusively same-sex. Even in late adolescence boys rate same-sex friendships as more valuable than those with girls.
- The role played by peers in adolescence is critical. Relationships with peers during these years imitate later adult relationships. Teens who do not learn how to get along with others by the time they reach adulthood are likely to face obstacles in years ahead.
- Since teens spend twice as much time with peers than with parents, the lack of supervision in peer groups is significant. Teens come into youth groups looking for the “social” aspect, which is very important for their development.
- Having appropriate relationships with adults is also very important for their development.
- It is important that we have supervision for our chapter meetings, rallies and retreats so the teens have the opportunity to develop significant relationships in a safe environment.

Social Development Characteristics

Self-Conscious:

- preoccupation with self
- compare self to others
- worry about how they look
- hide from attention
- feel everyone is looking at them
- try on different personalities
- want privacy
- have uncomfortable awareness of differences in race, culture, class, finances, religion, etc.

Seeks Acceptance:

- strongly influenced by peers
- want to feel safe and loved
- worry about how others view them
- not willing to appear different
- may act out for peer approval
- like that you recognize something about them (but not them, really)
- quick to criticize others, especially outside clique

Feels Separate:

- believe they are the only ones feeling this way
- feel guilt or shame for thoughts, actions or experimentation
- don't know whom to turn to

Changing Emotions:

- vulnerable to moodiness or intense emotions
- many fears or worries
- might exaggerate feelings
- act out dramatically
- withdrawal
- may appear contradictory
- actions not matching words and feelings
- behavior disorders may appear
- depression
- aggression

Not a “child”:

- strive for independence
- want responsibility
- critical of adults, notice inconsistency
- wonder why adults are so self-absorbed
- confide in friends and the dog only
- begin to resist displays of affection
- don't appreciate parents speaking for them
- wonder when they will be listened to
- still want to be able to play
- going to church is no longer “cool”
- sometimes want an adult to talk to, but don't know who that should be or how to build that relationship

Moral Development

Moral development is an increase in understanding of what people believe is right and wrong. Knowing what each age is capable of is essential in appropriate expectations for them morally.

Youth ages 8-16:

- Action motivated by need to avoid rejection or disapproval
- Live up to what is expected
- Conformity is prized
- Being good/having good motives

Youth 16+:

- Group authority
- Concern for maintaining social order
- Moral judgment maintained by need to not be criticized by a true authority

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development relates to how one grows in understanding of spiritual concepts. This is the primary area of development we have the privilege of sharing with our young people, and the fundamental purpose of a youth ministry program. Spiritual development is an intrinsic part of being human; a dynamic process that varies by individual and cannot be separated from other aspects of our being. It involves both an inward journey (experiencing awe, wonder and mystery) and an outward journey, expressed in daily activities, relationships and actions.

Expressing spirituality is a multi-sensory experience involving intuitive and bodily forms of knowing about God.

What Influences Teen's Spiritual Development?

What are parents, adult leaders and teachers modeling with regard to spirituality? Are they walking their talk, demonstrating a sense of empathy, responsibility and/or love for others, for humanity and for the world? A variety of influences, practices and experiences help to shape a young person's spiritual development, including:

- family
- friends
- spiritual mentors
- youth groups
- overcoming challenges
- practices showing love, compassion or humility
- helping others
- being alone—outside in nature
- listening to music

- reading books
- praying and meditating
- having private time to think and explore inner thoughts and feelings

Our youth programs are important to help ground our teens in principles, practice and commitment.

How Do We Nurture Young People on Their Spiritual Journey?

- Take them seriously. Listen to them. Affirm, love and encourage them in their own journey. Let them know they are valued in who they are, and what they think and say.
- Build relationships with young people. Show up each Sunday on a regular, consistent basis. As a minister, set aside some time to spend with the teens. Have pizza and conversation, come to an event. Let them know that the ministry is also their home for them to use. Do the teens in your ministry know anything about the minister, the board, the Youth and Family Ministry Director? Do they feel part of the congregation?
- Create spiritually enriching “spaces” that give young people opportunities to reflect, be safe and experience silence. Be present and patient with them.
- Ask good, open-ended questions, not just ones with yes or no answers. Give them the opportunity to express the “how” and “why” and verbalize their thoughts.
- Use stories, art, films and other media to stimulate thinking and reflection. We don’t want to recreate “school” in their Sunday experience. Be creative in the presentations.
- Let them interpret their own experiences rather than telling them what they should think or feel. Answer their questions honestly. Don’t rush to correct them; if a mistake is made—it’s okay.
- Recognize and use their gifts. Encourage them to show care and compassion to each other and in the world. Give opportunities to serve others. Expect a lot of them. Let them teach us. Working with teens is a tremendous opportunity to deepen your own spiritual path.
- Especially important, have fun!

Teens are even more aware of the many perspectives to consider. God may be a confidante, a guide, a counselor. They are also conscious of whether a person who says they are spiritual actually lives what they say they believe. Teens are looking for clarity to questions they cannot make sense of.

Faith Development

Stages of Faith—James Fowler	Faith Development—Yob
<p>Mythic-Literal Faith, elementary school years through early adolescence The child’s developing ability to think logically helps them sort out the real from make-believe, to see the perspectives of others and to capture life and meaning in narrative and stories.</p>	<p>The Young Adolescent, 13-18 Form a number of important relationships outside of family Close relationships are very important—they are mirrors reflecting who they are. In period of conformity to conventions within their groups: ie. dress, behavior, activities, hobbies, music.</p>
<p>Synthetic-Conventional Faith, middle adolescence Teens begin abstract thinking and can reflect on past experiences looking for meaning. Begin to have concern about one’s future and about personal relationships. They also look for a personal relation to God and look to be loved in deep and comprehensive ways.</p>	
<p>Individuative-Reflective Faith, young adulthood A time to question, examine and reclaim values and beliefs formed thus far making commitments. A time to take charge of one’s life.</p>	
<p>Conjunctive Faith, mid-life or beyond Stage embraces and integrates polarities and opposites of one’s life, one sees both sides of an issue simultaneously and sees things related to each other.</p>	
<p>Universalizing Faith, some adults reach this Individuals are grounded in oneness with God, are devoted to overcoming division, oppression, and violence, live for love and justice in the world.</p>	

Sources: <http://www.sonlifeafrica.com/model/faith2.htm> and James Fowler, *Weaving the New Creation* (New York: Harper Collins, 1991), 102-15.

Keys to Teaching Children about God, Iris M. Yob, Barrington’s Educational Series, 1996.

It is important to be cognizant of the physical, mental, social, emotional and spiritual stages of development for our teens. However, behind these stages is another very important point to consider—*nature*, our genetic makeup and *nurture*, early childhood environment. Both play a part in developing into who we are. Nature endows inborn abilities and traits, while nurture molds these genetic tendencies as we learn and mature. The influence of a teen's future is a combination of genetic inheritance which provides potential, and training which determines the extent to which potential is reached.

Developmental Stages Chart

Physical Development	Cognitive Development Piaget	Moral Development Kohlberg	Social Development Erikson
		<p>Level II Conventional Stage 3: Mutual Interpersonal expectations, Conformity, 8-16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action motivated by need to avoid rejection or disapproval • Live up to what is expected of you • Conformity is prized • Being good-having good motives 	
<p>Later Childhood, 9-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration of physical growth • Glands begun secretion of sex hormones • Girls generally more mature than boys 	<p>Formal Operations, 11 –Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can think on abstract level • Can consider hypothetical situations • Can solve problems • Become interested in past and future • Can intensely explore subjects 	<p>Stage 4: Social Science and Conscience Orientation, 16+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group authority • Concern for maintaining social order • Moral judgment maintained by need to not be criticized by a true authority 	
<p>Adolescence, 12-20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach sexual maturity • Stage of maximum vitality 		<p>Level III, Postconventional Stage 5: Social Contract, some adults reach this</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Values and rules are up to your group. • Laws followed for the greatest good of society • Able to understand and appreciate perspective of other people 	<p>Identity vs. Role Confusion, 12-18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking for an identity that integrates into a sense of self • Failure to do so leads to inadequacy, isolation, indecisiveness, role confusion • Seeks similarities

<p>Intimacy vs. Isolation, Early Adulthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop meaningful relationships with others • Otherwise loneliness and isolation results 	<p>Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles, reached by only a few adults</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgment based on individual principles • Principles are universal-human equality, respect 		
<p>Generativity vs. Stagnation, Middle Adulthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to productive work and raising/teaching next generation • Or become stagnant and self-centered 			
<p>Integrity vs. Despair, Mature Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sense out of lives and see choices they made were reasonable • Despair at wrong turns and goals never reached 			

When we give special attention to understanding teen characteristics and stages of development, we can more effectively support their spiritual development. Teens are humans, ever growing and changing. Author Og Mandino writes, “We aren’t human beings, we are humans becoming.”

Section Three: Building Teen Ministry Programs, Part 1

Section Three, Part 1, “Building Teen Ministry Programs,” gives the foundational practices that contribute to group building and organizational development.

Foundations and Structure

How to Build a Teen Program

To solidly build your teen program, take time to put up the pillars which will support the various program components. Whether your vision is fairly basic or extravagant, it involves the same process:

- Identify who the program will serve. (Who?)
- Map out its purpose. (Mission)
- Define its philosophy. (Principle)

This should be a participatory process. Involve others who have a stake in its development and implementation. Your co-leader(s), Youth and Family Director, minister(s), parents and teens all may want the opportunity to contribute.

Who?

Decide if there is a need for a teen program and if so, are the parents and center willing to support it? Ask:

- Does your church have teens who would benefit from the program, and do they want it?
- Are their parents willing to support it?
- Will the church support it?

Assuming those answers are yes:

- What age or grade limits should apply to the teen group?

Ministries generally gear Uniteen groups for preteens and teens ages 11-13, in grades 6 through 8. Youth of Unity (YOU) is usually from ages 14-18 during the high school years, grades 9-12. However, situations vary. To best serve the needs of their youth, some churches have:

- Combined their Uniteen and YOU groups
- Included 5th graders in Uniteens
- Created separate groups for 6th, 7th or 8th grades
- Sent 14-year-old 8th-graders up into YOU

Also consider:

- Are we willing to make exceptions for individual students? If so, will we be able to explain those decisions to other parents who expect similar treatment for their child?

Mission

Identify the program's purpose—what is the reason the group exists? Every program should have a clearly defined mission statement that explains its purpose.

A mission statement is an attempt to put into words the broad, unchanging reasons for the group's existence. Every aspect of the group's structure and schedule should flow from, and support, this mission. (For detailed instructions in creating a mission statement, see Section Ten: Creating a Vision and Mission Statement.)

Principle

Explore philosophical underpinnings by examining beliefs about:

- The teens
- The teen leader's role
- How to facilitate
- Unity principles

This should not just be an academic exercise. Your entire program structure and leadership style should arise from these beliefs. Everyone's leadership style reflects certain perspectives and philosophies. The goal is to be aware of them, and work to align them with what you know to be true.

It is especially important that all aspects of your leadership and the Uniteen program reflect the principles Unity teaches. Students learn by observation. If they do not believe you apply Truth principles in your dealings with them (or in your everyday life), they will not understand why they should either.

In youth ministry as well as adult ministry, a specific structure provides strength and order to the program. As we consider the areas of focus for building a balanced and holistic model of organizational development, it can be helpful to use the framework of the Four Quadrant Model of Organizational Structure.

Four Quadrant Model of Organizational Structure



Each of the four quadrants represents a domain of holistic development in an organization. If any quadrant is undeveloped, there will be an imbalance in the organizational structure. The left quadrants are internal in nature and represent “being,” the right quadrants deal with external issues and represent “doing.”

1. The Upper Left Quadrant (Quadrant 1) represents **consciousness** and refers to how we develop consciousness in our classrooms.
2. The Upper Right Quadrant (Quadrant 2) addresses the **concrete programs, structures and practices**—the foundational architecture and systems we need to put in place in order to raise consciousness.
3. The Lower Left Quadrant (Quadrant 3) relates to the **inner culture** of the group, including shared values, identity, traditions and purpose.
4. The Lower Right Quadrant (Quadrant 4) pertains to **relational dynamics**, social systems for building community that demonstrates spiritual principle.

In setting up a youth program, we want to consider all four quadrants. The questions to consider are:

Consciousness (Quadrant 1—Upper Left)

- How do we experience God?
- In our groups, are we using heart-centered prayer, honoring different learning styles and intelligences, using curricula that draws out and develops the magnificence already inherent in our teens?

- What stories, myths, metaphysical metaphors lead to spiritual self-discovery?
- How much time do I, as a leader, spend in prayer and meditation?
- How much prayer time am I providing for my teens?
- Do I love the teens I work with and am I letting them know they are cared about?

YFM Programs and Structures (Quadrant 2—Upper Right)

- What structures need to be in place in order to create a strong, vibrant, healthy youth ministry?
- Have I taken the YFM Needs Assessment?
- Am I developing people rather than programs?
- Am I working with the ministry in budgeting for the teen group and fund-raising?
- Am I communicating with parents, ministry and other volunteers?

Culture (Quadrant 3—Lower Left)

- What does today's culture look like for our teens?
- What is the landscape in which they live and grow?
- In this landscape, what does Unity have to offer our youth?
- What is the culture of our ministry community?
- Does the ministry's mission, vision and purpose reflect this culture?
- What is my vision?
- How are we serving and making a difference in the culture both within and beyond our community?

Relationships (Quadrant 4—Lower Right)

- How welcoming is my youth group?
- Am I making room for new people?
- Do people feel at home with the group?
- Is it safe to share what is on their hearts?
- Is there a place for connection with the rest of the ministry community?
- Are the youth empowered to grow into leadership?
- Are those that serve in youth ministry cared for and honored?

For more in depth information on the four quadrants http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ken_Wilber

The Four “S”s

Each of the four quadrants comes into play in building a balanced teen program:

Spirit (Consciousness)

The primary focus of the Unity Youth Ministry programs is to offer the youth an experience with a spiritual focus. The weekly spiritual lesson is offered to assist the teens in understanding spiritual laws and their practical application into daily life.

Skills (Programs and Structures)

Teen skill building comes through eliciting teen input, leadership development, teamwork and allowing full participation by empowering and encouraging them to be responsible for portions of the tasks involved.

Service (Culture)

Teens conduct service projects to assist their ministry and community, accomplishing good through service to others, and making a huge contribution to their spiritual community as well as learning skills and empathy.

Social (Relationship)

Celebrating life creates a joyful consciousness when teens are gathered in a group. Social and playful experiences provide opportunities to build friendships, self-esteem and interact with others as well as learning skills and empathy.

Building Relationship

Creating and Building Rapport

The more effort and attention you give to creating a safe, loving, learning environment that is interactive, informative and fun, the better chance you will have of retaining the teens. By having creative experiences and individual participation, you provide the youth with opportunities to explore the wonderful messages that Unity teaches and empower young people to see the Christ potential in themselves and others.

To build rapport:

- Create an atmosphere of coherence, acceptance and non-judgment through heart-centered coherence practices and shared group agreements. (See below.)
- Establish yourself as a mentor and listener. Consistently work at being a listener and support system for the youth. Refrain from having the answer. Instead, provide a safe and nurturing environment where students can share and process their own ideas.
- Be aware of student needs. Whenever you teach a class, remember to facilitate the subject matter. If the conversation wanders from the topic, be flexible enough to allow it to happen,

and then, when the time is right, be creative enough to bring it back to the original topic once again or to a satisfactory conclusion.

- Realize you don't have to be an expert. Young people will respect your preparation and clear understanding of the material, but they will especially respect you if you don't have all the answers. Allow students to unfold the answers.
- Encourage individual participation. Many students, especially those who have been told they have the wrong answer or whose answers were invalidated by no response from the facilitator, may feel tentative about sharing their ideas. Find something positive to say about their contributions without repeating back exactly what they said or correcting something with which you disagree.
- Create a fun atmosphere. While learning is fun, straight lecture is a bore! It is more effective to engage students in a lively discussion and clarify the points of the lesson as you go along. Often, a participatory activity can become the most effective way to explore the content.
- Personalize appropriate examples without making it all about you, and don't be afraid to be vulnerable. The teen groups are never to become a group therapy session. Nevertheless, students will respect a sponsor who is willing to share his or her own joys and challenges. Be sure that the information is age appropriate and in good taste.
- When a new person joins the group, it's important that they feel totally involved by being included in all discussions and activities and that they feel comfortable to "pass" on an activity or discussion question if they choose. Have the group introduce themselves and tell one thing about themselves to help the new person feel a part of the group.
- Build rapport outside of class time. Take the time to get to know your teens. Call or email to find out why they've missed sessions, write encouraging and congratulatory notes, and listen patiently whenever you sense a need. Your availability and kindness will be respected and appreciated.

Creating Coherence

Using a simple, but effective technique can make a big difference in your classroom or group session by creating harmony and coherence. The term "coherence" refers to balancing head and heart, which means being in sync, in the zone or in the flow. Adding the following practice to your group's regular prayer time can provide the added benefits of releasing stress, re-focusing emotion and creating resonance among classmates.

There are four steps to creating coherence:

1. Move attention to the heart and shift the focus from head to heart. (heart focus)
2. Imagine breathing slowly and deeply into the heart space. (heart breathing)
3. Think of a person, a pet or a thing that you appreciate. As you bring them into your mind's eye, deeply feel the appreciation. (heart feeling)
4. Continue breathing into the heart, feeling appreciation and letting it radiate outward.

For more information on heart coherence, the science behind it and practical tools for creating it, visit www.heartmath.org.

Group Agreements

(Also known as Heart Agreements)

In all teen groups, members must decide how they will treat each other. Once teens know their group's purpose, they need to determine how they are going to function as a group. Your role is to help them come to agreement about:

- What sort of environment they want
- How they expect to be treated

Some Thoughts about Agreements

Members are agreeing how they will conduct themselves while in a group setting. Agreements do not extend outside of a group situation. (For example, you are not telling teens they cannot drink, smoke, use offensive language or make out when they're at home. But on church grounds and at events, such behavior is inappropriate because it negatively impacts the group.)

Trust the group to set reasonable boundaries. Teens want a safe environment. Leaders don't need to tell teens how they should want to be treated, because they already know that.

Leaders and the church are also part of the group. There are some "bottom lines," such as church policies. But even those issues can be presented as a matter of choice.

(For example, if the group chooses not to support church policies, the church will not support the group. Or if the group's agreements do not serve the leaders' needs, they cannot commit to being part of the group.)

Agreement cannot be imposed by a leader; it can only be facilitated. The teens must have ownership of the agreements. Otherwise, they become someone else's rules.

Agreements do not have to be adopted unanimously. But once adopted, everyone must agree to abide by them. Agreements are only in effect if group members sincerely agree with them. Sponsor and leaders must hold themselves to the same agreements, unless the group has exempted them from something.

A leader's authority in enforcing agreements derives not from their position as leader. Both the agreements and your authority come from the group. You are not enforcing your rules, but facilitating a group process by holding them to agreements.

All agreements can be revisited and/or clarified in the future. At any time, you should be open to discussing, adding, modifying or deleting agreements. For example, if a teen complains that a rule is stupid, inform the group you'll be happy to discuss it. Maybe you do need to change it. If you don't, the other members will not let the issue go very far.

Steps to Creating a Heart Agreement

- Decide how to engage the group in the process. Options include:
 - Bringing the need for agreements up for discussion
 - Using a specific incident to initiate discussion
 - Presenting a related experience first, such as “Poker, Teen-Style” and “Reaching Consensus” (See next page.)
- Create agreements. Discuss or brainstorm with the teens how they want to be treated. Consider:
 - What are the bottom lines for the church and leaders?
 - What issues are open for discussion?
 - Expectations of confidentiality (Teens must be informed of the adult's reporting obligations.)
 - Consequences for breaking agreements
 - How much clarification do certain agreements need?
 - How will new members be educated about and commit to the agreements?
- Put them on paper for review and editing. Someone (usually a leader) needs to take the ideas tossed around by the group and put them into a workable form that needs to go to church leaders and back to the group for review, to make sure it accurately reflects the understanding they have of them.
 - How will the agreements be displayed?
 - Should every teen sign them?
 - Should every leader/sponsor sign them?
 - Should copies be kept on file?
 - How often will the group need to review the agreements?
- Commit to the agreements. Agreements are only useful if members will support them.
 - Discuss and vote on Group Agreements.
 - Post the agreements in a prominent location.
 - Refer to them occasionally.
 - Use them during challenges.
 - Empower the teens to lovingly remind their peers when necessary.

Ways to Help Teens Understand the Need for Agreements

(© 1996 by Mark Fisk)

Poker, Teen-Style

Teens will be playing five-card draw poker for candy. You will need a table, cards, candy and dealer for every six teens. You need to explain the rules, but not reveal the real purpose of this activity—only that they'll be playing a game today.

Each round, deal five cards to every player. Leaders always deal. Players can then turn in up to three of the cards for new ones. There are no wild cards. High hand wins. Give candy to winner.

Hands, from highest to lowest:

Straight Flush: *5 in a row of same suit (6, 7, 8, 9, 10 of clubs).*

Four-of-a-kind: *all 4 suits of the same number (4 Jacks)*

Full House: *3-of-a-kind + a pair (three 8's and a pair of Kings)*

Flush: *5 of the same suit (3, 5, 6, 9, Queen of hearts)*

Straight: *5 in a row, any suit (2 clubs, 3 spades, 4 hearts,...)*

3-of-a-kind: *3 of the same number (three 6s)*

Two Pairs: *two different pairs (pair of 8s + pair of 5s)*

One Pair: *two of the same number (two 4s)*

High card: *with nothing else, highest card in the hand (Ace)*

Don't tell the players, but after a couple regular hands, you'll start changing the rules on them. Make 2's or 3's wild AFTER their hands are set. Announce upfront that 7's are wild, then change it to Jacks after they've drawn. Give six cards to some players, and four to others. Don't give back the same number of cards they traded in. Let a player choose the card they want, then disqualify them for cheating. Do whatever pops into your head, as long as it frustrates someone.

Play stops when they're frustrated enough or suspect there's a point to this. Then process with questions to the right.

For Poker

- o What were the rules as the game began?
- o What did you notice happening as play proceeded?
- o What feelings came up for you during this experience?
- o How is this experience like our group?
- o How is this experience like something in your life?
- o If you did not enjoy this experience, what would you do to improve it?
- o What point do you feel this experience was demonstrating?

Reaching Consensus

Create a list of 15-20 problems facing teenagers today (drugs, gangs, money, parents, rules, etc.). As a group, your teens must rank all these items in order of importance. They will have 15 minutes to reach a consensus. Decisions must be unanimous.

Adults cannot facilitate the process nor offer any direction, except to clarify the task at hand or verify its completion. All adults should leave the room during this activity, so the presence of authority figures does not influence whatever transpires, but check in periodically to see how things are going.

After the 15 minutes, process with questions to the right.

For Reaching Consensus

- o What was happening during this experience?
- o What did you enjoy, what was frustrating?
- o What would you like to be different?
- o What would you do to improve the activity?
- o Where do you see this happening in our group?
In your life?
- o How would you like it to be?

The Written Agreement

A “heart agreement” is more than a piece of paper, it is a consciousness. However, the paper helps clarify the group’s choices. Be sure to write down agreements and post them in a visible place. You may want to put them on a heart-shaped poster board that all can sign or have the youth create the poster. They could include:

- Show respect (see the 3 R’s below)

The 3 R’s:

Respect for others

Respect for myself

Respect for environment

- Wait to speak
- Honesty
- Active Listening
- Putdowns are unwelcome here
- Confidentiality
- Non-judgment
- Avoid side conversations
- Use kind words

Which means,

I will speak for myself...not for anybody else. Use “I” statements such as “I feel sad when ____.”

I will listen to others...and not disrupt prayer or meditation.

I will avoid judgments and put-downs...nobody needs them.
I will take charge of myself...using my words and actions responsibly.
I will show respect...since every person in this group is important. The Christ in me sees and respects the Christ in you.
I will be friendly with all others...for a little kindness goes a long way!

Compassionate Communication

In working with teens, open and honest communication is an important facet of group bonding. In order to create an environment of trust and caring, the principles of compassionate communication can set the foundation for heart-centered community building, as your group learns to speak honestly and listen empathically to each another.

Compassionate Communication, otherwise known as Non-Violent Communication (NVC), a process developed by Marshall Rosenberg, is based on principles of nonviolence. NVC assumes that people are naturally compassionate and that violence is a learned behavior. It involves sharing feelings and needs with others, while staying compassionately connected. People naturally want to connect and address their needs.

NVC uses four steps:

1. **Describe the observation.** What would a camera capture?
2. **Identify the feeling.** What is the feeling behind the words?
3. **Identify the need** that isn't being met.
4. **State your request.** Ask for what you need.

For more information on NVC and how to use it in your teen program, visit www.cnvc.org.

Positive Methods for Managing Classroom Challenges

If we want loving youth, we must guide them in a loving way.

- Recognizing the Christ presence within each student and acting from that awareness is the best strategy for managing a classroom. When we act from this awareness, we can't help but treat each teen with dignity and respect.
- Your actions should say, "I care about you. I want to help you to be all you can be!" That translates into...

Focusing

- Get students' attention, don't compete for it
- Use cues (peace sign, clap, etc.)
- Wait until everyone is quiet before talking, or start by talking quietly

Giving Directions

- Be prepared. Know where you are going.
- State specific instructions and expectations briefly
- Be sure students understand

Defining

- Establish and regularly review group agreements
- Offer clear boundaries for behavior

Modeling

- Set the example in attitude, speech and behavior

Empowering

- Allow them to make decisions for themselves
- Teach freedom through responsibility, not freedom from responsibility
- Let them learn from their own experiences (both successes and mistakes)
- Invite, do not force anyone to participate or share beyond their comfort level

Talking With

- Use age-appropriate communication skills
- Don't talk at or down to teens
- Communicate needs/wishes in "I" statements
- Honor the validity of all feelings, and explain your own, about a behavior
- Never talk about a teen in the third-person when they are around (except if it is a compliment)
- Try to understand their language, but don't use it

Encouraging

- Emphasize positive efforts
- Separate the behavior from the child
- Redesign classroom environment to support positive behaviors

Not Intruding

- Observe rather than direct interactions
- Do not interfere when students are working or interacting well. If it's working, don't fix it.
- Communicate in unobtrusive ways (standing nearby, a touch or a comment)
- Step into social conflicts only to avoid injury or to facilitate resolution

Offering Choices

- Give only choices you can live with and are appropriate

- Avoid ultimatums and choices you're not willing to follow through on
- Offer logical consequences, not punishment

Being Fair

- Be consistent
- Give fair warning
- Follow-up

Helping

Adult help is needed when a youth:

- Is out of control
- Is in danger
- Is having difficulty coping
- Has made a mistake that should be corrected
- Has asked for help

Become an Encouraging Leader or Facilitator

- Encouragement is different from praise
- Praise places a value judgment on the student and goes to those who excel
- Encouragement is helping students believe in themselves and their abilities. It does not have to be earned, but can be given for any positive movement.
- Teachers who use praise may believe they are building children's self-esteem but they may also be setting them up for feelings of self-doubt and inadequacy

Encouragement:

- Is a basic attitude toward yourself and other people
- Focuses on the work or effort, treating students with acceptance and respect
- Accepts students as they are, not as they could be
- Helps the learner develop the courage to be imperfect. Growing is a process. Mistakes are not failures, but opportunities for learning.

To become an encouraging leader or facilitator:

- Avoid making negative comments about students
- Identify students' strengths and goals
- Have high expectations, but not unreasonably high standards
- Avoid competition
- Don't set double standards
- Be an asset finder, not a fault finder

Section Three: Building Teen Ministry Programs

Part 2: Creating a Uniteen Program

Group Building

Are group dynamics important in Uniteens?

You are facilitating a group process. Everything you do is affected by, and a result of group dynamics. Some leaders are so focused on presenting lessons, they are unaware of the profound impact of group dynamics on a Uniteen's experience.

For example, Uniteens do not experience Sunday lessons in a vacuum. With adults and other teens around them, students' thoughts may be everywhere except on your lesson material. You can do all the teaching you want, but students will not participate in an activity, or come back, if they:

- Are self-conscious about how others are perceiving them
- Feel isolated or not part of the group
- Are distracted by others around them
- Have a personal conflict with someone in the group
- Don't know or trust the adults leading the class
- Are unfamiliar with, or confused by, what will happen during the class hour
- Are afraid of appearing foolish or uncool

Why is Uniteens a group process?

Uniteens is a move from a Sunday school class to a youth group, which reflects adolescents' development of group identity. As preteens and teens move through school, they begin to perceive and establish group identities. They see themselves and others as being members of:

- A circle of friends
- A sports team
- A clique
- An organization
- The 6th, 7th or 8th grade
- A gang

Social affiliations become more important and more defined. An eagerness to belong is accompanied by, or a result of, judgments about what groups people belong to. Small groups will develop even within your Uniteen program. (As adults, we do the same thing. But our concept of 'group' expands to understand what it means to be a member of a greater congregation and community.)

Whether you structure Uniteens as a youth group or as a Sunday school class, you should incorporate basic elements of the group-building and trust-building processes into your program. For your Uniteens to create a supportive spiritual community, they will need to:

- Establish a large-group relationship, not just small-group bonding within it
- Discover what conduct is expected of group members and their responsibilities to each other and creating agreements that reflect it

Steps to Building Community

The building of bonds is a natural process for people. The facilitator's role is to expedite that process. Your Uniteens and adults will bond as they spend time with each other—sharing experiences, opening up, gaining insights and developing trust. Group-building does not shortcut that process, but directly facilitates it.

Group-building activities bring members closer by:

- Increasing awareness of being 'in group'
- Helping teens and adults learn more about each other's lives
- Identifying and addressing issues that may be a source of tension
- Allowing everyone to risk a little more each time and take small steps forward together

While the group-building process is really a fluid mixture of overlapping experiences, it helps to break them down into specific components for descriptive purposes.

Group-Building Components

- Creating awareness of being in group
- Getting to know each other better

We create those components by doing the following:

- Ice Breakers
- Group agreements
- Mixers
- Cooperative exercises
- Name Games
- Trust activities
- History Sharing
- Affirming
- Stretching

(See [Section Eleven: Resources](#) for ideas and examples)

Factors That Affect the Group-Building Process

Group-building is a dynamic process, which may be helped or hindered by certain situations. Generally, an individual's journey into teen ministry follows these steps:

- Deciding to attend a Uniteen or YOU class or event
- Meeting other people there
- Being exposed to what happens in class
- Learning people's names and more about them
- Sharing experiences and beginning to trust
- Sharing deeper of their own personal history
- Understanding group agreements

As teens come together as a group, the process will be affected by five “potentially divisive-creating dynamics” (as identified in *Building Community in Youth Groups*):

- **Leadership:** There are always teens who lead by modeling and influencing. Their maturity and level of commitment to the group will determine where they lead those who choose to be followers. And there will also be some rebels, not willing to follow anyone anywhere.
- **Motivation:** Teens come for many reasons not related to church—friends, fun activities, parents' wishes, etc. Their motivations will influence their experience.
- **Desire & Ability:** Members are at different points in their spiritual yearning and understanding. And they're also at different levels in articulating and being open to sharing their thoughts and feelings. Some teens will monopolize a discussion, while others won't say a word.
- **Emotional condition:** You can't see the emotional scars, hurts, insecurities or fears that each person brings into the classroom. But they affect the group.
- **Energy differences:** You are dealing with a broad array of learning styles and energy levels. Some teens can have deep conversations, while others can't sit still.

Behavior Management Strategies

As group facilitator, you will be modeling and evaluating behavior, and responding to challenges as they arise. You must be mentally and emotionally prepared to face unexpected situations or undesired behaviors. With options as varied as the range of human expression, there is no perfect answer to addressing challenging behavior.

The purpose of this chapter is to help us understand how, as Uniteen leaders, we can:

- Determine what behavior is appropriate in the classroom
- Actively encourage positive self-expression and preempt challenges, evaluate and create logical consequences for misbehavior.

What is discipline?

- Discipline is the art of bringing an understanding of what is appropriate behavior into another's awareness.
- Unity makes no judgment about an individual's choice of self-expression. Yet as a group, teens need to decide what behavior is appropriate within the group setting.
- Creation of Group or Heart Agreements is a critical component of forming a group. Members must decide what behaviors will support them in exploring and living Truth principles at this point in their lives. And they must periodically revisit and recommit to agreements. (See Appendix for more information.)
- It is not a question of whether a teen is acting the way the leader wants or expects. Rather, it is whether he or she acts in a manner acceptable to the group given the purpose of that activity.

Recurring Themes of Discipline

- All adolescents seek acceptance, belonging and success. Most classroom behavior is related to the youth's desire to be accepted, gain a feeling of belonging and achieve success. When appropriate avenues towards such ends are closed off, youth find other ways to reach those goals which usually mean discipline problems. Attention is attention whether negative or positive.
- All adolescents can behave acceptably. Behavior is a matter of choice and they make their own decisions. You cannot control another person's decisions, but you can recognize that adolescents choose to behave the way they do because of rewards they hope to receive from others or themselves.
- Behavior is communication. What is the youth attempting to communicate? Ask questions to assist them to express their need with language.
- Discipline helps bring success. Adolescents want defined boundaries. Few teens can achieve success in classrooms which are disrupted by a lack of, or poor discipline. Discipline which educates a youth about inappropriate behavior and demonstrates the leader's commitment to maintaining a safe environment is a positive force in supporting their development.
- The leader is the most important figure in establishing class discipline. The leader will have more success by involving youth in establishing agreements for behavior, and helping them to take responsibility for their own classroom. The youth will still look to the leader (the adult presence) as the authority to handle misbehavior. That doesn't mean the leader is the only one responsible for discipline. Parents, Youth and Family Ministry Directors and ministers must also support and expect appropriate behavior.
- Discipline requires consistency and follow-up. Fairness requires wisdom and consistency. Each situation should be evaluated on its own merits, but violations of class agreements should never be ignored. This is distinctly different from ignoring attention-seeking behavior

that is not breaking an agreement. In addition, a leader should not let friendship infringe on one's responsibility to the group.

- Students who choose to break agreements must accept the consequences that accompany the rules. Rules are worth nothing if they're not enforced. Those who knowingly choose to break agreements have also chosen to accept the consequences. Consequences are not arbitrary punishments. They are results that students choose, just as they choose their behavior. Leaders must explain in detail the consequences and linkage to the broken agreements.
- Correction of misbehavior should redirect the youth. Adolescents do not always know how to behave appropriately. They may need to be shown proper behavior, be reminded of it and be positively reinforced when they do what is appropriate to the environment.
- The best way to teach good behavior is through example. Students imitate leaders. Leaders must hold themselves to the class agreements (don't expect teens to let a double-standard slip by unnoticed) and provide the best examples through their own behavior. This is why it is important to share Heart Agreements with ministers, Youth and Family Ministry Directors and parents. Have an established plan for behavior issues. Include parent, Uniteen and minister or Youth and Family Ministry Director in group discussion about behavior and responsibility.

Classroom management begins before class starts. The best way for a leader to address a behavioral challenge is by preventing it. A Uniteen leader's ability to influence behavior is not confined to class time. Things you do outside the classroom will help you deal more successfully with possible challenges inside it:

- Do your prayer and meditation work
- Have an inner conviction about the Christ presence within each teen and adult
- If facilitating the group, be prepared with lesson content and materials
- If teens are facilitating, be available as a support, giving them positive feedback and encouragement
- Plan routines and transitions
- Have Group Agreements
- Have clear boundaries for acceptable and unacceptable behavior
- Have knowledge about what is appropriate behavior for adolescents
- Learn about your individual students and their lives, so you have an understanding of where they are coming from, their challenges, interests, feelings and values
- Have a few good techniques and strategies for redirecting out-of-bounds energy
- Know when to implement Active Learning
- Use clear age-appropriate communication skills
- Line up outside help beforehand

Addressing Behavioral Challenges

Despite our best efforts to create a positive, supportive environment, disruptions and conflicts will invariably come up.

- All participants bear responsibility for maintaining group agreements. Yet, not all limit themselves to kind, loving words and actions. Words are said, the energy is disrupted, feelings are hurt, and frustrations rise.
- When boundaries are tested, teens will look to you as the adult to enforce boundaries. You should follow the basic framework listed below.

NOTE: The time required for this process can vary from the moment it takes to respond immediately with a quick word or look, to the time needed to sit down and mediate a dispute.

Gather as much information as possible.

WHO: There is more than one side to every situation. Find out who is involved—directly or indirectly—and ask each for their perspective.

WHAT & WHERE: Try to gain some clarity about what has actually happened.

WHEN: Evaluate the time frame of the situation—such as when it started, and how long it has been going on.

WHY: There is always a reason for our behavior. Find out what that is.

Determine the seriousness of the situation.

Is there a possibility of physical or emotional harm to anyone? Does it require immediate attention?

Does the situation require your intervention or presence? Will it work itself out?

Is the misbehavior temporary, a one-time occurrence due to certain circumstances, or ongoing?

Evaluate information. Decide how to proceed.

Decide if the situation warrants a response from you. If so, determine what further steps you need to take.

You may not have all the relevant information when you make a decision. Be open to adjusting your course of action as you receive new information.

Follow up with those involved.

Create Consequences to Redirect Behavior.

Effective discipline should bring an immediate awareness into group members' consciousness of a behavior's effect.

The Law of Cause and Effect states that, for every action, thought or word, there is a corresponding reaction. Behavior, whether desired or not, thus naturally generates its own consequences. For a leader or facilitator, the trick is to ensure that those consequences redirect misbehavior in a positive manner.

By using logical consequences, the teen can experience results with a direct relationship to the misbehavior. And unlike punishment, the consequences are not arbitrary, nor do they embarrass, humiliate, condemn or hurt anyone.

Options for Handling Misbehavior (adapted from Kids Can Cooperate)

Ignore Undesirable Behavior (unless there is a breaking of the Group Agreements)

- Ignoring is most effective when you ignore the offending behavior and give attention to desirable behaviors. Ignoring is appropriate when teens are fighting for attention, and the behavior is not physically or emotionally harmful to anyone else.

Restructure the Environment

- Look for ways conflict can be reduced by removing things, adding things or changing the way things are arranged. For example, if teens are fighting over food brought into the classroom, change the way it is brought in or remove it. Or if seating arrangements are causing disruptions, alter the way seats are arranged or chosen.

Encourage Problem-Solving

- Help Uniteens solve their own problems by asking them to identify the problem, generate alternatives, predict consequences and make a decision.

Offer Choices

- Decide what the Uniteen can do instead of the offending behavior. The choice may be between desirable options, or between the desired behavior and the consequences of the present behavior. Offer only choices you are willing to accept or follow up on. Help process the choices and consequences as the teen needs, for clarity in their decision making.

Direct Their Behavior

- Decide specifically what you want the student to do (in place of their current behavior) and invite them to do that.

Looking Beyond an Incident to Address Motivations

Many steps merely address the situation at hand. Looking to the underlying reasons will help redirect misbehavior positively. Generally, teens misbehave for:

- Power = I belong only when I am in control, or proving no one can boss me.
- Attention = I belong only when I am being noticed.
- Revenge = I need to hurt others as I feel hurt.
- Helplessness = Others should not expect anything from me. I can't.

There are positive outlets for those same motivations:

- Teen's Goal
- Suggested Response by Leader
- Goal of Redirection

Power

- Withdraw from the conflict. (Fighting or giving in only increases the youth's desire for power.) Express confidence in the individual and encourage his/her decision-making.
- Shows self-discipline. Does own work. Is resourceful.

Attention

- Ignore misbehavior when possible. Give attention for positive behavior when the youth is not making a bid for it. Let the individual know their contribution counts and you appreciate it.
- Helps. Volunteers

Revenge

- Avoid feeling hurt, punishing or retaliating. Build trusting relationship; help the youth to see that they are loved.
- Ignores provocation. Withdraws from conflict to decide own behavior. Returns kindness for hurt.

Helplessness

- Stop criticism; focus on assets. Encourage positive attempts. Provide opportunity for accomplishment. Avoid getting hooked into pity.
- Attempts. Compliments self. Succeeds

Risks & Consequences to Leader of Addressing Behavior

There is no better laboratory in which to learn and experience the Law of Cause and Effect than a youth group. Your choices will have consequences, positive and negative.

- Visualize your teen group as a small lake. Any disturbance will send ripples across the water, and can cause changes you can't see on the bottom.
- Your decisions whether and how to address behavioral issues will affect others—positively or negatively, often in ways you cannot foresee. Your actions or inaction, along with others' reactions, may have the following consequences.
- Bring your group closer together
- Maintain or restore harmony within the group
- Influence certain members to become more involved in the program
- Handle the immediate situation, but allow underlying cause to continue

- Escalate the tension or conflict
- Redirect the emotional energy to new person/issue
- Draw parents, youth director and/or minister into the situation
- Cause certain members to stop coming to the program
- Cause entire family to stop coming to the church

An adolescent's perspective, emotional attachments and processing time frame is much different from an adult's.

- Things can bother teens which adults don't see as a big deal, yet show no emotional attachment to the issues we have (or expect them to have).
- Teens can go from antagonists to best friends in minutes.
- Reaction to physical harm will be affected by events leading up to the injury, fears and embarrassment. A student may try to brush off a serious injury but treat a simple bump like the end of the world.
- Teens often expect leaders to react or respond like their own parents do, and act accordingly.

Ironically, while some teens are challenging, a leader's greatest frustration will probably come from parents:

- Parents bring their own beliefs, issues and parenting history. Their reaction may have little to do with the incident at hand.
- You will have no idea what a teen has told their parents about you, the program or their issues.
- If parents have expectations or agendas not in line with your program's purpose, you will have to educate them, change the program or allow them to be disappointed.
- While some parents are wonderful in helping leaders anticipate and address challenges, other parents are in denial about their teen's behavior or choices.
- Parents often put more emotional energy into a situation than their teen does. Thirty minutes later, the teen may have put the issue behind them, while their parents will stew on it for days.
- Nothing will stir up a parent more than the perception that their child has been hurt or unfairly treated.

Determine what it is that you are reacting to.

- Talk to a co-leader to get another perspective. Check your own feelings to see if any part of the problem is actually 'your own stuff' that needs to be dealt with.
- You may be unclear exactly what it is that bothers you. Maybe it's not a particular action as much as an attitude. Try to get past symptoms to the core of your concern.
- If you are already under stress or have difficulty tolerating certain behaviors, make that clear to the students.

When experiencing repercussions from decisions:

- Get another perspective. Discuss the situation with your co-leaders, Youth and Family Ministry Director and minister.
- Use open, honest, and direct communication.
- Keep actions in line with the Principles you teach.
- Separate the behavior from the person.
- Remember that every situation results from the choices made by students, parents, co-leaders and you.
- Do what is best for the teen and the group.
- Be willing to admit when you made a mistake.

Punishment		vs	Logical Consequences	
Emphasizes power of authority.			Emphasizes group agreements.	
<i>“Do this, because I say so.”</i>	Becomes a power issue. Assumes participants need no say in matter, since leader can decide for them.		<i>“I thought the group has agreed... (to listen when others are talking). If you want to change that rule, let’s discuss it.”</i>	The rules aren’t the facilitator’s, but have been set by the group.
Places blame on you.			Encourages empathy with me.	
<i>“You are driving me up a wall. Stop it!”</i>	Assumes there is no valid motivation for behavior. Nor does teacher need to accept responsibility for their own reaction.		<i>“This is how I feel (about constantly being interrupted)... I’m here because this is important to me, and...”</i>	Recognizes validity of teen’s and adult’s feelings or actions, even if teen’s actions are inappropriate in this setting. If that’s how the teen wants to behave, they need to find a different space to express themselves.
Judges the person.			Separates behavior from the person.	
<i>“You’re so annoying.”</i>	Uses harsh words, shame or guilt to modify teen’s behavior.		<i>“I care about you, but I don’t like what you’re doing.”</i>	The person is acceptable, even if the behavior is not.

Punishment		vs	Logical Consequences	
Emphasizes past behavior.			Concerned with present/future behavior.	
<i>“You’ll never learn. I can’t count on you.”</i>	Judgment of current behavior prejudiced by past perceptions.		<i>“I know you can do this. What can I do to support you?”</i>	Recognizes that some agreements can pose challenges (we all have our days.) Encourage with positive reinforcement.
Demands compliance.			Presents choices.	
<i>“This is the way it’s going to be. Do as I say. Your preferences don’t matter.”</i>	Assumes participants can’t be trusted to make wise decisions. Disempowering.		<i>“You are capable of deciding. (If you choose not to, you’ve decided to let me make the decision).”</i>	Nothing is being ‘done to’ the teen. Respects the ability of the youth to make a thoughtful choice, which they will be responsible for.
Arbitrary.			Consequences related to misbehavior	
<i>“You deserve what you’re getting...”</i>	Consequences not necessarily consistent or related to act.		<i>“We’ve agreed, if we can’t focus on the meditation, we will sit quietly and not disrupt others. Otherwise, we will need to sit outside the meditation area with adult supervision.”</i>	Makes sense, and provides opportunity to learn from the experience.

Adapted from *A Parent’s Guide to Child’s Discipline* by R. Dreikurs & L. Grey, Hawthorne Books.

Section Three: Building Teen Ministry Programs

Part 3: Creating a Youth of Unity Chapter

The International Youth of Unity (IYOU) is a program of Unity Worldwide Ministries, under its tax-exempt status and bylaws. The bylaws previously in place for IYOU have been dissolved and replaced with these policies and procedures, which extend only to international-sponsored events. International Youth of Unity honors the unique needs of its regional and individual ministries and does not require that regions and/or ministry youth programs adhere to these policies in structuring their own programs.

Chapter Eligibility Requirements

To participate in IYOU and to be considered an active YOU chapter, the group must:*

- Be under the direction of a recognized Unity member ministry of Unity Worldwide Ministries
- Be active in their regional YOU program
- Include one or more teens ranging from the ages of 14 through 18 years of age (YOUer) and have adult sponsors over the age of 25 (YOU Sponsor). In order to protect insurance liability, Unity Worldwide Ministries highly recommends the “two adult rule”—at least two adults present in the group at all times. (See [Section Nine: Sacred Safety](#).)

***Starting in 2007, the above chapter eligibility requirements replaced the previous program of chartering.**

Starting a New Chapter

This outline provides a framework for creating a YOU group. Once the creation and program have been cleared by the minister, there is a comprehensive assessment tool to discover the areas of excellence in the teen programming for YOUers as well as the opportunities for growth. Complete the assessment with your the Youth and Family Ministry Director (YFMD). After assessing, the sponsor(s) meet with the YFMD to continue in planning, using the following format:

- Pray
- Let Spirit direct the process of selecting additional YOU sponsor(s); someone who understands the commitment of time, love and mentorship is required. Set up interviews with possible candidates, using recommended Sacred Safety practices. For information, see [Section Nine: Sacred Safety](#).
- The YFMD, members, sponsors and ministers decide on an appropriate meeting place and time.

- Promote the new YOU program with an exciting announcement from the platform several weeks prior to beginning and continue several weeks in a row. Create an announcement for your monthly and weekly bulletin, website, Facebook page, ministry newsletter, Sunday morning Power Point announcements, etc. Encourage participating teens to invite friends.
- Hold YOU group each week. Use Unity Worldwide Ministries' teen curriculum, Truth books, UWM small group ministry study books etc. www.unityworldwideministries.org/curriculum
- When a core group is established, take time after class to discuss social activities, service projects, regional retreats and rallies, chapter officers, IYOU event, newsletters, including what skills and resources are needed to accomplish these things.
- Have fun.....flow with the needs of the GROUP.
- Explore local and regional training opportunities. Consider attending and/or sending YOU sponsors to Unity National Youth Ministry Training at Unity Worldwide Ministries Home Office. www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-ministry-training
- Contact your regional YOU consultant and let him/her know what help or ideas you need. Make sure you're on his/her mailing list for the regional calendar, newsletter, teaching materials, trainings, and flyers announcing regional events. You will then be a part of a Regional YOU program and can be in contact with other chapters.
- Sign up for Unity Worldwide Ministries' e-newsletter, *The Path* and notifications of new *Unity Leaders Journal* articles at www.unity.org/enews.
- Visit the IYOU web page at www.unityworldwideministries.org/iyou-international-youth-unity and the IYOU Facebook page at www.facebook.com/youthofunity.

Promotion, Motivation

- Include an announcement about YOU from the lectern/pulpit and/or the bulletin. Create a Power Point slide to include in the Sunday morning announcements, if appropriate.
- Place posters in the ministry telling about your activities and inviting others to join in the fun or create a handout brochure.
- Advertise YOU as more than a class. It is an experience of young people exploring ideas, meditating and sharing all kinds of activities together.
- Invite YOUers to discuss methods of inviting and welcoming other young people.
- For promotion outside the ministry, the best tool is a good activities program. When friends hear what YOUers are doing, they often become interested.
- A prime incentive for attendance and participation is the desire to attend sub-regional, regional and international events.
- Many teenagers work at part-time jobs or have transportation difficulties. To ensure continued interest, try to schedule activities at times when those who work can also participate.

- Young people return to places where they are receiving support, encouragement and a chance to explore situations they have going on in their lives. If the Sunday morning lesson is stimulating and relevant to the needs of young people, class members will look forward to attending.

Positive Methods for Managing Classroom Challenges

Silliness and Horsing Around

Address the group by saying something like:

“It’s okay if you choose not to do this activity, but I’m asking you to allow the rest of your classmates the chance to participate without interruption.”

How can I possibly teach everything, so kids are well-versed in the Bible, Unity principles, their own life issues, etc.?

Answer: You can’t. It’s about providing tools & empowering self-discovery

Living Curriculum vision, includes: “to empower facilitators to see education as a process, through which they effectively support the unfolding of the child’s spiritual nature and model the living of the spiritual principles...”

Off the Subject

If the discussion has moved from the topic you originally introduced to a new subject, wait to see whether or not the new topic is relevant and important to the students. If it is, be flexible. Let go of your lesson plans and let the spirit in the room direct the session.

Monopolizers

In some group discussions there will be one or two people who monopolize the conversation. Sometimes, they will even use the class discussion time as “personal group therapy” by introducing shocking or painful information. This captures the attention of others and keeps the attention focused on the individual member. If that person is struggling with an issue, the sponsor or facilitator can suggest meeting after class.

In addition, when someone is monopolizing the discussion time but is staying on the day’s topic, invite others who have not had a chance to speak by saying:

“Let’s reserve the next ten-minutes of class time to hear from the people who have not shared yet.”

If you do this, don’t be surprised if your comment is met with stony silence. Hang in there. More than likely, after several seconds of silence, one of the more reticent class members will speak up and you will have laid the foundation for a new means of communication within the class.

Small talk

If the discussion has wandered too far off the topic or people are having side conversations among themselves, bring the attention back. When you have everyone's attention, ask the students if they want to continue discussing this topic in small groups or if they want to abandon the topic altogether and move on to something else.

Summary

The information in this section is essential to the success of your YOU chapter. Since the primary goal of YOU is to provide an inviting environment where youth can explore their spiritual lives, how you facilitate the meetings and the way you present the material is of vital importance. The time you spend exploring your own spiritual life will serve you well in your role as YOU sponsor. Go to God first!

The following pages illustrate feedback questions for both the YOUer and the sponsor.

YOU'er Feedback Form

- _____ 1. How satisfied were you with this month's sessions?
- _____ 2. How satisfied were you with the group discussions?
- _____ 3. Were you satisfied with the amount of prayer?
- _____ 4. Were the activities during class time meaningful?
- _____ 5. Was the sponsor attentive to your needs?
- _____ 6. Did you feel included?
- _____ 7. Were you given sufficient time to "process" your feelings during class?
- _____ 8. How well did the sponsor handle conflict within the chapter?
- _____ 9. How satisfied were you with the lesson topics?
- _____ 10. How well do you think your chapter members communicate with one another?
- _____ 11. How well do you think your sponsor communicates with the chapter members?
- _____ 12. Are you satisfied with the relationship between chapter members and the rest of the ministry community?

Rate each question with a number from 1-5 that expresses the way you feel with "1" being "very" and "5" being "not at all"

Sponsor Feedback Form

- _____ 1. How satisfied were you with this month's sessions?
- _____ 2. How satisfied were you with the group discussions?
- _____ 3. Were you satisfied with the amount of prayer?
- _____ 4. Were the activities during class time successful?
- _____ 5. Were you attentive to the youth?
- _____ 6. Did you include everyone?
- _____ 7. Did you give sufficient time for the chapter members to "process" their feelings during class?
- _____ 8. How well did you handle conflict within the chapter?
- _____ 9. How satisfied were you with the lesson topics?
- _____ 10. How well do you think your chapter members communicate with one another?
- _____ 11. How well do you think you communicate with the chapter members?
- _____ 12. Are you satisfied with the relationship between your chapter and the rest of the community?

Rate each question with a number from 1-5 that expresses the way you feel with "1" being "very" and "5" being "not at all"

YOUer Open-ended Questions for Feedback

1. What do you consider the high point of this month's work?
2. What things gave you the most satisfaction?
3. What would make the sessions better?
4. What can the sponsor do to make these sessions better?
5. What can you do to make the sessions better?
6. What issues, concerns, or questions would you like to see raised in the group next week?
7. Comments:

Name (optional) _____

Sponsor Self-evaluation Form

1. What monthly objectives have I met?
2. What percentage of group time is dedicated to activities and discussion?
3. What is the percentage of members who participate in the discussions?
4. What steps have I taken or will I take to respond to this month's feedback?
5. What visual/physical changes have I made in the classroom to stimulate interest?
6. What part of the hour do the chapter members seem to enjoy the most? Why?
7. What area of leadership or facilitation would I like to change or develop?
8. What happened this month that I feel good about?
9. What would make the sessions better?

Section Four: Leadership

Section Four: Leadership, provides information and ideas on enrolling and equipping adult volunteers, outlines support systems at the local and regional levels, gives an overview of leader and sponsor qualifications and responsibilities, offers possible election procedures and youth empowerment information.

Enrolling and Equipping Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to any effective Youth and Family Ministry program. They come from a wide range of ages and offer a variety of talent and abilities. Volunteers today want to engage in meaningful work using their spiritual gifts. Many of them prefer to select how they volunteer rather than being willing to do “just anything”. To effectively use volunteers some thoughtful planning benefits everyone.

What Motivates Volunteers?

First, consider some of the various reasons why people might volunteer for your program.

They want to:

- Do something useful—help others, solve problems
- Have fun with youth and/or teens
- Do that which Spirit guided them to do
- Acquire new skills—be creative, cultivate new interests.
- Make new friends, belong to a group
- Repay what they have received
- Want to learn, to develop and grow personally
- Contribute to a cause that is important to them
- Feel like they are needed

Volunteers today are also interested in knowing what the benefits are for them. Before beginning recruitment become clear on the benefits so that men and women realize that volunteering is not all giving, but rather, they will receive much in return. Consider some of these benefits. Mention these as well as your own ideas each time you talk with a potential volunteer. They will:

- Learn and grow spiritually along with those you assist or teach.
- Meet and know many fascinating youth, teens and adults who are like-minded.
- Be emotionally rewarded knowing you are serving the church.
- Have opportunities to develop new skills.
- Experience a supportive and loving environment.

Additionally the church will provide many of the following for their volunteers:

- Training
- Prayer and emotional support
- Curriculum/lesson plans and supplies as needed
- A safe environment
- A complimentary recording of the minister's lesson

Youth and Family Ministry offers amazing opportunities for volunteers to experience love, joy and spiritual growth as they serve and share their gifts.

Reasons Leaders Volunteer

- Someone they love will benefit
- Someone asked them
- They get to meet new people
- They love being with kids
- They gain skills/experience
- They can use talents not otherwise used
- They gain a sense of purpose
- They can test leadership skills
- They feel a sense of power and success
- They feel they can make a difference
- They feel concern about a problem, such as teen pregnancy, decline in education, etc.

Reasons Leaders Remain Committed

- They feel appreciated
- They can see their presence does make a difference
- There is a chance for advancement
- There is opportunity for personal growth
- There is a sense of belonging and "teamwork"
- They are involved in decision-making and administrative process
- Their personal needs are being met

Reasons Leaders Lose Interest

- There are discrepancies between expectations and the reality of the situation
- They don't feel they are making a difference
- They perceive a lack of support from teammates or leadership
- The experience is not meeting personal needs
- There is little or no prestige

- There is no chance for personal growth
- There is too little chance to demonstrate creativity
- There is a lack of organization and it is a struggle to be involved

As you help others spiritually and in every way you not only fulfill the law of giving and receiving, you develop your own resources and capabilities in fuller measure. By helping others under the guidance of the Spirit of Truth you at the same time help yourself.

—Myrtle Fillmore, Unity's Co-founder

Building a Volunteer Team

A strong volunteer team results from time in prayer, intentional recruiting, careful screening, discerning when to say yes or to redirect certain people, and. As we remember our purpose to create a safe ministry where teens and adults can learn and grow spiritually while expressing joy, we move patiently through the process of growing our Youth and Family Ministry program on a solid, principle-based foundation.

To build a strong volunteer team, take time to go through these seven steps.

1. Pray.
2. Define the needs.
3. Recruit.
4. Screen and Interview.
5. Provide orientation and training.
6. Coach and supervise.
7. Give frequent recognition.

The first step is to spiritually prepare yourself and the youth ministry to receive the qualified and dedicated individuals the youth and teens deserve to have as Unity leaders, YOU sponsors and support staff.

The next three are the steps taken before volunteers commit and are described in this chapter. These steps discuss the guidance and support to provide after volunteers commit.

Step 1: Pray

In Unity, prayer is a foundational piece of all action. As you move through each of the steps consider each one prayerfully. Time in prayer allows us to open to Divine guidance as we serve youth and families. It also serves to assist us in appreciating and expanding the existing gifts in the ministry through gratitude.

Step 2: Define the needs

Whether you have a small or large youth ministry, begin by identifying the needs of your program. What tasks are essential to conducting a meaningful Sunday morning teen program?

List the actual tasks for which volunteers are needed. Remember the tasks that need to occur to prepare for Sunday as well.

How can the tasks be grouped? Write job descriptions for each of the various volunteer opportunities so that people are clear on what they are to do. Include amount of time expected for each position, details of the job and the length of commitment. Doing so helps determine how many adults are needed for the program. Defining expectations helps create a more positive experience for everyone. In defining needs, set standards of excellence and strive to meet them by matching abilities of volunteers with program needs. Consider the age groups of the teens in determining the total number of Uniteen leaders and YOU sponsors needed.

What are the recommended qualifications for volunteers?

These are suggested requirements for your church or program to consider when selecting volunteers.

- A completed application
- A background check for all who work directly with youth
- An understanding of Unity principles demonstrated in some way such as having completed a “Lessons in Truth” class
- Church membership or willingness to consider joining within six months to a year (for insurance reasons).
- Love and acceptance for youth/teens
- Six months or more regular attendance at your church (Recommend requiring this as a safety measure.)
- Willingness and desire to be of service to youth/teens/families
- Willingness to commit (2 Sundays per month) for a minimum of 6 months or a year
- Willingness to participate on a team

You may want to consider creating a Volunteer Advisory Board for youth and family ministry. These specially selected volunteer leaders or grade groupings team leaders can assist with many functions. They can serve as a leadership team for smaller churches, sometimes in place of a youth and family ministry director. They can assist with program direction, enrolling additional volunteers and many of the extra functions that create a vital, growing program.

Step 3: Recruit

Recruitment is the ongoing process of locating volunteers who are qualified or can be trained for the positions to be filled. There is no one best way to recruit volunteers. Instead, use a variety of strategies at different times of the year. Be sure to target men as well as women. Be creative and enjoy the process. Know that your passion and enthusiasm will motivate others to want to be a part of the program.

As you recruit, be aware of what people in the congregation don't know. Their beliefs can limit one's ability to see how they can serve. Plan and communicate clearly your needs and what is expected.

Some people mistakenly believe that volunteers are those who can serve every week, have a lot of flexible time, and who can make a long-term commitment. Some believe that there are only opportunities for those who have a deep interest in being with children. Others think that they are not qualified to fill any positions or training isn't available.

—John Verschoor, New Thought Unity Center, Cincinnati, OH

1. Gather names of potential volunteers.

- Ask for recommendations from your minister, other staff members, board members, other volunteers in the program, and the teens themselves.
- Notice which adults seem to have a rapport with the youth or teens.
- Listen for people who value and care about teens and youth.
- Consider adults that have lots of energy and enthusiasm.
- Consider adults who have taken classes and have a “pay it forward” consciousness.

Use a one-to-one approach to personally invite these people to volunteer. This is usually the most effective approach. Listen in order to identify any insecurity in volunteering with youth and teens and reassure potential volunteers in their capabilities.

2. Announce the needs during a service and offer a short informational meeting afterwards or have them meet you near the exit. Offer an “Interest Inquiry” sheet (see end of this section) in the program and promptly call those who return it to answer their questions.

Remember that some of your congregation does not understand what happens in youth and family ministry so include a brief description of the youth and family ministry vision and purpose before announcing needs.

3. Have a mature youngster or a tenured volunteer who is also a parent announce the opportunities. Be sure to assist this person with exactly what to say and help them practice. This could be a “testimonial” about the joys and fun of being in youth and family ministry.

4. Hold a volunteer fair after a service with each church area represented that needs volunteers. People can visit each of the tables to learn about a variety of volunteering opportunities. At the youth and family ministry table display pictures of your volunteers in action. Have some of them present to share what they do. Give away affirmative bookmarks the children and teens created or some other creation.

5. Encourage and arrange for an interested individual to visit a class.

6. Hold an open house in your youth and family ministry facility. Display or have children, youth and teens share about what they do there. Have youth make and serve refreshments. Share the opportunities for more volunteers and invite them to complete an interest inquiry.
7. Wear a button that says “Ask me about Teen Ministry!” Then be ready to promote your program to anyone who asks.
8. Invite your ministry to consider featuring youth and family ministry for 8-10 minutes during a service. Honor current volunteers in front of the congregation. Show pictures of youth and volunteers doing interesting things in youth and family ministry. Include in the bulletin an “Interest Inquiry”.

Special tips for recruiting men!

- Help men view children and teen programs as significant ministry. Promote using photos of men and women involved in the excitement of working with your children and teens.
- Ask men to recruit men. Highlight male workers through testimonies and newsletter articles as well as women.
- Help men understand their unique role in the classroom. Pair a male and a female volunteer when possible. Showing a healthy working relationship of men and women can be an asset to our growing youth.
- Encourage and affirm male volunteers often. Both men and women want to be accepted and valued.
- Provide strong leadership to the program. Strong leadership attracts strong volunteers—male and female.
- Give men and women ownership of their portion of the program. Invite them into the goal-setting process and ministry evaluation.

Step 4: Screening and Interviewing Process

1. Ask everyone interested in volunteering to complete an application. This is essential and very valuable as it provides contact information and insight into the interests and abilities of the potential volunteer. Keep blank copies on hand so you have them ready to distribute anytime someone expresses an interest. (See Appendix A, page 231)
2. Review the application carefully. You may want to schedule a date and specific time for an interview. Or you may want to call the references before scheduling—both personal ones and other churches where the applicant volunteered. Check with your minister and other staff as well. This is essential especially when volunteers work with vulnerable populations like minors or with sensitive information.

Contact References Sample Script

Hello, my name is (name) and I'm the (title) at (name of church) and I'm calling for a personal reference on one of your friend's, (name). He/She is offering to volunteer in our Youth Ministry department as (name of position). As with all our volunteers working with children or teens, we request they give us three personal references, which we then proceed to check.

(Name) listed you as one of his/her references. I simply need brief answers to the following questions.

- 1) How long have you known (name)?
 - 2) In what capacity have you known (name), or how did you meet?
 - 3) What is your overall impression of (name) as a person?
 - 4) How do you feel he/she works or would work with children or youth, even if you have not personally seen him/her do so?
 - 5) Would you have any reservations whatsoever, with (name) working with children or youth?
3. The interview lends importance to the position and to the youth ministry program. It also provides an opportunity for the volunteer to learn about the different needs in the program and where they might best serve. Know that the volunteer is interviewing you as much as you are interviewing them. Before the interview write a list of what you want to discuss. Then write the thoughts as specific open-ended questions for the candidate to answer.

In an interview the director can learn:

- Why the individual wants to volunteer
- The volunteer's expectations about serving
- If there is a match

The volunteer can learn:

- Responsibilities and expectations for the position
- What specific skill sets are important
- What training will be provided

4. Conduct the interview.

- Welcome the potential volunteer warmly and invite them to make themselves comfortable. Offer a cup of coffee or water. Try to establish rapport and make them feel at ease. Use good eye contact and body language. Then begin with prayer before moving the discussion to the interview purpose.
- Ask specific open-ended questions and listen carefully to what the person has to say. During the interview or immediately after, write down their responses.
- Offer the opportunity to ask questions about the youth and family program.

- Explain any policies that apply to this volunteer position such as a background check, sacred safety and appropriate boundaries.
- Briefly explain training and support offered.
- Close the interview at the appropriate time. Give them a clear indication of whether or not you are interested in them and a projected date for a final decision. End the interview by thanking them for their interest and willingness.

Questioning Strategies

Use open-ended and behavior-based questions, such as:

- What have you enjoyed most about your past volunteer experiences? What made it that way? (Rather than “Have you had any previous volunteer experience?”)
 - Please describe an incident where you worked in a team. What did you like and dislike about the experience? (Rather than “Are you a team player?”)
 - In what ways do you think you could help the youth and family ministry fulfill its mission? (Rather than “Given our limited budget, are you okay working with us as a volunteer?”)
 - Tell me about a time when you prepared an event or lesson that didn’t work out the way you thought it would. (Rather than “Have you ever prepared a lesson that the teens didn’t like?”)
5. Prayerfully consider each applicant. Listen to your intuition and guidance. Do not bring the person into the position if it is not a good match. Re-direct them to another area to volunteer or encourage them to take some classes. Lovingly make clear that there is no appropriate match for them just now in youth and family ministry.
 6. Conduct background checks before offering the person the position.
 7. Offer the position. Once the volunteer accepts, both parties sign a Volunteer Commitment Agreement that describes the responsibilities and indicates agreement to the volunteer position. This is not a legal binding contract, but insures understanding between volunteer and church. See Code of Ethics and Agreements (190) in Section Nine: Sacred Safety.
 8. Schedule the observation and orientation with them so they are clear when they begin.

Render service with enthusiasm, as to the Lord and not to men and women, knowing that whatever good we do, we will receive the same again from the Lord.

—Ephesians 6:7-8, NRS

When meeting with a potential assisting sponsor or teen leader, discussion should include information regarding appropriate relationships and boundaries with teens, social media policies, Sacred Safety policies, explanation about the working relationship with the Youth & Family Ministry Director, training opportunities, time commitment, etc. Questions to consider asking:

- What is your intention in volunteering with teens? (Is there an agenda to “fix” anyone or find inner child healing?)
- What do you believe about youth empowerment?
- What do you think is the difference between teaching/presenting and facilitation?
- What is your understanding of the Living Curriculum?
- What is your understanding of mentorship?

Support for Teen Ministry Leaders

During your involvement in the many phases of working with youth, you may sometimes feel isolated. To keep yourself “fresh” and nurtured as a youth group leader, it is important for you to become familiar with and utilize your local, regional, and national support systems.

Training

Training is required for any volunteer and staff member that has been approved to work in the youth ministry department. Training helps the person be successful in fulfilling their job responsibilities by giving them the tools, skills, and information they need to function within the guidelines and policies of the youth ministry department and the greater church community. In order to adhere to procedures, policies and best practices, one must know them up front with plenty of time to ask questions and find out where everything is. On-going training is also recommended for those who have been working for a while to refresh memories and update paperwork. The director also benefits by checking to see if the paperwork still reflects the actual practice and vice versa.

Your Local Support

Developing a positive relationship with your ministry community can benefit you and the teen group. Keep your YFM Director/minister informed about projects and ideas you have for the YOU chapter or the Uniteen group. In turn, they will be there to help you address goals, provide training and objectives for your group.

Your Youth and Family Ministry Director (YFMD), your biggest advocate, can help you with decisions regarding any group issues as well as with guidance and suggestions for lessons. Meet with your YFMD on a quarterly basis to consult about teaching materials, trainings, needs, successes, goals and objectives; and, to clear all plans involving special use of your ministry or center.

Your **co-sponsor/co-leader** can help you with teaching or social activities. Remember to regularly show appreciation for his or her contributions to the team. A co-sponsor/co-leader can be an invaluable resource when you need a break, input and/or support.

Consider a Leadership Team

The success of any teen group begins with its adult leadership team. Benefits of working in a team include:

- Having a range of ideas, experiences, personalities and teaching styles
- Greater personal attention for students
- Sharing of responsibilities
- Mutual support
- Sounding boards
- Sacred safety

Members of the leadership team serve in a variety of spiritual roles that assist in empowering pre-teens and teens to discover their inner Divine self. Leaders wear an assortment of hats, depending on the center's programs, which can include facilitator, teacher, guide, role model, coordinator, communicator, administrator, youth advocate, liaison, mentor, coach and event attendee. Each leader serves as an accepting, non-judgmental, caring adult who listens and supports without trying to solve the teen's problems.

The **parents** can help you as drivers and helpers during classroom sessions and activities. Be sure and keep the parents informed and included in the needs for the group. Besides transportation and classroom helpers, they can help to mail flyers, teach classes and serve as an Event Attendee for some events.

The **congregation** can help you through financial contributions, participation in fundraising activities and teen sponsored activities, praise for the youth, encouragement for leaders and sponsors. Keep the congregation informed of the good that is coming from your time with the youth. Let them know which activities have been meaningful to the group and how they can be of support.

The board of directors can help you with your financial needs if they are able and—if you keep them informed. The YFMD/Uniteen leader/YOU Sponsor team needs to submit a budget of estimated annual expenses for training, materials, and travel for the board's consideration. Open communication between the board, YFMD and teen ministry leaders (with the minister's support) can be invaluable. Let them know you appreciate them regularly.

Additional support can come from:

- The minister
- Your Regional Education Consultants including International Teen Ministry Coordinator
- Peers—network with other Unity centers and youth volunteers
- Local, regional and national training workshops, retreats and teachers' meetings
- Your personal relationship with God

What is a Uniteen Leader?

A Uniteen leader serves in a variety of spiritual roles that assist in empowering pre-teens to discover and express their inner Divinity by co-creating learning environments that empower all to explore and practice higher spiritual principles. A Uniteen leader always speaks, acts and behaves in a manner appropriate of a spiritual adult. Unity Worldwide Ministries recommends the “two-adult rule” for sacred safety for both teen and leader.

Uniteen leader roles encompass:

Facilitator, Teacher and Guide

- Creates a safe, supportive youth group environment in which Uniteens can share and grow
- Facilitates the Sunday class (See [Section Six: Lessons](#))
- Prepares and teaches engaging spiritual lessons that bring forth personal experience and thought
- Is fully present and prepared ahead of class time

Role Model

- Models Truth for Uniteens in all life situations

Coordinator

Helps to plan and organize group building activities that enable Uniteens to apply principles in a practical way through:

- Service projects
- Social outings
- Overnight events
- Regional events
- Fund-raisers

Communicator

Communicates with:

- Uniteens
- Parents
- Co-leaders
- Youth and Family Ministry Director
- Ministry’s leadership
- Congregation
- Regional education consultants including International Teen Ministry Coordinator
- Minister

Administrator

In conjunction with the youth director, manages paperwork such as:

- Electronic Communications
- Roster
- Attendance chart
- Permission slips
- Medical releases
- Event flyers
- Newsletters and newsletter articles
- Budget requests

Event Attendee

- Accompanies youth to local, regional and/or international events
- Depending on event, makes travel arrangements in conjunction with youth director
- If hosting, provides event coordination oversight
- Oversees group agreements
- Processes the experience

Youth Advocate and Liaison

- Points out the needs of the youth to the congregation
- Constantly speaks to the highest vision of the entire youth ministry program

Mentor and Coach to Teens

- Always sees their highest potential and their Christ light
- Is willing to be their role model
- Coaches YOUers to:
 - Stretch and grow
 - Communicate authentically and compassionately
 - Use their spiritual tools
 - Make commitments with intention
 - Develop leadership skills of officers/youth leadership team
 - I do it/We do it/You do it/Go teach someone else

Mentor to Parents

- Always see their highest potential and their Christ Light
- Be willing to partner with parents in helping to understand their teen
- Coach parents to keep learning about their teen's development
- Coach parents to accept and respect that that they no longer have a "child"—but a teen with a mind, beliefs, consciousness, values, likes and dislikes of their own
- Encourage them to never "give up" as a parent

Leader Roles and Responsibilities

Each center may set its own specific age and church membership requirements for youth group leaders. The following are recommended qualifications for Uniteen leaders:

- Loving desire and commitment to serve
- Knowledge of Unity principles
- Ability to relate to pre-teens and teens
- Communication and leadership skills
- Positive role model for Uniteens
- Available for classes, meetings, training and events
- Willing to grow and learn

Uniteen leaders come in all shapes, styles, backgrounds and personalities. The one constant is a sincere spiritual commitment to living and practicing Truth principles and a loving desire to serve our youth by engaging them in the learning process.

If you lack teaching experience, or knowledge about the Bible or Unity, you may feel unprepared to work with Uniteens. Some things that will help you gain the confidence you need to give and receive:

- Assist first, and gradually assume more of a leadership role.
- Recognize what being a ‘teacher’ means. You do not have to have all the answers. Your students should discover Truth within themselves.
- Allow yourself to make ‘mistakes.’ Do the best you can, and learn from your experiences.
- Use available materials provided by your Youth and Family Ministry Director. You do not have to prepare every lesson from scratch. Teen-specific lesson plans and curriculum materials are available from Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- Do your part in prayer and study; let Spirit do its part.
- Give up attachment to results. It’s easy to become results-oriented, to make sure students ‘get’ the concept you’re trying to teach. But you don’t know what’s going on in their heads. Let them approach topics at whatever level they are comfortable.
- Don’t confuse a student’s insecurity with boredom. Junior high students tend to be very self-conscious and reticent until they’re comfortable with the group. (See [Section Three, Part 2: Creating a Uniteen Program.](#))
- Know your limitations. No one is naturally perfect at all aspects of teaching. Allow yourself room to grow as a leader.
- Be open to suggestions and support from others.
- Give it time. Growth is a process that happens over time.

Learn who Uniteens are as individuals. Listen to them. Try to understand them. Spend enough time with them so that you can know the Christ in them, and they can know the love of God which pours through you to them.

Some things you can do:

- Learn their names quickly.
- Greet them with a smile, and maybe a hug.
- Talk with them before and after class.
- Offer a genuine compliment.
- Ask about their week and activities.
- Find out if they have pets.
- Meet their parents, siblings and friends.
- Include their guests in a circle of warmth.
- Go out of your way to get to know quieter, shy ones.
- Listen with an open heart and a keen ear.

Creating an Atmosphere of Trust

When we create an atmosphere of trust, a place where Uniteens can talk about the challenges they face, controversial topics will be brought up. **This is a sign that the group is functioning well.**

But no matter how well motivated we are to see them develop a spiritual awareness that will serve as their guide, we still need to be aware that there are boundaries we must maintain.

Uniteen Leader Agreements

1. I will prepare myself for classes and events through prayerful meditation and study.
2. I understand that I am there to facilitate the Uniteens' experience. I am not there to be one of them, serve as a parent or 'fix' anyone. Nor will I use Uniteens as my support group. I will seek out my minister or peers for advice and counseling on personal matters.
3. I will adhere to all church policies and state laws. I will work in harmony with my minister, youth and family ministry director, regional consultant and fellow Uniteen leaders. Should I disagree with their plans, decisions or leadership style, I will address the issue directly with them.
4. I will not preach my own personal value system. I will stick to teaching Unity Truth principles and help Uniteens understand their own beliefs. I will be honest with students, and let them know that my beliefs come from my own spiritual awareness. I will make sure they understand I am not telling them what to think. I will encourage Uniteens to discuss why they feel as they do.
5. I will respect the parents' authority in matters relating to their child. I will support both Uniteens and their parents by not taking sides about problems they may be having. I will

support efforts of everyone in the group to discover how they can apply Truth principles to situations that challenge them, but I will not try to solve their problems for them.

6. I will not become a Uniteen's private counselor, or counsel parents about their Uniteen, even if I am professionally trained. This does not mean I will avoid being there for them when they need to talk. If I am asked to counsel a Uniteen, I will not do so in a compromising location, nor without the knowledge and consent of their parent(s) and minister.
7. I will respect a Uniteen's expectation of confidentiality when sharing, but I will not take on the responsibility of keeping a secret that should be shared with the minister or a child's parent. I will make sure Uniteens understand my obligation to **report to the director or minister any threat of physical harm to oneself or others.** *If I suspect abuse or suicidal tendencies, or am concerned about a Uniteen's behavioral choices (e.g., use of controlled substances), I will discuss such matters FIRST with the director or minister, who will decide what action is necessary.*
8. I will be above reproach in my behaviors with Uniteens and other leaders both in and out of the classroom. I will maintain appropriate physical boundaries and avoid compromising situations.

Specifically, I will:

- Not tell jokes or speak words which contain sexual innuendoes
 - Not prolong hugs, return a kiss or pull children close to my body. I will use words, instead of touch, to show I care
 - Not touch anyone on the genitals, breasts or buttocks (which includes not allowing a Uniteen to sit on your lap). Neutral areas include the shoulders, back and top of the head.
 - Remember that others do not always interpret my intentions accurately. Teens already may have experienced trauma in this area, or may confuse adult leaders as romantic interests.
 - Not use alcohol or drugs around Uniteens or at any events.
9. When Uniteens ask about sex, I will answer their question directly and encourage them to talk with their parents. Before teaching a class on sexual issues, I will clear the subject matter with our youth and family ministry director, and have parents sign a permission slip. I will not talk about any of my personal sexual experiences.
 10. I will use my role as a leader to encourage and support all participants. I will not engage in put-downs or any physical, mental or emotional harassment of participants.

Ways to Earn Your Uniteen's Respect

1. Model—treat kids with courtesy, take them seriously, be sensitive to others and listen when they talk.
2. Relate to them. Don't talk down or too deep. Keep lessons relevant to their lives.
3. Be honest. Don't be afraid to admit you made a mistake or don't know the answer.
4. Show teens you care—enough to confront them, to be there for them and to get to know what's going on in their lives.

5. Cut them some slack. Be sensitive to their needs and situations.
6. Discipline appropriately. Don't command respect by embarrassing someone publicly.
7. Be realistic. Understand what Uniteens can do. Make sure lessons and activity plans are appropriate for this age group.
8. Be consistent. Don't ignore or keep changing classroom rules. Don't let friendships interfere with your responsibilities as group leader.
9. Spend time with them. The more time you spend outside class, the more they'll listen to you about serious spiritual stuff.
10. Be patient. Rather than demand respect, let them warm up to you.
11. Manage sibling conflicts in the group.
12. Encourage positive humor. Bring laughter into the classroom, but avoid sarcasm or humor that may put down or appear cruel to someone. In a volatile situation, get a kid to crack a smile.
13. Listen to them with complete attention—not only with your ears, but also watch their gestures and expressions.
14. Set behavior guidelines early.
15. Be sure to follow through. Never threaten what you can't or won't do.

Rewards of Being a Uniteen Leader

Serving as a spiritual educator—whether as a Uniteen leader, YOU sponsor or Sunday school teacher—is not only about giving of your time and energy. As you allow your light to shine by sharing your gifts and talents with others, you will undoubtedly experience:

- new friendships
- renewed self-confidence
- greater understanding of Truth and the Bible
- enhancement of your own faith and relationship with God
- a new hope for the future
- a sense of accomplishment in supporting a child's growth
- an outlet for your own creativity
- the joy of being loved and honored

Perhaps most profound is the knowledge that you have touched lives in ways you cannot even fathom. You have helped Uniteens plant seeds that will one day spring forth at their right and perfect moment. And you've planted some seeds yourself.

Questions To Ask Yourself

This checklist is intended as a reminder for leaders. Look at these items as goals.

Do not expect that you must fulfill each item every week.

1. How are my teaching and this group important to the ministry of the church?

2. Do I know the names of my students?

___ yes ___ no ___ most of them

3. Do I know their family situations?

___ yes ___ no ___ most of them

4. Have I found time for personal conversation with each student recently?

___ yes ___ no ___ most of them

5. Have I met and taken the opportunity to talk with each parent recently?

___ yes ___ no ___ most of them

6. How are the students relating to each other? Have I noticed any change(s)?

7. What is my relationship with each student? Have my relationships with any students changed?

8. Are there any specific students and/or behaviors that are a challenge for me?

9. What activities or special events are planned to help the group bond together?

10. What service opportunities have I planned for these students?

11. Are prayer and meditation part of my life outside of class?

___ yes ___ no ___ most of the time

Youth of Unity Chapter

What is a Sponsor?

Serving as a sponsor to a Youth of Unity chapter is an awesome responsibility as well as a pleasurable one. It provides numerous opportunities for modeling team leadership as well as experiencing personal spiritual growth. YOU chapters function most effectively with two or more sponsors who may take different responsibilities. We recommend the “two-adult rule” for sacred safety—for both teen and sponsor.

In order for you to be most successful as a YOU sponsor, we want you to be familiar and comfortable with the expectations. Most positions, whether volunteer or not, have a set of standards that help the organization run smoothly. This will allow you to make the most out of your time with the youth and hopefully, make the experience more manageable for you. The job description on the following pages is a general overview of the position. Your youth and family ministry department may have specific methods and requirements that are unique to your ministry. If so, your youth director will clarify the position during your initial meetings.

Portrait of a Sponsor

What qualities do we look for when choosing a sponsor who will be the spiritual guide for many young people during a crucial, and often tumultuous, period of their lives? We believe an ideal sponsor has the ability to: love, learn, appreciate, encourage, listen, support and mentor.

Basic Qualifications:

- 25 years of age or older
- A general understanding of Unity principles
- Availability of 2-4 hours per week for regular activities
- Able to attend rallies and events
- Actively participating in the ministry
- Recommendations/Referrals

Helpful Qualifications:

- Experience working with teenagers
- Training/expertise in communication skills
- Preferably able to make a one year or longer commitment

A sponsor serves in a variety of spiritual roles that assist in empowering teens to discover and express their inner Divinity by co-creating learning environments that empower all to explore and practice higher spiritual principles. A sponsor always models truth principles, speaking, acting and behaving in a manner appropriate of a spiritual adult.

YOU Sponsor roles encompass:

Facilitator and Teacher:

- Creates a positive and supportive environment
- Prepares and teaches engaging spiritual lessons that bring forth personal experience and thought
- Encourages and assists YOUers to facilitate all or a portion of a lesson
- Is fully present and prepared ahead of class time
- Helps to develop organizational and planning skills in youth desiring leadership
- Assists in planning and coordinating activities, events and/or service projects

Administrator

In conjunction with the youth and family ministry director, manages paperwork such as:

- Roster
- Electronic communications
- Attendance chart
- Permission slips
- Medical releases
- Event flyers
- Newsletters and newsletter articles
- Budget requests

Communicator with

- YOUers
- Parents
- Co-sponsors
- Youth Director
- Ministry's leadership
- Congregation
- Regional education consultants including International Teen Ministry Coordinator
- Minister

Event Attendee

- Accompanies youth to local, regional and/or international YOU events
- Depending on event, makes travel arrangements in conjunction with youth director
- If hosting, provides event coordination oversight
- Oversees group agreements
- Processes the experience

Youth Advocate and Liaison

- Points out the needs of the youth to the congregation
- Constantly speaks to the highest vision of the entire youth and family ministry program

Mentor and Coach to Teens

- Always sees their highest potential and their Christ light
- Is willing to be their role model
- Coaches YOUers to:
 - Stretch and grow
 - Communicate authentically and compassionately
 - Use their spiritual tools
 - Make commitments with intention
 - Develop leadership skills of officers/youth leadership team
 - I do it/We do it/You do it/Go teach someone else

Mentor to Parents

- Always see their highest potential and their Christ Light
- Be willing to partner with parents in helping to understand their teen
- Coach parents to keep learning about their teen's development
- Coach parents to accept and respect that that they no longer have a “child”—but a teen with a mind, beliefs, consciousness, values, likes and dislikes of their own
- Encourage them to never “give up” as a parent

Sponsor Roles & Responsibilities

Sponsors as Mentors

1. Communicates weekly with youth & family ministry director
2. Facilitates Sponsors meetings
3. Creates the Agenda for the business & Annual meetings with the Officer Team
4. Acts as a guide, coach and mentor to the YOU Officer Team & chapter members and occasionally their parents
5. Lovingly reminds all YOUer's of agreements, commitments and responsibilities
6. Encourages Spiritual Truths to be used on all levels, in all activities
7. Attends events
8. Communicates with each Project Coordinator regularly to ensure all is progressing

Mentor to a YOU Officer or Leadership Team

1. Understand and convey responsibilities for each position
2. Assist in setting an intention for the year
3. Support empowered, conscious and prayerful commitment

Activities:

- Coach teen(s) to plan, implement and delegate tasks of the activity as needed in a prayerful manner
- Assist in recruiting and coaching teen to recruit adult and parent participation for activities
- Coordinate calendar with youth and family ministry director and communications officer
- Plan to attend activity if possible for supervisory support

Communications:

- Coach teen to keep communications flowing: electronically, texting, phone calls, written communication
- Assist in details needed for effective communication
- Guide creation of accurate records kept of fundraisers, events and activities for future reference
- Offer prayer and gratitude
- Create written communications to Church through the youth and family ministry director: web, bulletin, Power Point, email blasts, newsletter, thank yous, etc.

Prosperity:

- Assist in coaching the teen in correct tracking and accurate updates of the YOU funds The youth and family ministry director and minister require Quicken (or similar) ledger reports monthly
- Assist in creating the budget, planning expenses, setting a goal for outcomes of fundraisers
- Support YOU Chapter prosperity awareness, gratitude and practice of tithing
- Directly responsible for cash box during all fundraising events
- Follow ministry policies regarding cash counting, reporting, deposits and requests

Spirituality:

- Coach teen in leading affirmative prayers and meditations.
- Encourage and coach all YOUer's to pray out loud and create written affirmations, prayers and meditations for a YOU classroom notebook.
- Encourage all YOUer's to utilize the classroom copy of the "Daily Word for Teens". Music and CD's also recommended.
- Care for YOU classroom resources.

Service:

- Assist on YOU Hospitality Sunday.
- Assist in creating a consciousness of service in Chapter.
- Assist in coordinating service to Youth Ministry at the church during busy activities for children such as Easter, Christmas, etc.
- Enroll chapter to involve themselves in chapter service activities in the community.
- Enroll the assistance of the congregation when possible and work in conjunction with existing church staff and/or service volunteers.

The Junior Sponsor

A junior sponsor is a young adult between the ages of 21 and 24, who acts as an assistant to the head sponsor in the group. It is suggested that the YOU junior sponsor regularly attend Unity services and classes, be a member of the ministry and have a general understanding of Unity principles. He or she must be willing to lovingly spend an average of two to four hours per week with YOUers in meetings, planning, listening and prayer.

Many YOUers wish to become junior sponsors when they turn 19. However, it has been observed that graduating YOUers are often not seen as having sponsor authority by their peers; and, in some cases, parents have expressed concern with a person under 25 having the responsibilities of a chaperone.

Junior sponsors are not allowed to attend the International YOU Event. Policies regarding their attendance at regional events varies from region to region. Generally speaking, they are not allowed to be the only sponsor responsible for the YOU chapter at regional or sub regional events.

In many states, liability in regards to driving youth under the age of twenty five may be an issue. Again, there may be a policy regarding this at a local or regional level. To be certain, check with your youth and family ministry director, minister and/or regional consultant. In addition, the ministry's insurance policy may have guidelines regarding the appropriate age of adults working with minors.

The New Sponsor

The new YOU sponsor should be welcomed by the current sponsors in their regularly scheduled planning meetings. At these meetings, the sponsors, will set a sponsoring schedule (who be responsible for which lessons on which weeks, as well as which sponsors will attend which events).

Conducting Chapter Business

Business Meetings

Youth Leadership

Youth-conducted business meetings should be held on a regular basis. Short business can be taken care of following a class lesson, but plan to have a regular monthly meeting just for business. This meeting can be held on Sunday, before or following a class. It also can be scheduled as an evening activity followed by a social time.

The YOU meeting should have an agenda prepared by the chapter president with the assistance of information from sponsors, officers, and members. The president runs the business meeting. The sponsors should be present at all business meetings for input, advice or to confirm their own availability for projects that are decided or voted upon. It is helpful for the youth and family ministry director to also be in attendance if possible to provide input on church activities being planned, and to clarify procedures that the volunteers may not be aware of. The president should give a time limit for discussion of each agenda item and stay as close as possible to that goal. (There are many items the chapter president can clarify with appointed chairpersons outside the business meeting.)

Suggested Format for A Chapter Business Meeting:

It is not the function of the YOU sponsor to teach formal parliamentary procedure. However, it is helpful to teach new officers a simple formula for running a short, smooth-running business meeting. The following agenda can be modified to suit the needs of the chapter:

1. Call to Order: President
2. Prayer: Led by vice president
3. Secretary's Report
4. Treasurer's Report
5. Unfinished/Old Business
6. New Business
7. Adjournment/Closing Prayer

Committee Chairpersons

It is important that teens in the chapter be willing to chair any activity or fund raiser that is voted upon. This indicates that someone is willing to be responsible for the planning and coordinating of the event. If no one is able to chair a voted-upon activity, it is canceled or postponed. The sponsor(s) assist, but do not serve as chairpersons of committees. If there is no teen chairperson, there is no activity!

Chapter Officers

A chapter can choose to elect officers as soon as they wish to become organized for outside activities and other business. They may not have enough officers to fill every office, so they may want to combine the offices. Many times this will be the first time a young person has held office, so it is important for him/her to have a job description and lots of support and encouragement. Be sure each officer has a copy of their responsibilities when they run for the office, so there is no question of the expectations. Ideally, each officer would be mentored by one of the adult sponsors or the youth and family ministry director.

Examples of Officers and Responsibilities

President

1. Runs business meetings
2. Supports committee chairpersons
3. Communicates with regional officer
4. Communicates weekly with sponsor for activity coordination
5. Prepares agenda for each business meeting with input from sponsors and the youth and family ministry director
6. Coordinates all other officers and their chapter activities

Vice President

1. Assists president in all his/her duties
2. Takes over duties in absence of president
3. Leads or delegates all prayers and meditations
4. In charge of chapter service projects
5. Leads closing circle

Treasurer

1. Leads prosperity prayer and love offering
2. Prepares annual estimated budget
3. Collects weekly offering, delivers to ministry staff
4. Gives names of contributors to secretary for thank you notes
5. Gives monthly financial report
6. Serves as fund-raising chairperson

Secretary

1. Keeps record of YOU addresses and phone numbers
2. Submits regional newsletter contributions
3. Takes weekly attendance and keeps business meeting minutes
4. Calls new guests after they visit
5. Writes thank you notes
6. Updates classroom activity calendar
7. Takes attendance at special events
8. Records who serves as project chairpersons

Historian

1. Attends and photographs all activities
2. Assembles visual presentations of the chapter's activities
3. Acts as publicity chairperson

Some YOU groups use shared rotating team leadership rather than set roles.

Chapter Elections

To provide for a smooth running chapter election, familiarize the chapter with the officers' duties and prepare a Sunday lesson on the benefits of leadership. Discuss the benefits and rewards of holding an office and serving the chapter. Be sure to announce the exact date of elections and when the installation ceremony will be scheduled. Often before elections, chapters will require candidates to complete applications (which include a parent signature of support) and post responses two weeks before elections. This ensures youth have read and extensively thought about the requirements of the office. The YOUers can then be prepared to make their decisions on Election Day.

Some Helpful Hints:

- The president or a specially appointed chairperson runs the elections. The president or chairperson may nominate themselves for office.
- YOUers may nominate themselves, in writing to the president, stating the office or offices for which they wish to run.
- The president reminds chapter of the above items and appoints vote counters, preferably the sponsor(s), just prior to elections.
- The president announces that elections are open. Nominations are now open for the office of _____. If there is a nominating committee, their nominations are presented first. "Are there any nominations from the floor?" (Nominations do not require a second.)

- After sufficient time, the president may declare, “nominations are now closed.” This requires a second. Do we have a second? All in favor, aye/nay...requires 2/3 vote to close nominations. If the vote to close nominations does not carry, nominations may be reopened with a motion, a 2nd, and a 2/3 vote.
- Call on candidates to give their platform if they wish.
- After candidates have spoken, president calls for vote and states method. “Voting will be secret ballot. Please cast your vote and pass it to our vote counters.” (State their names or write on board.) Candidates do not have to leave the room.
- Vote counters deliver name of elected officer to chairperson who makes the announcement, etc. “At this time let’s give an enthusiastic welcome for our new president, _____”.
- Additional community-building ideas:
 - Invite a Licensed Teacher or Chaplain to the elections to hold sacred space and prayer
 - Invite ministry Board of Trustees to be ballot counters
 - Invite the men’s/women’s group to host a congratulation celebration for incoming and outgoing officers

YOU Regional Support

The **regional YOU coordinator** who is employed by your regional ministerial board can help you with training, ideas and suggestions, and information regarding upcoming activities. You can obtain the name, phone number, and address of your coordinator from your minister.

Your **colleagues** can help you by sharing experiences and ideas from their own YOU chapters. You will have the opportunity to meet other YOU sponsors at the regional rallies and the sponsor training workshops. Your common interest in the spiritual awakening of teens and your mutual concerns create a wonderful bond. The YOU sponsors are a special “family within Unity.” Be sure to network with them regularly.

The **regional officers** can help you with visits to your chapter in order to provide ideas and support. Contact your regional coordinator for their names and addresses.

Teen Empowerment

How do we develop and empower leadership in our youth? These teens will grow up to become the next leaders in our world. As youth spiritual educators, how are we preparing them? The first crucial step is a paradigm shift of perspective to understanding that although the youth may be the future adults, they are an integral part of our centers right now.

What are some concrete ideas that can support the creation of a youth-empowered, multi-generational ministry? Here are some suggestions to consider:

Ministry:

- Invite the youth to share their wisdom at the end of the service.
- Ask the teens to be a part of creating the mission/vision for the community.
- Create a Youth board position with a different teen attending and giving input during a portion of the board meeting each month.
- Invite teens onto a multi-age youth ministry council.
- Have board members visit YOU business meetings.
- Support the youth in attending and raising funds for sub-regional, regional, international events and service trips.
- Create a Junior Chaplain position, which is mentored and taught by the minister, Licensed Teacher or Chaplain team coordinator.
- Create a Junior Membership with classes that teach tools for youth empowerment.

Sponsor/Leader:

- Reinforce with the adults in the congregation that the youth are part of the community now, rather than seeing their value only in the future.
- Identify teen leaders at a younger age (middle school) and give them opportunities to grow into leadership. Create a teen leadership track.
- Identify their skills and gifts and offer opportunities to put them to use. Remember that the needs and interests of youth are as diverse as adults.
- Develop people rather than programs.
- Teach the teens conflict resolution skills.
- Create a bridge between YOU and NGU by forming a young adult group for teens to move into upon graduation from YOU
- Set up a mentor/buddy system between Uniteen and YOU to build relationships
- Create and facilitate Rites of Passage when moving from Uniteen to YOU and YOU to NGU
- Have the youth be co-creators of their own program—Ask the teens what they want to learn that year, then create issue-based, current, relevant, living curriculum according to the list created.

- Teach them to go within to the infinite wisdom within their hearts to find the answers they seek.
- Support the teens to assist in teaching the lessons through coaching and mentoring. Allow participants to choose their role in the group that day—leading prayer, taking the love offering, attendance, etc.
- Consider leadership teams instead of officers and once a team has done the work, it dissolves.
- Provide leadership training.

Never underestimate the power and importance of youth and family ministry. Imagine how the work we do with a young person can be an important part of the transformation of their lives and the planet!

Why do we want to empower our teens?

We live in a time when empowering our young people is particularly important, not only for our teens, but for our world! Young people need adults to help foster empowerment. Adults need young people to usher in the new, emerging culture that is seeking to be birthed.

What does it mean to empower our young people?

Alan Nelson, author of *KidLead* writes, “Children are not books to be written but to be read.” We are not here to pour information into them, but to draw out what is there already.

We don’t just toss them into the deep end and hope they learn to swim. We have some tried and true strategies that we can use.

The “Three Legged Stool of Teen Empowerment” consists of faith, development and involvement.

1. We begin by cultivating solid faith in our youth’s ability to become who they truly are in order for them to have faith in themselves and grow into it.
2. The second step is to identify leaders at young age (middle school) and give them opportunities to grow into leadership, step by step.
3. Thirdly, we bring them into involvement step by step as we become conscious of the ladder of participation.

Ladder of Youth Participation

Adopted from Hart, R. (1992) *Children's Participation from Tokenism to Citizenship*

Where does your center find itself on the ladder leading to youth empowerment?



* The first three rungs illustrate non-participation and are not recommended.

To find where you are on the spectrum, refer to the chart on the following page.

Youth Empowerment

Rung	Description
1. Manipulation	Attendance mandatory regardless of youth's desire
2. Decoration	Presence without involvement
3. Tokenism	Limited participation with appearance of inclusion
4. Assigned and Informed	Limited impact on adult decision making
5. Consulted and Informed	Youth authority subject to adult approval
6. Youth/Adult equality	Equal split of authority, obligation, commitment
7. Youth-led and initiated	Adults support youth leadership and ownership
8. Shared decision making	Youth and Adult equal recognition for impact and ownership

Start by taking an inventory. Include the minister, board, youth and family ministry director and interested parents and teens. Explore the questions:

- How ready are you to have youth participation in your church?
- What systems are set up to train adults in assisting youth participation?
- What systems are in place to develop youth skills and leadership?
- Where is your center on the Ladder of Youth Participation?
- How okay are you with some growing pains, are you prepared to redefine perfection?

In the wise words of Don MacIntyre, a middle school principal, “Whether or not you choose to work to support young people, you will be the beneficiary of their decisions as they begin to assume leadership roles in society.” Let’s take steps to help them develop into positive, caring adult leaders.

Youth Ministry Interest Inquiry Form

You are invited to participate in youth ministry in whatever way is best for you. Below are some of the opportunities. What are you interested in?

Sunday Morning Opportunities

- Assisting in a Uniteen classroom, 2 times per month (middle school 11-13 years old, Grade 6-8)
- Assisting with the YOU, 2 times per month

Non-Sunday Morning Opportunities

- Contributing a gift of something on the teen ministry wish list
- Praying for a pre-teen or teen on a regular basis
- Volunteering a few hours during the week
- Volunteering for a special need—ex. newsletter, clerical assistance, prepare supplies, occasional music, drama assistance, photographer, bulletin board, bake goodies when needed, transportation (Underline your preferences)
- Other _____
- Contact me so I can learn more about these opportunities.

Name _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone/other _____

Commitment Agreement

My Commitment: I am willing to:

- Pray for the teens during the week.
- Share information with others as appropriate.
- Seek support when needed and maintain open communication with the Youth and Family Ministry Director including concerns.
- Practice Unity principles with the youth. Strive to respond to teens and co-teachers from a point of love, appreciation, and support.
- Give attention to preparing thoughtful and interesting lessons and/or helping teens to prepare lessons. Allot at least one hour per teaching week for lesson planning and preparation.
- Follow requested procedures such as having children sign in.
- Attend trainings when scheduled.
- Assist in the classroom _____ times per _____ month for _____ months.
- Other _____

The YFM Department agrees to lovingly provide for me:

- A director to guide the program and coordinate activities.
- Resources, equipment, and supplies for all activities.
- Training opportunities.
- Ideas and current resources.
- A safe, supportive, responsive and loving environment.
- A recording of the minister's lesson without charge.

Name _____ Date _____

Exercise

Do You Remember Your Teen Years?

Ask yourself

1. What is your most memorable experience from:

9th grade?

10th grade?

11th grade?

12th grade?

2. List as many memories (positive, spiritual, negative) as possible from:

9th Grade:

10th Grade:

11th Grade:

12th grade:

3. How does it feel doing this exercise? Does it bring back memories of joys, pain, anger, love?

4. How are adolescents today similar to when you were growing up?

5. How are adolescents today different to when you were growing up?

Section Five: Unity Basics

Section Five, *Unity Basics* is the focus which includes an exploration of the Truth Principles that Unity teaches. Leaders and sponsors will benefit the youth by being familiar enough with these basics so they can incorporate them into lessons and events that provide a learning opportunity. These concepts differ from what is learned in more traditional Christian churches and can guide teens as they develop their belief system. Studying Unity basic texts such as *The Simple Truth* or *Lessons in Truth* can provide a deeper and more complete understanding of these principles.

Basic Unity Teachings

While we encourage students to be unlimited in exploring all avenues of learning and subject matter, it is appropriate to remember that Sunday mornings are designated as class times for the study of practical Christianity as interpreted by Unity School of Christianity (also known as Unity World Headquarters) and Unity Worldwide Ministries. Astrology, numerology, and psychic phenomenon may prove to be interesting topics; however, they are not the primary focus for religious education in Unity.

Many ministry libraries have a wealth of material, authors, and subjects from which to choose. Your youth and family ministry director and regional consultant can also be invaluable aids. Whatever material you choose, the important thing is to be comfortable and familiar with the ideas you teach.

Unity's Five Basic Principles

While Unity does not have a lot of dogma or doctrines, it does have five basic principles that have become a foundation for what we believe. It is important to introduce your chapter members to these principles and provide them with opportunities to apply the principles to their lives. Set a goal that each of your youth will leave their YOU experience with a working knowledge of these Truth principles. The five basic spiritual principles, first stated in *Keys to the Kingdom*, are taught in Unity.

Five Basic Unity Principles (for children and pre-teens)

- God is all good and active in everything, everywhere.
- I am naturally good because God's Divinity is in me and in everyone.
- I create my experiences by what I choose to think and what I feel and believe.
- Through affirmative prayer and meditation, I connect with God and bring out the good in my life.
- I do and give my best by living the Truth that I know. I make a difference!

Five Basic Unity Principles (for teens and adults)

- There is only one Presence and one Power active as the universe and as my life, God the Good.
- Our essence is of God; therefore, we are inherently good. This God essence was fully expressed in Jesus, the Christ.
- We are co-creators with God, creating reality through thoughts held in mind.
- Through prayer and meditation, we align our heart-mind with God. Denials and affirmations are tools we use.
- Through thoughts, words and actions, we live the Truth we know.

You can choose to use either version, depending on the age and maturity level of your group members. Unity Worldwide Ministries' curriculum is based on the five basic Unity principles. These basic principles are available in seven lessons for Uniteens in *Bring on the Basics*. For YOU the basic principles can be taught using *Unity Basics for Life, Book 1* and *Book 2*. Unity Basics posters for classroom use are also available. All resources can be purchased through the Unity Worldwide Ministries shop at www.unity.org/products.

God the Good

We believe there is only one presence and one power in the universe and in our individual lives, God the Good. We believe:

- God is omnipresent and omnipotence (both the idea and the action)
- God is omnipotent and omnipotence
- God is the creator and the sustainer of all life
- God is good

If we truly understood and lived these words at depth, there would be no need for the other four principles at all. We would understand that we live and move and have our being in a benevolent and giving universe. We would trust that all our needs are met, all things are possible, and that life is eternal. Since that is usually not the case, though, we practice our faith—learning to trust more each day.

Provide your teens with opportunities to recognize that God—not the world or the things of the world—is the foundation of life. Use the following Bible scriptures as resources when speaking about the first principle or have the teens find their own.

- “For God is good, God’s steadfast love endures forever.” 2 Chronicles 7:3
- “O taste and see that the Lord is good.” Psalm 34:8
- “For everything created by God is good.” 1 Timothy 4:4

The Christ

We believe God is individualized in humankind as the Christ. We believe:

- The same presence that was in Jesus the Christ is in everyone—regardless of religion, ethnicity, lifestyle, nationality or color.
- Our goal is to live our lives as a fully awakened Christ being and bring heaven to earth.

Probably one of the most exciting and relevant teachings of Unity is the belief that we are spiritual and holy beings—the Christ in expression. While this belief helps to take us out of any shame-based doctrines, it also requires us to live up to the commandments that Jesus came to teach (i.e. Love one another as I have loved you). Provide your teens opportunities to explore what it means to be The Christ. Use the following Bible scriptures or come up with some of your own as examples.

- “Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27
- “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” 1 Corinthians 12:27

The Law of Mind Action

We believe that thoughts create reality.

Instead of, “I’ll believe it when I see it,” Unity teaches to *believe* first and then see the results in the outer world. Today, scientists are beginning to validate the impact that thought has on the material realm. Unity, far ahead of its time, has taught these concepts for decades.

Sometimes in Unity centers you will hear phrases such as:

- Thoughts held in mind produce after their kind.
- What you think is what you get.
- Our thoughts are prayers.

Your teens will probably enjoy working with this principle.

1. Invite them to discuss the phrases listed above.
2. Encourage them to explore how keeping positive or negative thoughts result in positive and negative experiences.
3. Have them collectively hold a vision of success, healing or love for someone they know. Ask them to share what results they’ve noticed.
4. Discuss the research that has been done on the impact of prayer (See [Section Eleven: Resources](#))

Use the following Bible passages for discussion to support the principle:

- “Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 2:5
- “Do not be conformed to the things of the world, instead, be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern God’s will for you, what is acceptable and good and perfect.” Romans 12:2

Prayer & Meditation

Unity believes prayer and meditation are tools to bring us into conscious communion with God. Both prayer and meditation help us realize that we are divine creations and our very nature is spiritual. Since our thoughts can be rather disorderly at times, we use affirmations and denials as a way to keep our thoughts in alignment with the Truth.

Through affirmative prayer and meditation, we connect with God and bring out the good in our lives.

Affirmative Prayer

Prayer is connecting with the Divine Presence that lives within our hearts. In prayer, we create a sacred space in which we connect and commune with God. Unity books are filled with many powerful affirmations. Use some of the following for class discussion and application, research additional affirmations or have the teens create their own.

- I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.
- Divine love, through me, blesses and multiplies all that I am, all that I have, all that I give and all that I receive.
- Christ in me now frees me from all limitation.
- I am the ever-renewing, ever-unfolding expression of infinite life, love and wisdom.
- All things work together for good.

Use the following Five-Step Prayer Process to experience the power of prayer.

Relax

Set aside time each day for prayer. Begin your quiet time by relaxing your body and opening your mind to an awareness of God. Breathe deeply, knowing that you are in the presence of God and the presence of God is within you. Let go of your concerns and know that all is well.

Concentrate

As you close your eyes and release any thought of the world around you, begin to think about God's presence in your life. Focus your mind on a single thought, idea or scripture that resonates with you. Repeat this idea over and over, either silently or aloud until it becomes your only thought.

Meditate

Allow this focused state of mind to move you into a deeper awareness of God. "Be still ... and know that I am God." Be still as you connect with the Spirit within you.

Realize

From the depth of your being, know that you are one with God. This realization, as you experience God's holy presence, is silent soul communion. In this receptive state of mind and heart, listen for the inspiration of God, the answers to your prayers.

Give Thanks

Let gratitude be your heart's joyous response to this experience of communion with God and with God's infinite goodness. Give thanks for blessings to come, ready to receive your good.

Praying Out Loud 4 A's

There are four A's to follow when praying affirmatively in front of a group of people:

- Atmosphere—Set the stage for prayer any way you like. "I invite you to join hands and take a deep breath."
- Acknowledge the presence of God. "As we breathe in we are reminded that God is in every breath we take and in every moment."
- Affirm whatever it is that you are praying for. "We affirm that we have come here today in love to learn, share, and grow. We remember to be kind to one another and enjoy our time together."
- Appreciate the gifts that we know have already been given. "For this and all of our blessings we are so grateful and we say thank you God." End with "Amen" or "And So It Is."

*Inspired by Unity of Wimberley, TX Youth Education Department
From Betsy Giunti, Unity South Central Teen Ministry Resource Library*

Why practice meditation?

Meditation is a state of awareness. Through the use of meditative practices, we seek to slow down the activity of the mind, relax, center and experience God's presence in the stillness. It helps us move beyond the intellectual mind to spiritual knowing. The many ways to meditate can include focusing on the breath, HeartMath techniques, singing, sounds, speaking or movement.

Start with brief meditations and increase length over time. Allow various ways to experience meditation—sitting, lying down, walking, deep relaxation, guided visualization, singing, etc.) Create an atmosphere conducive to relaxed alertness, not so relaxing to induce sleep but comfortable and inviting. Give clear instructions and ask for questions.

For more in depth information on prayer and meditation, visit www.unity.org and www.unityworldwideministries.org.

For lessons on prayer, please see Unity teen curriculum available through the Unity Worldwide Ministries shop, www.unity.org/products. Use the following Bible scriptures to support teaching prayer, meditation, affirmations, and denials.

- "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-17
- "Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you." Matthew 18:19
- "Lord, I believe. Help thou my unbelief."
- I am that I AM.

Denials & Affirmations

Denials & affirmations do not change God, but help align our consciousness in divine harmony with universal Truth.

How do affirmations and denials work? By simple repetition! What the mind repeats, it retains. What we focus on stays with us. Affirmations turn our focus to the presence of God at work in our lives.

An affirmation is a statement of spiritual Truth, which may appear contrary to the physical evidence. With denials, we deny that a situation or statement of others has no power over us. Affirmations build up, while denials erase or dissolve.

Examples of affirmations

I am whole & healed.

I am strong.

I have the answer within me.

Examples of denials

Nothing exists but God.

This weakness is false perception.

I have nothing to fear, for God is with me.

In *Lessons in Truth*, Emilie Cady explained: “The saying of any denial or affirmation is a necessary self-training of a mind that has lived so long in error and false belief that it needs this constant repetition of Truth to unclothe it and to clothe it anew... Deny any undesirable condition and affirm the good you desire.”

When creating affirmations,

1. Use the present tense. “I am a happy, joyful child of God” instead of “I will be happy and joyful when....”
2. State what you want rather than don’t want. “I am joyful and happy” vs. “I am not depressed.”
3. Be specific enough in describing what you want while still leaving room for Spirit to move in the situation. (Describe the “what” not the “how” and end with the words, “This, God, or something better!”)
4. Keep it simple and short.

Points to remember:

- When we affirm something for our highest good, we are opening ourselves to benefit fully from spiritual laws that are already at work. We are not “magically” making it happen. We are reminding ourselves of what is already true and creating the conditions for the truth to manifest.
- Change instantly occurs on the spiritual level, but it may take much longer to physically manifest—especially if thoughts and actions contrary to the affirmation continue. For example, it took Myrtle Fillmore years of dedicated affirmation work for the outer healing to be complete.

- Affirmations are not just wishful thinking. In *Spiritual Economics*, Eric Butterworth writes: *“We do not mean sitting around mouthing a lot of cheerful platitudes, such as ‘everything is going to be all right’. The fact is everything will not be all right until you achieve a consciousness of all-rightness. Much so-called positive thinking is little more than wishful thinking, voicing a lot of words that you really don’t believe. It is a matter of synchronizing yourself with the flow of the infinite. The ideal, of course, is to think the kind of thoughts that lead to the kind of conditions that you want to see manifest in your life.”*

Affirmation activities

My “I AM” alphabet

Each student writes the words “I AM” in the center of a page, and then lists all the positive words that describe them—starting with words that begin with A, and continuing through every letter in the alphabet, to Z. (Get creative with some letters, like X-cellent, X-citing.)

What are you affirming?

Through journaling or discussion, have students list the “I am” statements they often say (e.g., I’m not good enough, I’m so stupid, etc.) and compare which affirm their Truth or merely reaffirm a limited perception.

Blessing circle

Taking turns, each person stands quietly in the center of a circle (optional: eyes closed), while classmates list the highest qualities they see in that person.

What Others See in Me

Each person writes their name on a piece of paper, which is then passed around the circle so everyone can write a word or phrase that affirms what is special about him/her.

Charles Fillmore’s Favorite Affirmations

These affirmations were chosen for display at Unity Village. Some of the wording has been updated.

- The joy of the Lord is (my) strength.
- God in me is infinite wisdom. He shows me what to do.
- In all ways acknowledge him, and he will direct (your) path.
- I can do all things through Christ which strengthen me.
- Nothing can disturb me, for Christ is my peace and my poise.
- All things work together for good.
- In quietness and in confidence shall be your strength.
- Faith is the strength of the soul inside, and lost is the man without it.
- The greatest teaching ever given is—“Christ in you, the hope of glory.” (Col. 1:27)
- God is my help in every need.

**The Affirmative Prayer for Protection,
based on the Prayer for Protection by James Dillet Freeman**

The light of God surrounds me; I AM the light.

The love of God enfolds me; I AM the love.

The power of God protects me; I AM the power.

The presence of God watches over me. Wherever I AM, God is. I AM the Presence of God.
Amen.

Action

Just as the Bible declares, “Faith without action is dead,” we also realize that faith doesn’t mean very much if it can’t be applied to the circumstances of our lives. That is why we call our faith “Practical Christianity.” If it doesn’t change lives, it isn’t really very effective.

In Unity centers, you may hear phrases such as:

- To *know* and not to *do* is not really to know
- The Truths you use are the Truths you own, all the rest are just theories

Sometime before the teens leave the Sunday session, have them think about an action step they could take during the week that is related to the subject they have studied during the hour. At the beginning of the next session, invite the youth to report back on their degree of success.

Use the following Bible passages for discussion to support the fifth Unity principle:

- “Pick up your bed and walk.” John 5:8
- “Go and sin no more.” John 8:11
- “Faith without works is dead.” James 2:26

Twelve Powers

For resources and ideas on how to teach the Twelve Powers, see:

- *Power Up, The Twelve Powers Revisited as Accelerated Abilities* by Rev. Paul Hasselbeck and Cher Holton (To purchase: www.amazon.com/PowerUP-Twelve-Revisited-Accelerated-Abilities/dp/1893095649)
- *Twelve Powers of Man*, Charles Fillmore (To purchase: shop.unityonline.org/)
- *Twelve Power Meditation Exercise*, Charles Roth (To purchase: www.amazon.com/Twelve-Power-Meditation-Exercise-Charles-Roth/dp/087159305X)
- *How to Use Your Twelve Gifts from God*, by William A. Warch (To purchase: www.amazon.com/How-Use-Your-Gifts-God/dp/0875165303)

Twelve Powers

Power	The ability to:	Location	Disciple	Color	Month
Faith	Believe and see Truth	Pineal Gland	Peter	Dark Blue	January
Love	Unite with Divine Mind and attract good	Behind heart	John	Pink	February
Strength	Be steadfast, persevere and endure	Small of back	Andrew	Spring Green	March
Wisdom	Understand through spiritual discernment	Pit of stomach	James, Son of Zebedee	Yellow	April
Power	Have dominion over thoughts, words, actions	Throat	Phillip	Purple	May
Imagination	Visualize Divine Ideas	Between eyes	Bartholomew	Lt. Blue	June
Understanding	Comprehend Divine Ideas	Front brain	Thomas	Gold	July
Will	Make choices and take action	Front brain	Matthew	Silver	August
Order	Organize	Navel	James, Son of Alphaeus	Olive Green	September
Zeal	Express enthusiasm, passion	Brain stem	Simon the Zealot	Orange	October
Release	Let go of outworn ideas	Lower Abdomen	Thaddeus	Russet	November
Life	Enliven and energize, express creative force	Generative Center	Judas	Red	December

Section Six: Lessons

Section Six, *Lessons*, is designed to assist in creating spiritual experiences for teens based on the [Living Curriculum philosophy](#). In this section, we also provide insights and resources to increase effectiveness, including ways to encourage all participants to lead prayers, games, meditations, discussions, and to help older teens and adults prepare lesson plans and develop content ideas. Many teen leaders use lessons prepared by others. We highly recommend the use of Unity Worldwide Ministries teen ministry curricula at www.unity.org/products. These lessons can also serve as a model when you are creating your own lessons. Teens need thoughtfully planned lessons that include community-building activities, interactive participation and thought-provoking spiritual ideas. This chapter will provide you with a strategy for developing meaningful lessons for this age and provide suggestions for success in facilitating them. Remember to utilize the youth and family ministry director for support in curricula and lesson selection.

The Facilitator

Sometimes the term “teacher” is understood by instructors to mean one who imparts information to a captive audience: meaning, the student listens while the teacher lectures. But teachers who are most effective know that:

- A good teacher must also be a good follower.
- To teach, you must first be willing to be teachable.
- It is not you, but truly the Spirit within you who teaches the lesson.

Many chapters prefer to use the title facilitator for the person who is responsible for the day’s learning. Instead of thinking the information comes from one individual, the facilitator understands that everyone in the room is both a teacher and a learner. It is the job of the facilitator, then, to create an engaging environment where learning can take place.

Characteristics of a Facilitator

- Trusts the ability of the group to develop its own potential at its own rate
- Permits the group to accomplish the group’s goals—not the facilitator’s goals
- Participates in all the activities in order to
 1. help facilitate the growth of a chapter member (see [Section Four: Leadership](#))
 2. develop personal growth
- Listens carefully, accurately, and with sensitivity for the meanings and feelings being expressed

Facilitation Tips

- Promote success
- Encourage Involvement
- Acknowledge Frequently
- Think Creatively
- Be Honest
- Be positive
- Build Trust
- Build Esteem
- Listen Actively
- Love Unconditionally

- Maintains flexibility realizing that the process is more important than sticking with the days' lessons plans
- Encourages humor within the sessions allowing a feeling of joy, playfulness, and spontaneity
- Respects every member of the group equally conveying psychological "safety" as well as Spiritual Truth
- Allows the group members to decide for themselves whether they want to participate or not. No attempt should be made to "shame" a person into participation
- Accepts the group exactly as it is—unconditionally, while at the same time giving guidance when needed
- Empowers members of the group to facilitate as their comfort and willingness to stretch allows

Suggested Format for the Sunday Experience

The Sunday experience generally consists of three parts:

- The Opening Circle
- The Lesson Exploration
- The Closing Circle.

Pre-session Activity

The Pre-Session Activity or beginning experience gets the teens actively involved when they first arrive. Being involved helps students feel more comfortable with each other. Activities might include active learning games, group bonding activities, empowering another teen to lead a portion of the lesson from selecting a "check-in" question to leading a prayer. The purpose is to connect and engage each individual. The more the teens do this, the more impactful it becomes. When possible, connect the activities to the topic for the day. This is a prime time to build trust among the group, raise the energy levels and allow creativity to flow.

Greeting and Opening Circle

The facilitator sets the tone for the session. This is the time to create a sacred space that invites all to participate and provides a place where teens can be accepted just as they are. It is also a time to welcome people new to the group. Components include welcome, introductions, announcements, review of heart agreements and check-in. This time is an opportunity to welcome newcomers and to begin to bond with others. It also provides a sacred moment where the youth can tune into their own feelings.

Joy Songs

Invite a few of the teens to lead the joy songs each week. Try to include one or two that are up-tempo and one that is more reflective to lead into prayer and meditation. Pre-teens and

younger teens may be more reluctant to join in singing. Consider having an older and more seasoned teen lead the joy songs.

Opening Prayer/Meditation

(For information on how to lead prayer and/or meditation, see [Section Eleven: Resources.](#))

Led by the leader or one of the teens, this is an excellent time to bring the energy inward to prepare for the day's lesson. Prayer and meditation are an essential part of the Sunday experience. Unity is founded on affirmative prayer and encourages everyone to develop a rich prayer life. Give your group many opportunities to experience and express prayer. You may want to use a short opening prayer and include a longer meditation or visualization later in the lesson. Encourage students to pray aloud before making group decisions, when someone is in need, when the group needs insight into an issue and/or as a centering practice.

Affirmation helps move the energy and focus the attention on a single spiritual idea. Use affirmations found in Unity curriculum books, ones you write or affirmations developed or written by your teens. For information on how to write and use affirmations and denials, see [Section Five: Unity Basics.](#)

Offering and Blessing provide the teens with a place to apply the prosperity principles they have been learning in this group. Unity believes that God's abundance is always available in infinite supply and that what a person puts attention on always increases.

Beginning Activity

The theme of the lesson can be introduced. This can be done through story, song, activity, game, discussion, simulation, video, etc. Note: These activities may be led by a variety of people depending on the needs of your group.

Lesson Content

The Lesson Exploration typically uses story or Bible story (or an interactive experience) to create a common base and to stimulate discussion. The lesson is a planned truth teaching, with objectives related to teen life, including an action plan for applying the principles learned. Gear the presentation to stimulate individual thought and group discussion. The lesson should not exceed 15 minutes, with additional time allotted for activities, discussion and questions, and conclusions that relate to the topic.

Questions and Discussion

(For information on how to ask questions and lead discussions, see [Section Eleven: Resources](#))

Questions to the teens assist them in processing their understanding as well as applying the concepts to everyday life. The intention is to "draw out" wisdom and truth principles from within the student whenever possible.

Interactive Activity/Creative Experience

(For information on how to lead games and activities, see [Section Eleven: Resources](#))

This provides an experiential understanding of the lesson principle and helps the teens move into their heart space to claim aspects of the lesson as their own. Use activities that incorporate the body, mind and spirit such as: music, creative art expression, movement, discussion, drama, journaling, etc. We encourage non-threatening physical and verbal interaction during group meetings as a way to promote trust between the members, build individual self-confidence, and help the teens form healthy relationships with their peers.

Closing Circle

The closing is a vital part of the group's weekly experience as it restates or summarizes the lesson's focus and physically connects the entire group for a brief moment. During this time, individuals can share the insights that have been gained during the meeting. A prayer can be spoken or a song sung. The sponsor can weave all of the topics together in a closing statement and then offer action steps for the following week. While the closing should be as brief as possible, it should always be a meaningful part of the teen experience and include a closing prayer. Many groups close with the Prayer for Protection by James Dillet Freeman. See 104 for the Affirmative Prayer for Protection. A Lesson Outline form is provided. See Appendix B, page 235.

Preparing for the Sunday Experience

The work you do before the group even meets is frequently more important than the actual event itself.

Pray first

Before any planning session or event, the most beneficial thing you can do as the leader/sponsor is to consciously commune with the presence of God. Allow Divine wisdom to inspire you throughout your projects. When you prepare the Sunday lesson begin with prayer. Remind the teens to do the same whenever it is their turn to facilitate. Prayer will provide guidance on what to bring into the meeting. Listen in the Silence for direction on:

- the content for the lesson
- creative ways to express the material
- how you can grow from the material yourself

Understand the needs of your group

Teens have a need for variety. Make sure to include some routine to establish structure, but have variety in presentation and timing. Because we have various learning styles, energy levels and attention spans, routine can get boring.

As part of preparation for creating an effective lesson plan or activity, get to know your teens. Think about individuals in your group. Is one overly sensitive? Is one going through a traumatic event like the loss of a parent? Are two group members at odds with one another? Each of these

factors can affect the direction you take and the quality of the experience. Consider the relevance of the topics to the lives of the teens in your class. What are the issues they are facing?

Read the material

If you are using material that has already been prepared, make sure you read and understand all of the material before you facilitate the class. It can be embarrassing, as the facilitator, to find you really don't know the material. Even if you're using your own material or material that you know quite well, spend some quality time reviewing your notes. What may have seemed like relevant information in the past may seem quite different now.

What lesson material am I supposed to use with my teens?

Beginning with material/concepts/tools, the two approaches to determining lesson ideas/subjects are:

1. Working with it to explore how teens can address/apply to their own issue.
 - What supporting resources are available?
 - What curricula is available through [Unity Worldwide Ministries](#)?
2. Identifying teens' needs and issues, developing/finding lesson ideas that are applicable

Decide on a theme/topic

Ask yourself what you want to address during your Sunday experience. How will you apply Unity principles to teen issues such as:

- Peer pressure?
 - Parental control or involvement?
 - Self-acceptance?
 - Self-expression?
 - Relationships?
 - God concepts?
 - Social concerns?
 - Spiritual social actions?
-
- established [curriculum modules](#)

Other Possible Topic Suggestions

- Unity/spiritual studies
 - The Divinity of Humankind
 - Prosperity
 - The Christ Self
 - Interpersonal skills
 - Treasure Mapping
 - Goal Setting
 - Tithing
 - The Bible
 - Parables of Jesus
 - Miracles of Jesus
 - Prayer
 - Meditation
 - Metaphysics
 - Developing our Potential
 - Healing
 - Life Issues
 - Self-discipline
 - Self-worth
 - Self-image
 - 4-T's
 - The Twelve Powers
 - Group Building
 - Cooperation
 - Responsibility
 - Peacemaking
 - Care-taking
 - Integrity
 - Holiday Celebrations
 - Joy
- identifying purpose of group & agreements; coming back to purpose (building community)
 - basic principles (God, prayer/meditation, cause/effect, nature of self, Jesus—the person & teachings, Bible/metaphysics, affirmation/denials, divine order)
 - spiritual consciousness (love, forgiveness, judgment, healing, prosperity, oneness)
 - celebrations (holidays, special events, ceremonies)
 - other religions & practices (including visits/experiences, yoga, tai chi, chanting)
 - Unity history (& where Unity fits into the global picture)
 - decision making & problem-solving (life issues: substance use, anxieties, gangs, violence, sexuality, sexual harassment)
 - global awareness / social issues (world peace, hunger, environment, diversity, applied Christianity to current events)
 - people's stories (videos)
 - using a book/manual (Celestine Prophecy, The 4 Agreements, The Simple Truth, Love Languages, 7 Highly Effective Habits, etc.)
 - relationships (getting to know each other better/sharing history, parents, friends)
 - personal mission statement & credo (statement of belief)
 - communication

Identify key Learning Concepts

Once you know what topic you're going to cover during the lesson, identify

1. The learning objective (why you're teaching this particular material)
2. The main ideas you will be covering
3. Any action steps you need to take

Learning Objective Examples

- The students will be able to understand the meaning of the Law of Mind Action and be able to give examples of when they have seen the law at work.
- The students will be able to explain the importance of tithing by reciting key scripture passages and Unity teachings about prosperity.

Main Idea Examples

This lesson will examine:

- a. The reason for tithing ten percent
- b. The cultural significance of the passage “pressed down, shaken together, running over . . .”
- c. The importance of giving thanks in advance

Action Steps

The action steps are the methods you will use to accomplish your learning objectives. Action steps should include:

- Any activities you are going to use
- The examples (personal, scriptural) you will give to support your concepts
- Where to find out more if the topic really connected with someone
- Music and supplies needed for the hour

Decide on creative or experiential activities

After you have developed your lesson, select the activities, prayers, and songs that correspond to the lesson's content. An important part of this process is deciding what interactive experiences help to develop the lesson theme. You'll want to vary these activities to meet the different learning styles and keep the interest of your students.

Create alternatives

Sometimes, parts of the lesson plan don't work. Whether it's an activity that is too difficult or simplistic, or your students need to stay on a topic longer, or an immediate issue needs the classroom's attention, don't be afraid to put aside your plans and go to alternatives. Your activity time may include:

- Create a mask that represents how the teen hides his or her true nature.
- Shower one another with love. Invite one of the teens to take a seat in the center of the circle.
- Ask the others to say one positive thing they love about that person. Repeat until everyone has had a chance to be showered with affection.

- Role play/act out the scenario and possibilities to respond

Supplies Needed

List in an easily identifiable area, the items needed to facilitate the experience,

- Index cards
- Pens
- Music
- Etc.

Prepare any handouts

Preparing in advance any handouts or materials for your lesson saves having to copy it at the last minute. Copy machines within the church see a lot of action, especially on Sunday morning.

Collect/order supplies

Check with your YFM Director to see if the church has the supplies that you need for your class. If not, follow the church policies for purchasing materials.

Prepare the space

Before your group meets on Sunday, arrive enough ahead of time (at least 20-30 minutes early) so that you can create a space that is warm, inviting and reflective of the day's focus.

Prepare yourself

Before your group arrives, find a quiet space to center yourself in the presence of God. Be “prayed up” and welcome your students from a consciousness of love. Some youth and family ministry departments meet as a group for prayer prior to class. Join them to build and be a part of your youth and family ministry community.

Within you, there is a wealth of wisdom, joy and creativity. When you prepare your lessons, begin by exploring the gifts that lie deep within your own heart.

What else should I consider during the lesson?

Below is a brief list of other elements you may want to consider as you facilitate your classes.

Although you probably won't have to deal with all of these issues at every session, it's good to have a plan of action in the event they do occur.

Time

The amount of available time you have each week to meet with your teens is a major

consideration and one that can vary from week to week. When you are planning your sessions, ask yourself:

- Will the teens be joining the entire congregation at the beginning or the end of the service?
- Will they be participating in a beginning program with the entire youth ministry?
- Am I hesitant to begin until everyone has arrived?
- Do students arrive after starting time?
- Do I need to review and discuss agreements weekly?

Each of these factors should be considered, or you may discover you only have 20 minutes to facilitate a 45-minute lesson!

Space

Teens want a certain level of ownership of their space. Work with the youth and family ministry director to provide your teens with an area that they can decorate and make uniquely their own, if space allows. Discussion as to the group's needs in balance with the church community outlines that. Most space is shared with other groups and church activities. The group's space should be large enough for activities and soundproof enough to allow for loud voices. If you need to move to another space temporarily, give the teens plenty of notice. Moving can be disruptive. Some lessons may actually be more effective in another location.

Pacing

Observe how quickly or slowly you present the material. If you move too quickly, your participants may become confused. If you move too slowly, you may lose their attention to boredom. Ask the teens for feedback on the pacing.

Silence

The effective use of silence can be a powerful teaching tool. You might invite students to quietly reflect for a few moments before answering a question. A "pregnant" pause may indicate the need for time to consider the question.

Selection

Use random selection when calling on people in the group. Some teens are reluctant to volunteer an answer unless called on. Give them enough time to process their answers and offer encouragement to assist them in sharing.

Interest

Create interest in the material by using phrases such as "This may be a tough issue," "Can anyone offer ideas on how to deal with this subject?" or "This may be difficult for some of you to hear." These types of statements quickly focus the attention on the material.

Response

Model effective listening skills by acknowledging the student's contributions. Refrain from

parroting back what the student has said. Instead, use words like “thank you, interesting, tell me more.” Occasionally you may want to paraphrase what was said to see if you understood it correctly. It may also help when others seem confused.

Age Appropriateness

Is the topic being addressed appropriate for this age to be considering? It is a sensitive issue that should be handled with parental permission or awareness?

What factors might affect the Sunday morning experience?

- Group dynamics & trust issues (being aware of where the kids & teacher are at)
- Disruptive behavior
- Setting tone/environment
- Location and room usage guidelines (sharing, not own space)
- Pacing (staying with the dying cat)
- Energy levels (transitions, effect of energy levels on sequence of events—never plan a lesson requiring intense focus after an all-night event!!)
- At start of year, getting to know each other & learning to trust each other will take most of the time
- Open to taking advantage of the teachable moment—go with the flow and the discovery
- The challenge with student-based, rather than teacher-based, processes is that the lessons will not always go in the direction the teacher anticipated

When and what adjustments might I need to make?

- When students really become involved in a portion of the lesson, don't rush them just to complete all the parts of the lesson. Usually where they are engaged is right where they need to be. Sometimes the “teachable moment” is not what you had planned for that lesson. Allow for flexibility in your teaching.
- When students are especially interested in a topic, consider allowing more than one week to explore it in different ways. Ask the students if they want to discuss the topic more.
- When students are non-responsive to a discussion or activity, try changing the pace, lightening up the approach or coming from another perspective. Also, feel free to throw out the entire topic and address an issue that is more relevant instead. Can the topic be explored in a more active way?
- When disruptive factors interfere with the lesson's effectiveness, deal with them on the spot. For instance, if you are trying to meditate and the class next door is extremely noisy, save your meditation for a later time. Many youth and family ministry directors attempt to coordinate the multiple programs to accommodate meditation at the same point in the hour.

This allows every class to engage in the experience.

- When students arrive with a concern or issue that affects many of them, (1) save your planned lesson for another day, (2) seize the teachable moment, and (3) help them to relate the issue to a Truth principle. You can ask them “What would Jesus do?” “How does this relate to Unity’s Five Basic Principles?” Which of the 12 Power faculties could be activated in this situation?
- When one or more students ask to leave the room, it may indicate something simple (like the need for more physical breaks), or something more complex (like the lesson plan needs more variety or there is a lack of trust among the students). You can alter your material, quicken the pace, give everyone a break and/or discuss people’s needs.
- When students hold side conversations, it may indicate genuine excitement over the material or just the opposite — boredom. You might break the students into small groups and give them the opportunity to discuss the material in depth, or you can change your lesson plan if the students are not interested in the topic for the day.
- When students are fidgeting, it may indicate the material is challenging, threatening or too intense. It may also indicate the environment is physically uncomfortable or it’s time for a break.
- When students bring a major life issue to class, it can be one of the most difficult aspects of being a teen facilitator. It is not your role to be a counselor or have your class turn into a therapy session. Instead, learn when to advise teens to seek help from a professional counselor, the minister, a chaplain or their parents. Know when you need to discuss a situation with your minister or youth and family ministry director.

Beware of . . .

- Ultimatums—They generally end up as a power struggle.
- Nicknames—It is very difficult to know how someone is feeling about a name you use. Better avoid using nicknames altogether or ask what they prefer.
- Benevolent Protection—Many tasks are easier for the sponsor than for the chapter member (running a class meeting or getting things moving). Nevertheless, it is important to give the youth as many opportunities as you can to explore and develop leadership skills of their own. Don’t “fix it” or “do it” for them. The mentoring skill building formula is “I do it/We do it/You do it/Go teach someone.
- Hurtful Humor—Occasionally, humor becomes a mask for hostile feelings. Watch for jokes that belittle people, or jokes that are putdowns.

Frequently Asked Questions

How can I tell how a lesson is going?

- First, realize that you can't measure the internal thought processes, feelings, impact, or understanding of someone else. And often the effect of a lesson will not be immediately evident to the teacher or the student.
- Let go of the belief that the greatest learning/revelation will come in the classroom (often the connection between a tool and personal relevance comes in real-life situations). As facilitators and teachers we may never know what difference our words, commitment, lesson or illustration, etc. may make in a young person's life.
- It's easier to teach in result-oriented manner, where one can gauge whether students can give you back the answer you want but it's more important they engage in processing. Processing takes time—allow and honor uncomfortable pauses.
- Pay attention to students' attention/focusing, behavior and nonverbal signals.
 - Negative indications: no one has eyes closed, fidgeting during meditation; open disruptions, leaving the room
 - With the negative indications, is it the lesson format or content, or something else with the group, like conflict or lack of trust?
 - Positive indications: side conversations that derive from excitement/interest in the lesson (rather than boredom, not engaged); eagerness to participate, give opinion; willingness to participate in activity (often, reluctance at first but enthusiasm to repeat or stay with activity)

What adjustments might I need to make?

- Move to Plan B (save what is prepared for a more appropriate time)
- Alter planned pacing (might find the beginning activity warrants far more time than allowed)
- Shift emphasis (take different direction than originally intended)
- Address disruptive factors (environmental—like meditation in room that is physically uncomfortable or noisy; behaviors)

Best advice I ever got:

- Don't do all the talking—listen, listen, listen!
- Make it fun (if you're bored, so are they)
- Be open to learning/allow them to teach you
- Know/use names
- Love them unconditionally (love the person, not the behavior)
- Be enthusiastic
- Get them engaged quickly (start with impact)
- Mix things up
- Remember it's their needs to be met

- Remember we're sowing seeds
- Don't be attached to outcomes/results
- Keep intention pure (avoid hidden agenda)
- Don't take it personally (kids' comments/criticisms roll off quickly)
- Pray up. Trust the divine process.
- The greatest thing you can do is to show up and want to be there with them.
- It's all about processing (teachable moment, if you can find it). Don't need to come up with the right answers; coming up with own questions is more important.

Preparing the Lesson

Things to keep in mind:

1. Pray!
2. Arrive early
3. Plan, plan, plan ahead
4. Accept the differences in people
5. A person's attention span is usually one minute per year of age—keep your teaching sessions short (18-minutes or less) and to the point.
6. Use names frequently
7. Keep discussions moving
8. Create a close, friendly atmosphere
9. Involve everyone/ Acknowledge all contributions
10. Give directions all at once and then check for understanding
11. Give regular feedback

Other considerations when preparing a lesson

- Is the content age appropriate for your teens?
- Is it culturally appropriate?
- How does it use a variety of learning styles?
- What spiritual principle is included? How will you bring that in?
- What do you need to add or alter to make this appropriate for your teens?
Prayer? Music? Supplies?
- In what ways is this lesson interactive? What can the teens get involved with?
- How much of it is teacher talk?

Who Can Present the Uniteen Lesson?

The regular leaders

Have at least two leaders with the Uniteens weekly. You may choose to alternate who facilitates the lesson. If you feel inadequate with teaching, talk with your minister or your youth and family ministry director about training offered at your church or provided by the regional consultants.

An occasional guest facilitator

When choosing your guest, keep in mind that teens will not open up if a relationship of trust has not been established first. Invite them to visit prior to facilitation.

A YOUer

If you have a YOUer facilitate the class, you will need to define the boundaries of the topic carefully, and plan the lesson together. Support and mentor the teen to feel confident and be successful

The minister or Licensed Teacher

Uniteens benefit greatly from having the minister or Licensed Teacher share and explain spiritual concepts on their level.

A Uniteen

Occasionally you may delegate small portions of the topic to one of the youth. Provide materials and/or close guidance. Generally your Uniteens will prefer to have the same two or three leaders facilitate the lessons. It takes time to build a sense of trust among the teens and their leaders. Until this happens, they tend to not open up completely. So be clear as to why you are having someone else present to them. Serving Uniteens by planning and sharing lessons with them can enrich your life as well as theirs. You will learn and grow as they do.

In Closing

Preparing for your Uniteens may feel overwhelming at first. Thankfully, there are many support systems in place that can assist you as you step out into this wonderful adventure of helping young adults spiritually unfold. Among them are your minister, youth and family ministry director and regional consultants.

Of primary importance, though, is the activity of prayer in your life. Remember to stay prayed up. Pray before every session, open yourself to Divine wisdom as you prepare the lesson plan, consistently pray *with* your students, and teach your group how to pray for one another during the week. Nothing affects the quality of your time together more than a relationship with the presence of God.

YOU Lessons

Role of the Sponsor

While some chapters encourage the YOUers to facilitate *all* the classroom learning themselves, others may choose to have the sponsor model facilitation skills on a regular basis. Regardless of what you choose for your chapter, involving the youth in their own education will increase the degree of participation and deepen the learning.

Note: If the YOUers are facilitating lessons, you may want to invite them to review this section of the teen manual. Offer a mini workshop to empower a number of the teens to step up into leadership on whatever level they are comfortable with.

Whether or not you are the facilitator for the session, it is your responsibility as the sponsor to create an environment where real learning can take place. Begin by building rapport with the teens (see [Section Three, Part 2: Creating a Uniteen Program](#)).

Who should be presenting the lessons in YOU?

- Sponsors, if equipped
- Guest facilitators—inside or outside ministry? (balance need for specialized knowledge vs. shift in group dynamics/ trust issues; with approval of ministry)
- YO'ers assisting (with proper preparation, well-defined boundaries & role) Setting them up for success by using 4 steps of mentoring
 - I do it
 - We do it
 - You do it and I observe and support
 - You teach someone

Learning Styles

Just because students are quiet and appear to be listening doesn't mean they are learning.

Active Learning

- Active = learn by doing
- Passive = learn by passive means (watching, reading, listening).

Although there is a place for both types (we do need to transmit information), active learning is where teen's learning is most apt to occur.

Examples of difference/impact:

- Watching a video is passive
- Visualizing yourself in the story, discussing it and expressing your feelings about it are active
- Reading a story or having it read to you is passive
- Dramatizing or personalizing the story, to process how a student relates (if at all) to the story, is active
- Prayer: passive if just listening to what someone else says; active if facilitating someone else's prayer experience (creating an opportunity that invites someone into their prayer consciousness)

Components of Active Learning (to find out more, search active learning at www.google.com)

1. Unpredictable (don't know where students will take it)
2. Engaging (captivating)
3. Involves everyone (no spectators—otherwise they're passive)
4. Student-based, not teacher-based (students makes own discoveries, rather than emphasis on teacher imparting knowledge/ideas)
5. Process-oriented (the end result/product of an experience is not as important as being in the process. May not get the point of the process until later.)
6. Debriefing (bring an awareness to the lesson learned, otherwise may be written off as fun but pointless activity)

Examples of Active Learning

- Creative expression (art—drawing, collage, group murals/creations, sculpture; journaling, poetry, music, dance)—difference between creative expression and crafts (crafts give you instructions you are to follow and an expected product)
- Treasure mapping/mission statement/credo
- Name games, mixers, group building activities, critical thinking games
- Simulations/contrived experiences/cooperative activities
- Field trips/outdoor adventures
- Service projects
- Role plays/participatory drama/theater games
- Trust activities
- Skill building activities
- Meditation, visualization, prayer
- Affirmations/Denials (creating & speaking)
- Case studies
- Discussions/debates/mock trials
- Teaching others (preparing to)

What not to do... lecture, read/talk at them (vs. with), make them sit still and listen for long period of time, fish for “right answer”, force participation (right to pass), invalidate/discount answers, don't listen, criticism, talking down to them, trying to be one of them, lying, breaking confidence or agreements yourself (except in event of threat of physical harm to oneself or others)

Cooperative Learning

Cooperative learning is an effective method for meeting students' varied learning styles because

it actively involves students in learning. It also provides opportunities for students to develop and practice appropriate emotional and social skills, thus enhancing self-esteem. Cooperative learning also creates opportunities for social interaction and friendships among a greater diversity of students than normally occurs.

Cooperative learning is most effective when

- Used to apply and practice concepts being learned
- Used to generate ideas
- Used to enhance other learning modes
- Is well structured and timed by the facilitator

For successful cooperative learning

- Keep group size at 3-5 persons per group
- Clearly define what students are expected to do and/or accomplish
- Provide specific time parameters for in-class work
- Define expected roles for each of the participants: i.e. timekeeper, reporter, recorder, facilitator, etc.
- Structure task so that everyone in the group needs to participate in order to complete it.

Example: Each group is given a quote that relates to the lesson topic and is given 5 minutes to discuss the meaning of the quote, and report to the rest of the group what their ideas are.

- The facilitator guides the discussion, making sure that everyone has a chance to speak.
- The recorder writes down a summary of what each person says.
- The time keeper watches the time and lets the group know how much time they have.
- The reporter takes what the recorder wrote down and reports to the larger group what they came up with.

The Living Curriculum Philosophy

The real purpose of education is to nurture and guide the soul to blossom in its own time and space as it pursues its destiny. —Murshida Vera J. Corda

Myrtle Fillmore believed our mission was not to “entertain the children, but instead, to draw them out.” The Living Curriculum, used by Unity Worldwide Ministries in our curriculum development, is an approach or philosophy which affirms that the curriculum—that which is to be learned or known—already lives within the adult, child or teen, themselves. It moves us past the belief that teachers have all the answers and need to impart them to the students. Instead, there is a realization that all of us are uniquely unfolding on our spiritual path, having access to the Spirit within.

The Living Curriculum is a process of spiritual support used to assist children, teens, families, and the ministry community in co-creating successful living. It honors the inherent wholeness and wisdom within each one of us, and utilizes storytelling and experiential creative expression to “draw out” the Truth we already know. The lesson is based on an issue which provides opportunities for relating to the issue personally. The process helps us to explore spiritual principles and to become aware of how the principles operate in our lives.

Six-Point Checklist using Living Curriculum Philosophy

To assist in creating a meaningful, effective experience or lesson using the Living Curriculum philosophy, here is a six-point checklist as a guide:

1. Identify which issue, theme, or need is currently active in your group’s lives. Choose a story, movie passage, song, Bible story, or experiential activity that will introduce the issue/theme and help the participants connect to it.
2. Write a brief intention, keeping it open ended to allow for the outcome to be different for each individual. Start with words like: “to explore, discover, understand, experience, examine, feel or share.”
3. Find a method to explore the issue or theme in order to make it relevant, for example: “wonder questions”, e.g. “I wonder what (the character in the story) thought/was feeling when....” role-playing, puppets, visualization, meditation, etc. The purpose is to move into the heart space rather than analyzing.
4. Use open-ended questions, worded to avoid yes/no answers, to progress from safe, “out there” answers to more internal “in here” answers:
 - What is happening in the story? (Stay with the facts and save interpretation for later.)
 - How do you see this experience in the world? (Ask a bridging question that looks at how it is showing up in school, community, or the world.)
 - How do you see this experience in your daily life? How do you see yourself in this character? (Share personal stories both factually and from the heart, deepening community.)
 - How are you going to use this experience in your life? (Putting principle into practice)
 - How would you like it to be? (Seeing with the eyes of Christ, making different choices)
5. Choose an open-ended activity to awaken the story within, for example: art activities, music, movement, games, journaling etc. Expressing spirituality is a multi-sensory experience.
6. Allow time for participants to share, if they choose, what the experience awakened in them. Encourage action related to the story.

Living Curriculum:

- Is designed to “draw forth” the truth mainly through experiences, storytelling and creative expression.

- Recognizes that a group of people can have a common experience through a story.
- Is issue-centered and story-based.
- Seeks at all times to facilitate an experience of God.
- Honors the process of creativity as a primary human activity.
- Is interactive between the teens and the leader.

Questions to consider during lesson planning:

- Which Unity principle does the theme or issue relate to?
- What will I use for an opening prayer?
- What question might help to transition into the remainder of the lesson?
- What is an appropriate affirmation?
- What song(s) might fit with this lesson?
- What will be the order of the lesson?
- How will I close the experience? Affirmation? Prayer?
- Open yourself to guidance from Spirit. Allow the lesson to “perk” awhile. And revisit after a day or two.
- Utilizing the Living Curriculum empowers each individual and assists them in more fully expressing the Christ within.

The Art of Questioning

- Emphasizes the process
- Avoid yes/no, one-word, right/wrong or expected answer.

Specific examples of questions:

- What is happening in this (story, situation, etc.)?
- How do you see this happening in the world?
- How do you see this happening in your own life?
- What I see/perceive...
- What I feel...
- What I want...

Taking small steps with concrete/literal thinkers

- How, what, when (possibly why)
- How do you think they’re feeling? (why?)
- When have you ever felt like that?

Multiple Intelligence

(for more in-depth explanation of each of the multiple intelligences, see [Section Eleven: Resources](#))

Multiple Intelligence refers to the variety of ways that people take in and process information. Research has revealed that individuals learn through a variety of approaches. Yet many teachers either teach in the same manner that they were taught or they teach using their own learning preferred style. In doing so, teachers miss countless opportunities to engage students in effective learning. What is most beneficial is to regularly vary how one teaches so that each student has the chance to learn from his or her most developed intelligence. It is not essential, though, to include every learning style in each lesson.

Having an understanding of each of these Intelligences helps us to not only prepare classroom experiences that fully engage preteens and teens, but also helps us to discover the Intelligences that we feel most comfortable with and therefore use most in our classrooms.

If we have been experiencing classroom management issues or our preteens and teens don't seem to participate as much as we like, it could be that we are not presenting experiences that speak to their way of learning. Offering a variety of activities that engage different Intelligences creates not only a fun and empowering classroom experience but also builds self-esteem by helping the students understand that there are many ways to learn and that we honor all of them.

As classroom facilitators, the more we understand which Multiple Intelligences we are most comfortable with, the more clarity we will have in what experiences we need to add to our lesson plans so that we go beyond our comfort zone and grow and develop right along with the students.

At this point in time there are nine recognized intelligences. Every human being possesses all nine intelligences but are generally strongest in three of them. So, each human is a unique blend of intelligences that grow, expand and develop throughout our lifetimes. The Intelligences rarely work alone. They form different patterns and combinations depending upon what we are doing or experiencing. They often enhance each other. We can, at any time, develop a greater understanding of and make greater use of any of the remaining six Intelligences that are not our primary strengths. In fact, this is what makes a great facilitator—the desire to grow and learn and to be constantly open to new experiences and ways of being.

Become aware of including variety in creative experiences as well as in ways a story is presented. For example, a story may be read, it may be watched as a video clip, it may be enacted as a drama or the group may have an experience that creates its own story and serves as a basis for discussion.

As we demonstrate our own willingness to learn more about ourselves and our strengths we become a model for our students, inviting them be self-advocates in their own learning process. An added benefit is that the more we understand our own particular way of taking in information, the more effective we can be in communicating with others.

Accommodating Multiple Intelligences

Verbal/Linguistic Learner

How can I use the spoken or written word, gestures, facial expressions?

Small group discussion	Picture with caption
Read Bible	Chalk board
Research	Storyteller
Asking questions	Writing activities
Brainstorming	Agree/disagree
Reporting	Neighbor nudge
Interview	Newspapers

Logical/Mathematical Learner

How can I encourage exploring and bring in patterns, logic, classifications, numbers?

Problem solving	Ask questions
Categorize	Use reasoning
Metaphysics	Opinion poll
Puzzles	Mental games
Brainstorming	Case studies

Visual/Spatial Learner

How can I use visual aids, visualization, color, art, pretending?

Creative activities	Map study
Flannel board	Chalkboard
Pictures with story	Drawing
Play dough/clay	Magazine pictures
Visualization	Debate

Musical/Rhythmic Learner

How can I bring in music and environmental sounds, use rhythm and melody?

Music—song as basis for lesson	Music—as background, to set tone
Rhythm—heart beat in meditations	Rhythm instruments
Joy songs	Songs with motions

Bodily/Kinesthetic Learner

How can I involve the whole body, hands-on experience and expressing emotion?

Active games	Drama/role playing
Field trip	Puppets

Creative movement
Crafts
Choices

Cutting and gluing
Learning centers
Group hugs

Interpersonal Learner

How can I engage students in learning cooperatively, gaining social understanding?

Small groups

Partners

Sharing

Interviewing

Cooperative learning

Games

Intrapersonal Learner

How can I evoke personal feelings and self-understanding and give students choices?

Individual projects

Self-paced instruction

Read and present

Focus inward

Work alone

Being original

Naturalist Learner

How can I involve students in nature and understanding it?

Outside activities—garden walks

Collect, sort & classify nature items

Include animals & plants in discussion

Stories about nature and animals

Use nature items & pictures in classroom

Do nature experiments

Existentialist Learner

How can I involve students in a deeper understanding of spiritual life?

Discussion of abstract ideas and concepts

Self-exploration of beliefs

Meditation and Contemplation

Inquiry into deep questions

Other Learning Considerations

4Mat System of Learning

Another consideration in using a variety of creative activities is the 4Mat system of learning

styles—Why? What? How? If? Learners:

Why? Innovative Learners—brainstorming, interacting

What? Analytical Learners—acquiring facts to deepen understanding, analyzing, observing

How? Common Sense Learners—hands-on learning activities

If? Dynamic Learners—creating and adapting

www.aboutlearning.com/what-is-4mat offers a clear introduction and is by the creator of 4mat.

Other Factors

Other factors also impact learning. These include the environment in which one has an experience—the sounds, the temperature, furniture/setting design and light; the emotional elements—responsibility, structure (ability to do things their own way), persistence and motivation; the sociological elements—learning alone, learning in groups, authority-oriented or peer-oriented; and the physiological elements of time of day, food and drink intake and whether they can do this while learning.

Cultural considerations

Cultural factors also affect one's receptivity to learning. These may include age, gender, racial classification, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, physical disabilities, political orientation, physical size and appearance. The culture influences how the world is viewed and how the persons operate in his or her daily approach to life thus making their perceptions different from others.

Unity honors and values each individual, yet we may unintentionally overlook our cultural bias as we relate to others. As teachers and facilitators we want to continue to be open to learning more about others in every way.

Section Seven: Events

Section Seven, *Events*, outlines responsibilities and provides samples of event documents and forms. Some of the highlights of being a leader or sponsor include retreats, social events and rallies.

Uniteen Events

If neither God nor one's spirituality can be confined to an hour on a Sunday morning in a church building, why would your Uniteen program be confined?

The greatest growth in Uniteen programs has occurred at churches that look to serve their Uniteens' spiritual, social and recreational needs beyond Sunday morning. While many Uniteen programs are running as full-fledged youth groups, even groups that are primarily Sunday school classes need to be able to take advantage of additional programming and community-building opportunities.

Spiritual, social, service and skill-building events are the most dynamic, exciting experiences a Uniteen program can offer.

There is a basic expectation that Uniteens will meet on church grounds on Sunday morning for class. Parents, Uniteens, the youth and family ministry director and church leaders need to be informed of the purpose and details when:

- The group leaves church grounds, or
- The group meets outside normal meeting times, or
- Class content requires an explanation (if parents may not understand the purpose of the lesson) or parent permission (due to sensitive material)

Activities, Events and Outings

Uniteen groups will need to deviate from the normal Sunday class for the following types of activities, events and outings:

Spiritual (Lesson-Related) Programming

These events offer a unique experience of spiritual principles and beliefs. They are lesson-related and are presented as a learning opportunity.

Social Outings

Social outings really bring a group closer by letting everyone have fun together, which serves an important role in the group-building process.

Service Projects

Service opportunities allow Uniteens to give of themselves to others. The emphasis is not just on the help they give, but the benefits they receive in return. Service projects make great lessons.

Skill Building Activities and Events

Uniteens are in the stage of development where acquiring new skills assists in building a greater sense of both inner and outer self-esteem.

Why Have Events?

By branching out beyond Sunday morning, your program can take advantage of many unique opportunities for spiritual growth, fun and fellowship.

The benefits of spiritual, social, service and skill building activities for your Uniteens are numerous. These events:

- Allow opportunities not possible in a Sunday morning class and/or on church grounds.
- Help the kids connect with each other and you. Time together and shared experiences are needed for friendships to form and to bring the group closer.
- Let the group put Truth Principles into practice. Rather than just talking about loving and supporting each other, go bowling and see how it works. Or volunteer in a soup kitchen. Or focus on applying prosperity principles before holding a fundraiser.
- Create intimate, informal spaces where everyone can really learn about each other. You will learn more about a student on a car ride than during a month's worth of lessons, and they will learn more about you and the other Uniteens than they can in a classroom.
- Allow your group to find God at work in the world.
- Increase participation. Events draw teens to church, where they can do the things they want to do and make connections with others.
- Deepen a commitment to studying Truth. The more fun they have with you, the more willing they will be to do serious learning later.

Spiritual Programming

Lesson-related programming helps Uniteens experience spiritual lessons, learn life skills and examine their own beliefs.

A lesson-related activity does more than illustrate a principle or event, it puts Uniteens in it. For example, rather than talking about God at work in nature, go to a park or botanical garden and let them find it for themselves.

There is no limit to what lessons can be learned outside the classroom. But to be effective, such events must:

- Engage and involve participants
- Incorporate sufficient processing to help participants take what they've learned into their own lives

Anything Can Become A Spiritual Experience, If You Bring One's Awareness To It!

Consider this class held at a Slot Car Track:

Slot cars are remote-controlled cars that are raced around tracks. They stay in their lanes by fitting into slots on the track. If they go too fast, they can go out of control and jump off the track. If they go too slow, they will stay on but will be passed by others. The goal is "to find one's right and perfect speed."

After racing a couple rounds, ask participants to think about and answer these questions:

1. How is this like life?
2. What does it feel like to be out of control?
3. When might we go fast—for a thrill, or because we believe we can't be hurt?
4. What is it like to go slow and steady? When have you ever felt like that?
5. Share how both fast and slow could be appropriate in your life.

Types of Spiritual & Other Lesson-Related Experiences

Visit another place of worship

Arrange with another religious organization for your Uniteens to visit to learn more about them on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning:

- Attend Catholic Mass or a Protestant service
- Visit a Synagogue, Mosque or Temple
- Experience a Native American Sweat Lodge or Pow Wow

Holiday event

Involve Uniteens in holiday programs:

- A Christmas program
- Dramatization or update of a metaphysical or Bible story
- Reenactment of the Last Supper. (Invite Uniteens to come as a disciple to a Passover meal where Jesus will explain why it is their last meal together.)

Off-site classes

Take your group away from church to experience God at work in the world:

- At a park or zoo
- At someone's house
- In a museum
- During a nature hike

Life skills classes

Help teens learn practical skills while building relationships and experiencing trust:

- Home skills (cooking, clothing care, home repairs)
- Personal care (skin care, nutrition, hygiene)
- Etiquette (formal dining and attire)
- Stress and anger management and conflict resolution

Team Building exercises

Facilitate group challenges, in which group members must work together:

- Team Challenge Course
- Ropes Course
- Indoor rock climbing

Classes on special topics

Church should be a place where teens can discuss their concerns and questions. Be willing to discuss puberty and sexuality, but require parent permission.

Social Outings

Social outings involve spending time together 'for the fun of it!'

Social activities play an important role in the group-building process. While Uniteens may think the only purpose for such events is recreational, the real benefits for the group go much deeper.

Group members will:

- Realize that church can be fun
- Spend time with each other, getting to know each other and building friendships
- Create a supportive environment, by practicing upholding group agreements
- Want to get involved in the selection and planning process. Don't expect them to plan an event from scratch, but allow them input.
- Be more willing to get into the serious stuff, as they get more comfortable with you and trust each other

When you start offering social outings, you'll see the payoff in the Sunday morning classroom and in the group dynamics. Ask your youth and family ministry director for assistance with permission slips, medical release forms and enrolling parents to help create a full array of fun activities.

Social Outings, From A To Z

Theme Ideas for Outings

Amusement park	Ice skating	Rodeo
Arcade	In-line skating	Roller skating
Archaeological exploration	IMAX	Ropes Course
Bar-B-Que	Indoor rock climbing	Scavenger hunt
Baseball game	Jack-o-lantern carving	Sledding
Basketball contests	Kite making/flying	Slot Car racing
Batting cage	Lake trip	Snow skiing
Billiards	Laser Tag	Softball
Boat ride	Local sporting event	Sports skills contests
Bowling	Luau	Swimming
Broomball	Miniature golf	Super Bowl party
Bunco tournament	Moonlight hike	Tag football
Carnival	Mother/daughter makeovers	Tea party—Mad Hatter themed
Christmas party	Movie matinee	Teen dance
County/State Fair	Nature hike	Tour of local site
Crazy contests	Nerf ball	Treasure hunt
Cross-country skiing	Over-the-line softball	Ultimate Frisbee
Day hike	Paint ball	Videos
DVD Video Night	Picking strawberries	Volleyball
Easter Egg Hunt	Picnic	Water park
Food tasting	Pizza party	Water skiing
'Fun Day'	Pool party	X-cellent Adventure
Game night	Potluck dinner	Yuletide caroling
Halloween party	Progressive dinner	Zany Olympics
Hay ride	Pumpkin patch	Zoo
Horseback riding	Quiz games	
Ice cream social	River trip	

Be creative with events!

Spruce them up by adopting a theme or adding a twist:

- Birthday Party—Use an event to celebrate the season's birthdays.
- Other Party Themes—Create an event around a theme—beach party, Christmas in July, Hawaiian Luau, Super Bowl party, etc.
- Uniteen Night Out—Rather than holding all events on afternoons, schedule an evening event.
- Boys' or Girls' Night Out—Offer some Father/Son and Mother/Daughter experiences.

- Family Event—Encourage Uniteens to bring along parents and siblings.
- Parents-vs-Teens Contest—Uniteens love friendly competition (softball, laser tag) with their parents. And they're always surprised at how well the parents do!
- Destination Unknown—Uniteens are informed when an outing is and what to bring, but only the drivers know where they'll be going and what they'll be doing

Service Ministry

Service ministry is a process of doing something to benefit others, then reflecting on what was done and its impact on the teens individually and in recognizing the power of teamwork.

Uniteens are filled with many gifts which they are capable of sharing with others: the family, the youth and family ministry, the church, the community, the city, the earth.

Service Ministry is not about 'fixing' someone who is 'broken.' Rather, service allows God's love to flow through us, so we can discover the awesome experience of doing God's work and will. Those served find there are youth who choose to honor them in a way that is helpful.

Thoughts on Service to Others

Prosperity principles show that as we give we receive.

Participants must 'buy into' the project. Create a lesson about giving service first, and ask members who have volunteered before to share their excitement from that experience.

Select a project that is easily do-able and will provide a sense of satisfaction quickly. Do not lock Uniteens into a long-term commitment. Give them easy tasks and offer much encouragement, guidance and support. They may need a lot of hands-on help at first. Include many adult volunteers.

Service ministry is contagious! As youth get involved, it spreads into the adults' consciousness. They, too, will begin to serve in new ways and reap the benefits.

Why Do Service?

Through service to others, teens can learn more about their own capabilities, interests and connection with others, and how God can work through them.

Some of the ways Service Ministry benefits the youth:

- Gives a sense of purpose and usefulness
- Brings out talents, gifts and skills
- Exposes them to new things and people

- Broadens their world view
- Builds self-confidence and leadership
- Develops communication and relating skills
- Allows them to experience making a difference in the world
- Creates opportunities to see our interconnectedness, and encourages empathy
- Feels good
- It's FUN!

Service Project Suggestions

At Church:

- Assist with Sunday Service
- Child Care
- Clean Grounds
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Holiday Pageant
- Kids Prayer Box
- Phone tree
- Plant flowers
- Prepare luncheon
- Summer Camp/Bible School assistant
- Sunday refreshments
- Teach Sunday School
- Update scrapbook
- Wash Car Windshields
- Work Day

At Church, For Families or Community:

- Back-to-school kits
- Clothes Collection
- Food or Toy Drive
- Fund-raising for other group or organization
- Send Greeting Cards (especially holidays)
- Stuffed Animal Ministry

In Community:

- Animal Shelter
- Adopt a Highway
- Area Clean-up
- Children's Hospital party
- Clean seniors' yards
- Glean orchard for Food Bank
- Meals for shut-ins
- Nursing Home Party
- Recycling
- Runners' Relief (*pass out Gatorade on running trail*)
- Soup Kitchen
- Special Olympics
- Volunteer at local event

Q & A

Q: What if church leaders tell you: "Uniteens are too young. They need to wait until they're in YOU to do these types of activities."

A: Remember, people who do not work with Uniteens often need to be educated about adolescents' wants, needs and capabilities. Also, some people fear that an active Uniteen program will dilute the youth's YOU experience a few years down the road.

They probably do not understand how off-site, overnight, and regional activities are appropriate, effective, and much-needed by Uniteens. Such age-appropriate opportunities are a valid part of an adolescent Truth student's experience, serving them where they are as Uniteens, not where they might be one day.

If you don't serve Uniteens' needs now, they won't be around for YOU later.

Please find support with the youth and family ministry director to process these comments and to support the educational process already in place as to the overall impact each age group adds to the spiritual community.

Programming Combinations Chart

Your events can serve more than one purpose. Although this chapter has neatly compartmentalized Uniteen activities into spiritual, social, service and skill building categories, many events actually combine elements of all four. For example:

Event	Description	Detail
Sunday Service	The Uniteen group can present part or all of a Sunday Service.	They are serving the church by ushering or giving the lesson. They also must learn the material they will be presenting, thereby building presentation skills and public speaking confidence.
Off-site Class	When leaving grounds for a lesson-related experience, it is often a good idea to plan social time after the class portion.	If you hold class at a park, follow the lesson component with a picnic and softball game. If class is held at someone's house to watch a movie, invite Uniteens to stay for a BBQ and pool party there.
Retreat, Overnight or Campout	The group is together for an extended period of time, usually overnight.	There will be lessons tied in with the theme for the event, social time to play and get to know each other, and opportunities to be of service by helping with meals, set-up and clean-up. It is an opportunity to learn new skills for youth who may not perform these tasks at home.
Outdoor Adventure	A physical or team challenge—such as a ropes course, backpacking or rafting trip—may take more than one day.	These may require some physical ability. Usually the goal is for participants to support each other, work together, overcome their fears and learn about themselves. Everyone participating may learn, display and practice a new skill during such an adventure.

Area-Wide & Regional Events

Many regions organize events that bring together Uniteens from different churches for a powerful experience of self-discovery, fellowship and fun.

Uniteen events do not need to be limited to the local church level. Regional events allow deeper spiritual work and help Uniteens see how they are part of a larger Unity community.

The purpose, facility, cost and length of the event often dictate what geographic area is invited to attend:

Area-wide: includes ministries in the surrounding area.

Events: Afternoon picnic, Day long get-together, Overnight, Weekend campout

Sub-regional: breaks region down into two or more sub-regions, includes all active Uniteens in the state(s).

Events: Overnight, Weekend retreat

Regional: for all Uniteens in the multi-state region

Events: Weekend retreat, Week long camp

What if your region does not yet offer Regional Events?

Start your own. Many regional activities grow out of events put on by local ministries. For example: The Southwest Region's Winter Retreat originally was a weekend event at a mountain cabin for Mesa, AZ Uniteens. It grew into a region-wide event when other churches expressed interest in joining them.

Coordinate with other nearby Unity ministries. You don't need a regional consultant to put together a city-wide picnic, or to invite another group to your overnight or campout. Inform your youth and family ministry director, minister and the regional board of your program's needs. Again, it's about education and communication. Unless brought to their attention, they are probably not aware of the need.

Q & A

Q: What is a Unitreat?

A: 'Unitreat' usually designates a regional overnight event. Depending on the region, the term may be used for a sub-regional one night overnight, a weekend event or weeklong camp.

Q: Do Uniteens have "Rallies"?

A: No. Uniteens is not intended as a Junior YOU program. To avoid confusion with YOU, use terminology that reflect the unique events that serve the needs of Uniteens. (For example: Uniteens attend Retreats/Unitreats and Camps. YOUers attend rallies and International YOU Event)

Planning an Event

Events require proper planning, organization and notice to ensure the best experience for all.

For every event—whether lesson-related, social, service or skill-building—you must be able to answer the following:

- What is the purpose of the event?
- What will happen during the event?
- Where will it be?
- When?
- Who is allowed to attend?
- How much will it cost?
- Are there any special considerations (logistical or financial)?
- What options are available that should be considered?
- How many adults will be needed?

How Involved Should Youth Be In Planning?

Empower your Uniteens by involving them in planning and carrying out events. But remember that they are still kids.

You can help Uniteens learn how to take responsibility for their spiritual education by inviting them to assume more responsibility for their own youth group. Encourage their input and offer them opportunities.

Depending on the enthusiasm, aptitude and organizational skills of your Uniteens, their involvement may include:

Brainstorming • Feedback • Planning & Event duties

Some suggestions:

- Start small and add responsibilities as they experience and understand these types of events
- Assuming a leadership role does not mean being voted a 'leader.' It is not recommended for Uniteen groups to elect officers like in YOU
- Spread the tasks around, but not so it's unmanageable. You might work with a few Uniteens at a time at different events.
- Uniteens need much hand-holding and positive reinforcement. They are not adults. They may forget or overlook things, or not be well prepared. It may take more effort to involve them at first, but it will pay off in the long-run.
- Support them in their efforts and help them support each other. Follow-up with phone calls to each teen with a responsibility. Have them work in teams. Putting responsibilities in writing—a list of bullet points to review them—is helpful

- Do not place them in positions of authority over their peers.
- Don't be afraid to allow them the opportunity to fail. They may not know how to do a task, but they have to learn somehow. There are no failures, only growth opportunities.
- Trust them. Trust Spirit. And lead by example. A loving smile goes a mile!

Tips for Brain-Storming

1. Accept everything!

Withhold criticism or evaluation of ideas. They can be censored or refined later.

2. Think wild!

Who knows where someone's idea may take you? Open up your mind to new possibilities.

3. Leaders participate, too!

You should contribute along with students. Sometimes they want to know what you're looking for in ideas before they'll open up, especially if you're asking them to plan something that has not been part of their life experience.

4. Don't stop too soon!

If you feel blocked, check your assumptions. See if you're limiting your perspective.

5. Build and combine ideas!

Find new ways to improve old ideas. Combine two or more ideas into a third possibility.

Q & A

Q: Events cost money. What if a Uniteen cannot afford to attend?

A: Uniteens are too young to work and must rely on their parents for money. No active Uniteen should be denied the opportunity to participate due to financial constraints. Speak with your youth and family ministry director to learn your ministry's procedures and ways to support families.

1. When possible, increase event fees to cover the costs of those who might otherwise not be able to attend.
2. Establish a scholarship fund in alignment with youth and family ministry procedures. Use event surpluses, donations and ministry funds to support it.
3. Hold fundraiser(s).

Q: What if a Uniteen can't get to/from an event?

A: Uniteens cannot drive. Unless they are within walking distance of the church, they must rely on others for transportation.

1. Encourage Uniteens to call you about transportation problems.
2. Put families in contact with others who live near them.
3. Obtain permission to share the group's roster with all parents.

Event Policies

Your ministry has certain policies you will need to adhere to when planning an event.

Each ministry must decide for itself which guidelines best serve its youth and family ministry activities, given the center's resources, location and individual circumstances.

Activities must comply with all state laws and ministry policies. In addition, if your center has not adopted policies in the following areas, minimum requirements (*with additional suggestions in italics*) are:

Paperwork

- Require medical/liability releases & permission slips for minors

Transportation

- Require from an adult 25 or over, a valid driver's license and insurance (*copies on file*)
- One seat belt per passenger
- No one rides in back of pick-up truck or camper shell
- No smoking in cars
- *First aid kit in each car, provided by ministry*
- *Cars traveling together must stay together*

Staffing

- Adults understand and will abide by Guidelines for Uniteen Leaders, as listed in "Leadership Team" chapter.
- Appropriate adult-child ratio, with at least two adults present.
- Roles and expectations of volunteers are to be clarified.
- Adults will not put themselves in compromising situations.
- No alcohol or drugs allowed.
- Smoking not allowed around youth.
- Contact event leader and youth and family ministry director as soon as possible about any incidents or disciplinary problems.

Overnight Events

- Establish curfew/lights out time for overnight events
- Boys and girls sleep in separate areas, with appropriate chaperones present

Event Planning Checklist

(Cross out items which do not apply for this event)

Planning the Event

- _____ Receive approval from youth and family ministry director/minister.
- _____ Make reservations/group booking (if necessary).
- _____ Consider contingencies:
 - in event of inclement weather (rain, snow)
 - minimum group size needed
 - maximum group size allowed
 - eligibility requirements (open to all, active Uniteens only, friends must attend class first, etc.)
 - access to church after regular hours
 - financial assistance if cost is a hardship
- _____ Visit event site beforehand (if it's unfamiliar).
- _____ Enter on ministry calendar.
- _____ Prepare invitation/permission slip (include cost, start/end times, transportation details, list of what to bring, contact person with phone number)
- _____ Distribute information in timely manner.

Advertising the Event

- _____ Submit by deadline(s) for inclusion in:
 - Weekly bulletin
 - Sunday morning announcement
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Local newspaper (if open to community)
 - Website
 - Social Media
- _____ Remind participants by phone calls or email.
- _____ If transportation may pose a problem, line up sufficient drivers or require pre-registration.

Before the Event

- _____ Prepare facility.
- _____ Clarify roles & plans with adult volunteers.
- _____ Explain group agreements to ALL participants.
- _____ Check medical releases & permission slips.
- _____ If providing transportation off church grounds:
 - make sure licenses and car insurance policies are valid
 - require one seat belt per passenger
 - distribute passengers' releases to proper vehicles
 - distribute maps/directions
- _____ Pray in group before leaving. Recognize and affirm event begins and agreements are in effect.

Event Tips

Always check about group rates and discounts.

- Minimize costs, by emphasizing free and less expensive events. Space out more costly events.
- Invite parents. Don't wait until the day of the event to get parents signed up to drive.
- Review group agreements before leaving church.
- Take photos.
- Take a first aid kit, blanket, jumper cables, and extra water.
- Always allow your group more time for an event, so you don't keep running late.
- Print mailing labels.
- Use fun graphics, clip art and colored paper with flyers.
- Keep a list of paperwork on file. Make copies of medical releases for drivers to carry. Leave event information with authorized personnel at the ministry.
- Ask for help. Delegate responsibilities and involve the Uniteens.
- Verify that participants have birth certificates or necessary paperwork if crossing into Canada, Mexico or the U.S.

After the Event

Service and lesson-related programs are not complete without adequate processing. Otherwise, it may appear as an enjoyable but otherwise meaningless activity.

Take time after an activity to process the experience. Uniteens can celebrate their pleasures and accomplishments. They can reflect and realize their own learning and growth. And non-participants can be exposed to the benefits of the activities.

Even after a social outing ask for feedback. This can be done the following Sunday.

When reflecting on an activity:

1. Share details of the experience with those who did not participate, as well as with each other.
2. Ask questions like:
 - What did you do that you haven't done before?
 - How did it feel?
 - What did you enjoy the most? What did you enjoy the least?
 - What would you do differently?
 - Is it complete or do we need to finish something?
 - What does this have to do with Truth principles?
 - Do we need to share this experience with anyone (congregation, newspaper)? Who, when, how?

3. Encourage creative expression of the experience: i.e. journal, write a poem, write an article for the church newsletter, draw a picture or mural, or display photos from the event.
4. If the activity lends itself to celebration and/or recognition of participants, prepare awards or certificates, or acknowledge the youth with a party.

Programming Schedule

An event calendar is often like a puzzle, with various pieces coming together in a complete programming schedule.

The goal of programming is to offer a balance of activities that appeal to Uniteens, provide meaningful experiences, and bring the group closer together.

Planning Tips

Plan in seasonal blocks. If yearly or quarterly planning is a stretch, begin with logical divisions:

- Fall (Back-to-school to Thanksgiving)
- Holiday Season (Thanksgiving to New Year's)
- Winter (January and February)
- Easter Season (late February to Easter)
- Spring (from Easter to End of School)
- Summer (June to August)

The Anchor

A major event should anchor the schedule for every season. This 'anchor' is usually an overnight or full-day event that can solidify an ever-changing group. The plan must not only build to the event, but also keep the momentum going afterward.

Balance Events

Offer a mix of spiritual, social, service and skill-building events. Determine how frequently to offer them. Consider an Event Coordinator specifically to manage the outings of Uniteen groups.

Emphasize Group-Building. Go heavy on group-building, especially at the start of the school year. Events must take into account the group's trust issues.

The first event(s) should keep the group in a confined space and force integration (such as pool party at someone's home or bowling alley).

Wait until the group bonds to hold activities at open locations (such as at a city park or amusement park).

Q & A

Q: Should a Uniteen program take the summer off?

A: Obviously, every group leader needs to assess their own situation. But consider Uniteens' needs:

- they can't drive,
- they don't have jobs,
- they see few friends outside of school, and
- they spend a lot of time looking for things to do

While summer is casual, it can also be the perfect time to increase the schedule and build the group.

What A Year Might Look Like

The following is a sample calendar for a well-supported Uniteen program. You will need to match the amount of activities and events to size of group, number of leaders and availability of parent support with transportation, etc.

*—Social outing +—Lesson-related activity (S)—Service project
**—Anchor event \$—Fund raiser

Fall

September

BBQ & Pool Party *
Class at Zoo +

October

Bowling with Families *
Attend Unity Service together +
Assist with Halloween Party (S)

November

Miniature Golf *
Overnight Event at Church, with trip to
Amusement Park **
Assist in Sunday School (S)

Winter

December

Uniteen Christmas Party *
Church Holiday Program +

January

Billiards *
Visit another church/temple +
Super Bowl Bake Sale \$

February

Winter Spiritual Retreat **
(regional if available, or local)
Pizza & Movie Afternoon *

Spring

March

Indoor Rock Gym *
'Last Supper' on Passover +
Assist with Easter Egg Hunt (S)

April

Parent-Teen Softball Game *
Regional Spring Overnight **
(or Picnic at Park w/nearby group)

May

Uniteen Raffle \$
'Destination Unknown' *

Summer

June

Water Park Trip *
Teach Sunday school (S)
Uniteen Camp **

July

Uniteen Formal Dinner +
Ice Skating *
Day hike *

August

Back-to-School Campout **

To contact your regional teen consultant for more information on Uniteen and YOU events in your region, visit www.unityworldwideministries.org/regional-education-consultants-overview.

YOU Events

Spiritual, Social, Service and Skill-building Activities and Events

Social Events

Outside activities are a key to promoting chapter growth and enthusiasm. They can be held monthly, quarterly, on special occasions, or just anytime. They serve to bring about balance in the chapter and to create chapter participation and closeness.

The benefits reaped from sponsoring outside activities include:

- Increased participation
- Increased growth
- Awareness of working and growing with others
- Balance and outworking of spiritual principles
- Building trust with others
- Closer feeling between adult leaders and teens
- Springboard for participating in regional, sub-regional and international activities

The sponsor can assist by helping the group find out what YOUers want to do and help them coordinate an activity. Have them brainstorm possibilities and select a chairperson to organize the event. These events are “just for fun” and members are encouraged to invite friends. It is important that members establish group agreements for themselves and for the information of

guests. The ministry, youth and family ministry department and sponsor are the “hosts” and together with the YOU establish conditions for the safety and acceptable behavior at ministry-sponsored functions. A group meditation and a closing circle or song introduce a spiritual fellowship at these events. For traveling, swimming, or any event off of ministry property or overnight requires permission slips, and a medical release form may be in order.

In summary, the following points are useful in planning a social activity:

- Approval of the minister, youth and family ministry director and sponsor
- Time, location, and cost of activity
- Adequate adult supervision

Ideas for Social Activities:

- Overnight: A time to unwind, hang out, prepare a fund raiser, help one another with questions or challenging situations. This can be a time to present a workshop in Truth principles, and might include a potluck dinner, followed by music, discussion session, vespers or a popcorn/movie night (with metaphysical interpretation, of course) etc.
- Party with a special theme....i.e. a laughing party, “game” night, etc. Kidnap breakfast or sunrise breakfast
- Skating, Bowling, Movies, Pizza
- Holiday parties
- Local Tour
- Hay ride
- Camping trip
- Sports activity
- Dance
- Visit other groups
- Picnic, beach party, Luau,
- Scavenger Hunt
- Kite flying
- Miniature golf
- Bar-be-que
- Talent Show
- Horseback riding

These are just a few of the many ideas with which you could begin a brainstorming session. See “Social Outings, From A To Z” on 135 for more ideas.

Service Projects

Within the ministry: The YOU has a responsibility to the ministry, just as the ministry does to the YOU. In order to have support and respect from ministry members, the members of the YOU should present a pleasant and helpful manner to the ministry. This can be done through annual, semi-annual or quarterly service projects for the ministry. Service projects also build ownership and help the YOU become visible to the congregation. Some ideas for service and visibility are:

- Ushering one Sunday a month or on special occasions
- Babysitting for evening meetings or special functions
- Window washing, painting, yard work or other services the ministry could specify that are needed or would be helpful
- Fund-raising to purchase or donate a special item to the ministry
- Donating a free Ice Cream Social... or Soup and Sandwich Day
- Seasonal clean up
- Sacred Servers at special events
- Board or minister special requests
- Teaching adults classes on using their electronic devices (i.e. cell phones, cameras, computers, etc.)
- Serving in fellowship after service
- Volunteering in ministry office
- Plan a Teen Sunday and have teens do the entire service based on what they have learned by attending teen events.

A service project done outside the ministry is another way the group can practice the law of tithing time and service.

Some ideas for projects outside the ministry are:

- Old books, toys: Collect these items and deliver them to children's waiting room in any hospital or local underprivileged school
- Christmas/Thanksgiving/Easter Basket or stuffed animals for the police department or seniors' center
- Provide canned goods, etc. for a needy family or local food pantry
- Adopt a child or grandparent for the chapter.
 - Read to and/or mentor a child
 - Read, mow lawn, rake, snow shovel, or help clean up for the elderly
- Create a Scholarship: A fund within your chapter to help support and/or buy school supplies for a needy student
- Children's Hospitals: Make stockings and fill them with candy, toys, or whatever the hospital guidelines will allow

There are many more ideas on which your chapter can brainstorm. Most counties have agencies that will supply lists of volunteer projects and give information for their requirements. The important thing is that the teens experience the joy of giving both inside and outside the ministry.

Overnight events

Sample overnight event format/schedule:

All night:

- Gather at ministry
- Travel to indoor rock climbing/broom ball
- Movies/games, etc.
- Return to ministry for vespers and lights out

Fri evening to Sat am/pm:

- Group games, treasure hunt

Sat midday to Sun am:

- Gathering
- Games
- Small group
- Workshops to rotate through
- Dinner
- Workshops/evening entertainment
- Vespers
- Bedtime/lights out
- Breakfast
- Check-in
- Attend church service or do service project for congregation

Options:

- Social Event only vs. Lesson Exploration
- On-site vs. sleepover at someone's home (check insurance guidelines)
- Moonlight hike
- Pool party at someone's home

Creating an Event Timeline

(see also Event Planning Checklist on 144 for additional information)

Initial/exploratory planning

- announce the event
- site/ ministry OK
- budget/costs
- staffing needs/assignments
- approvals/contracts
- answer the questions who, what, where, when, why, how much
- biggest issue is determining site/dates

Event preparation:

- marketing/communication—i.e., what does everyone need to know
- paperwork/release forms
- logistics—meals, housing, registration, transportation, money
- supplies
- putting together program schedule
- staff prep
- safety and liability issues, such as insurance coverage

During the event:

- adjusting schedules
- communication issues
- sponsors roles
- behavior/situations to address

Post-event

- returning supplies
- paperwork
- event report
- follow-up debriefing with attendees & group members who did not attend

Consider:

- scholarships
- staff ratios
- special needs participants
- detailed schedule for leaders; prayer work/preparation/training for staff
- sleeping arrangements / lights out

Programming Components:

- Theme
- Opening (agreements, prayer, intros)
- Mixers/group games
- Group gatherings (chapel, campfire, vespers)
- Prayer/meditation time
- Lessons/workshops (large/small-group)
- Lesson-related activities (team activities, challenge course, treasure hunts)
- Play time, sports, activity time (not lesson related)
- Social/free time (dance)
- Cabin/room time (lights out)

Regional Rallies

When a chapter is placed on the regional consultant's mailing list, the youth and family ministry director and sponsor will receive information about the rallies the chapter members can attend within the region. These rallies can be held in a central location within the region, and planned and coordinated by the regional team. Each chapter may be asked to serve on a committee. Occasionally, a chapter may be asked to host a rally at their church.

Purpose

Rally programs provide a meaningful spiritual and educational experience for the YOU members. In addition, it allows prolonged interaction between the different chapters within the region.

These intensive weekend rallies usually include:

- Family Groups and Workshops
- Discussions
- Meditation and Prayer
- Music
- Social Interaction
- Recreation

Attendance Requirements

Any YOU group member is welcome to attend rallies with their YOU group and group sponsors. Each region has specific requirements for a teen to be eligible to attend a regional event. Requirements may include Sunday attendance, service hours and specific grade (9-12)/age (14-18) guidelines.

Note: Some regions may require the YOUer to be a ninth grade student before they can attend a rally.

Special guests from non-affiliated youth groups (international guests, exchange students) are also accepted at the discretion of the regional consultant. These guests must fulfill the same registration qualifications and requirements as the YOUer.

Registration

Rally registration for a YOU chapter and its members is usually made through the regional consultant who receives the registration fee, medical/liability release, and signed group agreement form from each participant via website or physical form.

Medical Release Forms: Most hospitals require parental permission before administering treatment. In case of a medical emergency during the rally, the medical/liability release forms will be made immediately available to the medical treatment facility (See Appendix C: Medical release example, page 239)

Group Agreements: The regional officers and regional consultant develop the agreement forms. They are referred to as “agreements” not rules and occasionally contain a second sheet outlining regulations from the rally site (see Appendix D: Group agreement example, page 243)

Before a rally, the sponsor reviews the agreements with each chapter member and gives them a choice as to whether or not they wish to sign the form as a symbol of acceptance. If members choose not to sign, they are making a choice not to attend the rally.

The consequence of broken agreements during a rally may result in the chapter member being sent home at the parent’s expense. If that is not feasible, attendance at the next event may be denied.

Please confirm with the regional consultant regarding the current forms and procedures to register your group. Your minister or youth and family ministry director will need to review, sign and consent to the participation of each attendee.

Note: Sponsors are also responsible for sending the chapter registration forms including signed group agreements, medical/liability release forms, and registration fees to the regional consultant.

In order for the rally to be a meaningful and orderly experience, the sponsors need to thoroughly prepare the YOUers by discussing with the group, as well as individually, each person’s expectations, intention as a participant, what they can offer to others during the event, and how they feel about the group agreements. Discussion of expectations helps clarify what behavior is appropriate at rally and also guides the YOUers toward realizing the importance of their own responsibilities.

The sponsor may wish to use the following words in the discussion. In addition to these words, ask the YOU'ers if they have words of their own that might reflect the experience they wish to have during the event.

Cooperation	Introspection	Fun
Choice	Worship	Love
Order	Fellowship	Joy
Enthusiasm	Oneness	Growth
Christ Presence	Expectancy	Meditation
Inclusiveness	Highest Good	Community

Note: Sponsors are expected to contribute to the overall experience of the event by keeping a positive and loving attitude, participating in all activities, and signing and honoring the group agreements and expectations as well.

Hosting a Sub-Regional Rally

When a chapter decides to host a sub-regional event, a vote needs to be taken to determine the degree of willingness and commitment level of all the chapter members. A chapter member must be willing to chair the event and the sponsor and youth and family ministry director must be willing to help coordinate the plans. Approval by the minister is required. If the above conditions are not met, the event should not occur. After discussing the details and upon agreement, the following steps are suggested:

Steps

- Check your planned date with the regional coordinator to be certain the event will not conflict with an upcoming regional event
- Obtain approval and support of the sponsor(s), youth and family ministry director, minister, and regional consultant
- Determine date(s), time, theme, and location of event and add the date to the ministry calendar (if the event is to be held at the church, receive ministry approval prior to contacting the regional consultant)
- Plan the program

If the sub-regional event is casual, the day might include:

- Spirituality (Walking Meditation, Chanting, Journal Writing)
- Games (Horse shoes, Badminton, Baseball)
- Activities (Swimming, Picnic, Treasure Hunt)

If the event is over the weekend, the program might include:

- Icebreakers
- Opening and Closing
- Discovery Activities
- Workshops
- Activities

Advertise the event well in advance. Decide which chapters you wish to invite. Prepare a flyer with full details, including the following information:

- Date, location, and address to send registration
- Cost
- Theme of event
- Registration deadline
- Who may attend
- Contact person(s)
- Medical/liability release forms, group agreements
- What to bring
- Transportation arrangements

Sponsor Obligations Before and During Rallies

Before the rally takes place, the sponsor can help prepare the youth for a positive experience by:

- Holding discussions regarding the theme of the event, facilitating the pre-rally lesson provided if available
- Discovering the individual expectations of the YOUers and group expectations
- Reviewing the group agreements
- Inviting the teens to address what they're willing to give to others during the rally

In addition, the youth and family ministry director and sponsors are vital links in the communication between the ministry, the youth and family ministry director, the YOUers, and the parents. Be sure to keep the minister(s) informed of any upcoming events—regional or sub-regional rallies. Mail parents the flyer that was sent to the chapters.

During Rally

During rallies, sponsors should make every effort to establish a sense of community with the teens. Avoid creating situations that seem like “them” and “us.” You can do this by:

- Participating in all events
- Sharing in group discussions
- Following the same group agreements as the teens (participation requirements, smoking agreements, activity attendance, lights out, etc.)

Officially, all sponsors are required to:

- Circulate and participate with youth in activities
- Greet and welcome new sponsors
- Remain on grounds during weekend
- Lock automobiles securely
- Give on-the-spot responses to inappropriate behaviors if needed to maintain agreements
- Report major disciplinary action to the head sponsors
- Be aware of special needs (disabilities, health requirements)
- Ensure all medications are turned into wellness per event guidelines

Cabin and room sponsors are responsible for:

- No smoking in cabins or rooms and following facility guidelines
- Special health and medication needs of cabin/room occupants
- Accounting for all cabin/room occupants by lights out
- Posting Tranquility Slips on the door
- Supporting others through compassionate listening
- Sharing time, meditation time, and lights out
- Wake-up calls to those who need it
- “All clear” that all teens are out to breakfast or the next scheduled activity

Longer/larger events

- Away from ministry (off-campus)
- 3-day retreat (weekend at cabin/camp/campout)
- Ropes course, survival course
- Outdoor/sports-oriented trip (skiing, lake, cabin)
- Include other ministries

Sample formats/overviews

- Purposeful, intimate weekend retreat (Rites of Passage kids, by invitation only)
- Campout w/ropes course (camping equipment, kitchen/food, outdoor precautions, site selection)

- Ski weekend at a lodge (recreation focus)
- Weekend retreat @ camp with other ministries

Additional considerations:

- More planning/programming needed
- Off-site
- Overnights for community building (less lesson content possible)

International YOU event

The International YOU Event is a weeklong event traditionally held in July at Unity Village in Lee's Summit, Missouri. The goal of the event is to provide an in-depth spiritual experience with other youth of like-mind and hearts. It is an intense, spiritual experience filled with:

- Workshops
- Family discussion groups
- Meditation and prayer
- Dancing
- Music
- Inspirational speakers

Each year the International Teen Ministry Coordinator and the International leadership team plan and coordinate an exciting and meaningful time for those who attend. Participants stay in motel-type accommodations on the grounds of Unity Village. Meal packages are provided for the week.

Attendance Requirements

There is room for approximately 150 people to attend which is made up of YOUers and sponsors. YOUers must be between the ages of 15-18 years old and are selected by a process within the chapter.

Choosing Attendees

The attendee(s) chosen to attend the event should be members who have shown leadership skills throughout the year. Allow the entire chapter to provide input. After the choice is made, seek support and approval for the decision from the youth and family ministry director and minister. Use the following criteria to help you make the decision:

- Attendance
- Participation—class discussions, fund raisers, activities
- Holding office
- Extra committees
- Volunteer and service activities
- Initiative, dependability, cooperation
- Spiritual readiness

Note: In case of a tie between two possible delegates, look at:

- Whether one has already attended this event
- Whether this will be the last opportunity for one to go due to age requirements
- The types of contributions each can make to the chapter upon returning
- The length of availability to the chapter once he or she returns

Remember, the attendees are representing your chapter and your ministry.

Benefits

Attendees return to their chapters with a greater understanding of themselves and the principles that are taught in YOU and Unity. Most often, they return to their groups renewed, inspired, and filled with ideas and enthusiasm for the growth of their chapters. Each YOUer participates in a morning of “Behind the scenes of Unity Village” through participation or service that he or she has chosen ahead of time. This inside look at what happens at Unity Village helps to create a deeper understanding of Unity’s foundational roots.

Summary

The time you spend participating in activities outside the YOU chapter classroom is small, and yet, the impact of the rallies, events, and social activities is profound. During these events, you—the YOU sponsor—will have the opportunity to deepen your relationship with the individual members of your chapter. As important, though, is the fact that the YOU members will deepen their relationships with one another, with members from local and regional chapters, and with members from across the country. These events are important stepping stones for creating “Unity” within our YOU community—a worthy goal!

To contact your regional teen consultant for more information on Uniteen and YOU events in your region, visit www.unityworldwideministries.org/regional-education-consultants-overview.

What is the Future?

For information on Next Generation Unity (NGU) for young adults 18-35, visit www.unity.org/ngu.

Section Eight: Finances

Section Eight, *Finances*, provides information about the financial aspects of the teen program. Included are ideas for managing finances, creating a budget, fund-raising and tithing.

Managing Finances

Ideally, the teen group helps support itself through fund-raisers. Work along with the youth and family ministry director, minister and ministry's board of directors to create clear policies about handling cash, receipts and disbursements for your teen ministry activities. The youth and family ministry director, Uniteen leader or the YOU sponsor, prepares an estimated yearly expense budget that is submitted, as information, to the board of directors. It is suggested that this budget be met through fund raisers raised outside the ministry as well as through the congregation, so that no one becomes inundated with teen money-raising projects. The fund raisers can then be scheduled well in advance of the need for finances to attend retreats, rallies, conferences, etc.

Event Expenses

The leader's/sponsor's registration fees and travel expenses ideally are a part of the Uniteens/YOU budgeted expenses. If the teen is unable to meet these expenses, many times the ministry may be willing to subsidize the difference when they have received a budget and a request. Scholarship accounts can be set up with guidelines for application and fund disbursement.

If a leader/sponsor chooses to tithe his/her expenses to the Uniteens/YOU, it is important that the ministry know what expenses are and have been, in the event that a new leader/sponsor does not choose to tithe in this manner. This information helps your ministry stay informed concerning teen ministry expenses.

Many ministries believe the training and education of teachers is their responsibility. Thus, ministries are encouraged to provide for the registration and travel of sponsors to sponsor/teacher development workshops, regional rallies and international IYOU events.

Who goes to Uniteen retreats, YOU rallies and International IYOU Events?

Active members of the Uniteen group or YOU chapter who meet the requirements:

- Regular attendance of Sunday group meeting—If teen does not attend regularly he or she is considered not ready for rally/retreat/event (there can be exceptions and this need to be discussed with minister, liaison, youth and family ministry director)
- Participation in service projects
- Participation in fundraising

Paying for registration and travel expenses for attendance at events

The Uniteen group/YOU chapter includes the projected registration and travel expenses in the annual estimated budget and meets this budget through planned fund-raisers.

OR . . .The group/chapter and delegate share the cost

OR . . .The group/chapter, delegate, and church share the cost

Often teens pay a portion of the fees personally, so they are personally invested in the events. There may also be a special scholarship fund for those who do not have the resources currently available to pay their portion of the registration fees.

When the total is paid by teen's family:

- Some are left out
- teen has no investment

When the total is paid by ministry:

- teen has no investment
- does not promote parent involvement

Three-way split to pay—1/3 by family, 1/3 by ministry, 1/3 by group fund raising

- family involved and invested
- teen sees they are a part of the ministry and are supported
- teen has investment
- teen group is not always trying to raise funds
- teens move into ownership of ministry when doing service project
- not a large burden on anyone

Alternate: The ministry's yearly budget can dedicate a specific amount to cover adult registration and/or travel to each event, thereby shifting to a ½ by family, ½ by group fundraising for teen participants. The ministry contribution is pre-determined in alignment with budget.

Annual Budget Sample

September

Leadership Retreat	
Approx. 8 attending @ \$50.00	\$400.00
Transportation	<u>\$250.00</u>
TOTAL	\$650.00

November

Fall Regional Retreat	
Approx. 8 attending @ \$100.00	\$800.00
Transportation	<u>\$300.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1,100.00

June

Official Regional Rally	
Approx. 8 attending @ \$150.00	\$1,200.00
Transportation	<u>\$300.00</u>
TOTAL	\$1500.00

July

International YOU Event	
Approx. 3 attending @ 400	\$1200.00
Transportation for 3 @ \$450	<u>\$1350.00</u>
TOTAL	\$2550.00

Estimated YOU Expenses

	650.00
	1100.00
	1500.00
	<u>2555.00</u>
TOTAL	\$5805.00

Fund-Raising

Fund-raising is one of the means by which the teen group provides for travel and other chapter related expenses. Sometimes the ministry or other donors also willingly contribute to the group treasury to help with expenses. Check with the youth and family ministry director about your ministry guidelines regarding group fundraising policy and procedures.

The purposes of fund raising are:

- To raise funds to meet the projected annual expenses through activities conducted both within and outside of the ministry
- To teach and re-emphasize the laws of prosperity through the concepts of service, love offerings and tithing
- To create a balance in the areas where fund-raisers are conducted, so the congregation will not become inundated with teen projects.
- To schedule fund-raisers in a manner, so the teens are not overwhelmed. A maximum of one fund-raiser per quarter is suggested.
- All fund-raisers will have a leadership team in charge, creating continuity and accountability.
- All fund-raisers will be advertised and promoted with announcements, signs, posters, banners and other creative displays and ideas.
- Chapters will learn the practice of tithing on all income.

To create a fund-raising plan, meet with youth and family ministry director to discuss:

- The vision for the teen group
- How the ministry can support that vision
- What the teens are studying
- Service projects
- Finances of the teen group
- Together decide which avenues of fund-raising are right for chapter and ministry

Fund-raising Ideas

Bake Sale

Held in fellowship hall during holidays.

Raffles

Invite the congregation to donate a worthwhile item(s) to be raffled. Offer a 50/50 raffle, people purchase tickets for a set amount (\$10-\$20) and the winner receives half of the proceeds, the teens receive the other half.

Garage/Rummage/Book Sales

Encourage teens and ministry members to collect their unused items for a sale.

- ask for donations
- have teens price
- have a donation place set up for leftovers or sign up a crew to deliver to charity group
- have teens plan clean up

Give and Get Circulation Day (free garage sale):

- invite congregation to donate items
- people attending can get items for free
- invite community to participate
- have Love Offering jars stating that the teens organized this and donations appreciated
- newspapers will publish for free under community calendars
- give congregation advanced preview time
- have a donation place set up for leftovers or sign up a crew to deliver to charity group
- have teens plan clean up

Car Wash

This can be organized and held in the ministry parking lot while members are in the service, or held at a corner gas station.

Gift Wrapping Booth

This can be a gift wrapping service for congregation members or in a local shopping mall. Ask congregation to donate wrapping paper, bows, tape, ribbon, gift bags, and boxes.

Meal Fund-raisers

Baked potato luncheons

Taco salad luncheons

Spaghetti Dinner

Souper Sunday

Ice Cream Social

- ask wholesalers for a donation or discount
- ask congregation for donations
- offer a variety of selections
- invite parents' involvement

Pancake Breakfast

Plan a breakfast time after consulting with your minister, youth and family ministry director, leaders and sponsors as to which Sunday would be best. Easter Sundays, Mother's Day, Father's Day, and Grandparents Day are sometimes a favorite.

Salad Bar

Provide an assortment of lettuce, spinach and other vegetables and condiments for lunch following ministry. Variations of this can be: a soup and salad bar with crackers and breads, a "Pita Party", soup and sandwich day, an ice cream social, a spaghetti dinner, etc.

Coffee Hour

Once a month, teens oversee coffee, tea and snacks during weekly fellowship hour following Sunday service on a love offering basis.

Dinner and Talent Show or Movies

Sponsor a potluck dinner for the congregation. They bring the food (you bring some too). You provide entertainment for the evening.

Movie Night at the church

- host a concession stand
- offer baby sitting

Supporting Angels Sponsorship Program

- invite adults from congregation to financially support teens' fund-raising needs with donation
- host spaghetti dinner honoring Supporting Angels
- teens do presentation about retreat/rally experiences
- write thank you notes

Other Sales of specialty items

- prayer bead necklace made by teens
- artwork by teens
- nothing extremely expensive or that cannot be returned

This is just a sample of many ways to raise money. Some of them can be held at the church and some away from the ministry. For success, they require careful planning and promotion through posters, flyers and announcements. They need a commitment by the youth and the support of the adult leadership, who can help coordinate but does not do the work or assume the role of chairperson. Network with your fellow regional peers about successful fundraising ideas. Request prayer support and be sure each fundraising plan has approval and blessing from the minister, board, youth and family ministry director.

Things to consider in doing fund-raisers

- timing
- tie to event at the ministry
 - before annual meeting
 - before special workshop on Sunday afternoon
- participation by teens
 - bring part of meal
 - set-up

- clean-up
- sign-up with duties
- make job chart
- create signs
- create skit or presentation for congregation to promote event/ activity
- make notice for Bulletin, Website, Announcements and distribute to appropriate individuals
- pricing
 - price as a suggested love offering that leaves opportunity for a bigger gift

Tithing

As we work with the knowledge and understanding of the laws of prosperity, we can teach this principle through demonstration. Tithing is one of the ways that each group and chapter becomes a growing part of the local, regional and international teen programs. Teens can be introduced to the practice of using this technique in their personal lives as they observe the demonstration on a ministry level.

The group should establish a practice of tithing on each and every fundraiser, as well as on a monthly basis to their spiritual source. Some groups choose to split their tithes between local, regional and international teen ministry. It is helpful for the group's treasurer to select a specific date to remember to send the tithe, no matter what the amount.

Teach tithing and prosperity by tithing a certain amount back to the church. You can use the book, *The Four Spiritual Laws of Prosperity* by Edwene Gaines. There is a free downloadable workbook at www.unity.org/thrive that can serve as a guide for teaching the book.

Section Nine: Sacred Safety

Section Nine, *Sacred Safety*, provides a comprehensive overview of Sacred Safety Policies and Procedures including facility and classroom safety, staffing, travel and event policies.

Sacred Safety

Teen Ministry programs throughout Unity vary considerably in how they are conducted. Every church wants to offer the best practices they possibly can. Many aspects of Teen Ministry are choices for the director and minister. There are some things, though, that are not negotiable. One of those areas is Sacred Safety. Sacred Safety deals with avoiding problems and possibly losses by having plans in place and by careful preparation for youth ministry. Insurance may cover a loss, but Sacred Safety can do a great deal in preventing loss situations.

Sacred Safety is about keeping our children and adults safe through procedures, policies, and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situations. This in turn reduces the church's legal and liability risk. Continually educating the families, volunteers, staff and congregation on your plan is an important part of this process.

Ministry is all about being in relationship—with God, with others, with our self. Relationship invites us to open up and become vulnerable to the person sitting next to us so that we might interact in an authentic and caring way. This is God in expression. This is what the church and ministry strives for. However, if we are physically, mentally or spiritually harmed by a person in “God’s house” representing God’s love to us, then our relationship with the very source of our Being can be severely affected. This restricts our ability to live unlimited and abundant lives. When the person wounded is a child, this breach has far-reaching effects in many lives.

In today’s world, this breach or violation of a child is against the law of the land as well as the law of the heart. Not only will the perpetrator of this crime be found liable but also will the organization that created the conditions for the crime to occur. Most national youth organizations have taken the appropriate steps to reduce their liability of this happening within their personnel, facilities or events. Habitual molesters and pedophiles now gravitate to the organizations that provide access to minors with few or no restrictions to prevent someone from taking advantage.

Important Considerations for our Churches

One organization that is easy access is the church, especially smaller churches. Why is this? This is partly because churches traditionally do not want to think that this act of violation would happen on their premises within their membership because their teachings are in opposition to the transgression. Consider the teaching of forgiveness that is translated to mean that we need to give

people second chances. Or consider the teaching to honor someone's call from Spirit. Add to that the church's constant need for youth ministry volunteers and the excitement of having someone volunteer to help you as much as possible. These may be the scenario for a possible tragedy.

Courts throughout the United States now are taking churches to task and finding them liable for not taking precautions in preventing or reducing the risk of child molestation and abuse. This includes compensatory damages that can be covered by insurance and punitive damages that are not covered. Any church involved in an accusation can find itself on the news, in the paper and in court.

It doesn't need to be this way. There are steps or best practices a church can utilize that will reduce the risk of injury, harm or danger to every youth in that ministry. Though we cannot prevent all harm to our children and teens, we are responsible in reducing the possibility of it happening in our church. Jesus said it best. "Let the children come to me and do not hinder them for to such belongs the kingdom of God." A child's right of safe passage in their spiritual and human development is so important that no matter what size church we serve, we have a responsibility to make it safe for all who enter.

Screening

All persons whether volunteer or paid, who will be working with children and teens need to be screened before having access to the youth. You are responsible for the people serving your children and there are no shortcuts to this part of Sacred Safety.

Pre-Screening

Be sure to use a written application and job description for each position you wish to fill. Through this procedure the applicant knows what the responsibilities of the work are and what qualifications they must meet to apply. As a pre-screening device, the job description outlines the age requirement and the length of active participation within the ministry.

It is recommended that sponsors for teens be 25 years or older, and that persons are 21 years or older to serve in the nursery and children's ministry. Younger people can certainly assist or be junior sponsors but this is beyond the two adults required. If the volunteer or staffer is required to drive, they must be 25 years or older no matter what age they are working with.

It is recommended that an applicant have attended the church regularly (two or more Sundays per month) for at least six months before that person can apply for working with the children. For teen ministry, it is strongly encouraged that an individual have attended regularly for no less than a year. Some Unity churches require membership or completion of basic Unity classes like Lessons in Truth or Unity 101 before a person can teach in youth ministry.

If either of the above are not met, the person should be redirected to another area of volunteering until the time that they do qualify for youth ministry.

Application Considerations

An effective way to obtain needed information and to treat volunteers and staff uniformly is to require all potential candidates to complete an application that includes questions on various aspects of the youth ministry. For current volunteers, you can ask them to update the church's records by completing the new form.

This application can include questions regarding previous volunteer experience, spiritual gifts they have to offer, abuse and other criminal offense questions as well as what motivates the person to want to volunteer in youth ministry. Be sure the form includes a liability release to sign and a background check authorization form.

Sensitive questions

Some forms also include the question, "Were you a victim of abuse as a child?" If so, have you had any counseling?" This is a sensitive issue and one that many people would rather not ask. The reasons for asking for this information, however, are valid. If an adult is vulnerable in this area it could show up as an inability to detect signs of abuse with a child in class. Or it might show up as hyper-vigilance where there is an increased watchfulness and intensity to looking for and reacting to signs that could be interpreted as abuse. There may also be the possibility of this person being an abuser. If the abuse has not been addressed or if there is still shame attached to it, knowing this will help the director understand the individual during times when the vulnerability factor is high. As always, this information is confidential and kept in a locked file. Each church will have to prayerfully ask itself if this is an important piece in protecting the children and if so, whether they wish to address it on the form or in the interview.

Realize that you, as director, sponsor or leader, must stay educated to the latest in Sacred Safety and the law. This chapter provides a good start for insuring the safety of your children but it is not state-specific and may not reflect the latest changes in federal or state law. Each church is responsible for researching the necessary requirements and recommended procedures for your state and situation. Unity Worldwide Ministries can assist you in finding resources, but the primary responsibility for implementation is with your church and membership.

The three main areas to consider regarding Sacred Safety are facility, programming and staffing. Decision-making about Sacred Safety will involve the minister and the board as well as the Youth and Family Ministry director. Decisions may also be influenced by your insurance company and lawyer's advice.

This chapter takes you through considerations specific to children and teens. Use the checklists to assist you in reviewing your own facility. Also consult your church's policy manual as you begin this process to see what policies are in place and what policies and/or revisions are needed.

Resources for Best Practices

First identify the times and places, activities and events, church and non-church groups where children are present in the church. After reviewing the accessibility of the facility and the programming parts of Sacred Safety, look at the human factor. Who has access to a child? All volunteer and paid staff who work directly with the children and teens are included in the human factor along with those on the fringes.

It is strongly encouraged that each ministry and director research and study Sacred Safety from those organizations that specialize in this area. Unity Worldwide Ministries recommends these two online subscriptions that every Unity church with children should subscribe to for at least a year.

Reducing the Risk: www.reducingtherisk.com

Resources include training manuals, CD presentations, and online support to create a comprehensive risk reduction program concerning staffing including volunteers.

Group Publishing: www.group.com

Resources include articles, tools, training, forms, ideas, and reduced-rate background checks.

Non-subscription websites to keep current with are:

Church Mutual: www.churchmutual.com/

Safety resources are also available for non-members but members benefit the most from the current research, forms, and recommendations.

Unity Worldwide Ministries: www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources

Updates on Policies and Procedures, Sacred Safety, and recommendations are posted frequently. You can also go online and check with youth organizations like scouts and the YMCA to see what they have available.

Background Screening

At Unity Worldwide Ministries we strongly suggest and encourage individual Unity ministries to conduct background screening on all adults—either paid staff or volunteers—working with minors.

Youth and family ministry provides high risk opportunities for adults to be alone with a child or teen during ministry hours and off-site activities. Background screening provides the ministry with information that may safeguard our children, our adult volunteers and the ministry. Screening will not eliminate risk altogether but does show that the ministry has acted in good faith to place appropriate adults in responsible positions.

A background screening would include:

- an application on file
- documentation that personal references given on the application have been checked
- a face-to-face interview with the applicant
- a criminal background screen

We suggest ministries use a professional background screening company or the local police department. Background screenings would include a national criminal search and a motor vehicle check would be mandatory for those individuals transporting minors.

All reports are to be considered confidential and stored in a locked area with limited access. Only the minister/and or another staff member (perhaps youth ministry director) should have access.

Due to the structure of Unity Worldwide Ministries, each ministry is responsible for creating and implementing sacred safety/risk management procedures such as the above. This not only safeguards children but also those of other Unity ministries with which you interact.

If you have questions about who should be screened, contact the Multigenerational Ministry Coordinator at Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Suggested Companies for Background Checks

First Advantage/Volunteer Advantage offers non-profit organization the services to protect their ministry. This is probably better for larger ministries or those that need a global footprint.

<https://volunteer.fadv.com/pub/>

Protect My Ministry provides cost-effective background checks with free re-verification of criminal records and has no minimum requirements. <http://protectmyministry.com/>

Shepherd's Watch Background Checks is part of the Group Publishing family and provides affordable, reliable background checks. <http://www.group.com/shepherds-watch>

Facility

The easiest place to start in providing a safe environment is to look at your facility including the buildings and grounds. Consider the following questions and give thoughtful consideration to those that apply to your size program.

Overall Location Considerations

- What space are you using for the teens?
- Does the size and layout of the room fit the size and needs of your youth?

- Are there two exits from every classroom space? (Count both doors and windows.) If in the basement, are there two exits to the first floor or a window that can serve as an exit? If on a second floor, are there two staircases or a fire ladder available?
- Is there adequate ventilation? Cooling and heating?
- Do the appropriate people know where the circuit breakers and water cut-off are?
- Are bathrooms easily accessible
- Are the bathrooms accessible to adults not involved in youth ministry?
- Is drinking water easily accessible?

Location Tips

When considering security and ease of supervision it is helpful when all the rooms are clustered together in one area or at least by age groups. The older the child/teen the farther out or higher up their room can be. Match the location and space to the ability of the youth to problem solve or move quickly with little or no adult assistance if there was an emergency.

Think about establishing an invisible perimeter around the youth and family area where adults without children are immediately noticed and gently guided to other areas where they will not have access to children. This is especially important when the children and adults share the same bathroom facilities.

Adults always stay outside of the bathroom area. If the bathroom is also used by adults, have minors wait until all adults are out of it and then the youth can go in. When this is not possible, the adult at least needs to leave the stall door open or the bathroom door open or make arrangements for parents to take their child to the bathroom before class. Create the safety procedure that works best with your size of church.

Determine how drinking water is supplied. Options in addition to having a drinking faucet in the classroom include having a water cooler in the area, providing pitchers and paper cups for each class, or perhaps using a kitchen that is close. Do not fill pitchers or cups from the bathroom sink/faucets as this is unsanitary.

Classroom Considerations

- Are there windows in the door or wall of the classroom that allow people to look into the room without entering? This reduces the room's isolation and increases the accountability of knowing who is in the room and what is happening.
- Are outside windows screened and in good working order? When opened, can the window stay open or does it have to be propped open? Does it have a lock? (Check the web for the different products available.)
- If the room is higher than the first floor, do the outside windows of the rooms have a restraint to keep children from falling out? If windows are barred, is there a release mechanism from the inside?

- If room is lower than the first floor, are there outdoor windows that can be used as safety exits? What kind of covering do they have over them?
- If windows are non-operable such as in new buildings, is there adequate ventilation?
- Are there locks on the doors to keep people in? Out? Is a key readily available to unlock the door if a youth accidentally locked the door?
- Are electrical outlets covered in rooms where there are young children?
- Are electrical cords short and taped/close to the wall where no one will trip over them or tip over the electrical equipment?
- Are blind and curtain/drape cords out of reach of young children?
- Are light switches clearly marked and accessible?
- Is the furniture appropriate for the age it serves, sturdy and in good condition?
- Are the rooms clean and attractive?
- Is the flooring clean and appropriate for the age level?
- Are the cleaning solutions appropriate and kept in safe spaces?
- Is there anything stored in the room that is harmful when ingested or comes in contact with skin or eyes?
- What are the insurance guidelines regarding candles? Consider using candles with light bulbs. For older children and teen, if candles are permitted, use a hurricane lamp around the flame, especially when placed on the floor, or a big squat candle that won't tip over.
- Is all equipment in good working order with no rough or sharp edges, no fraying cords, etc.?

Classroom Tips

Consider whether you want locks on your classroom doors. Locks are handy during the week when you wish to curb the use of the room but on Sunday morning, no room should be locked except for an emergency lockdown. (See Emergency/Evacuation Tips on the next page.) This is true for all age groups.

Determine how to store medications, cleaning supplies, etc outside of the classrooms. First aid kits need to be put beyond reach of smaller children. Choose cleaning supplies that are earth and people friendly. This keeps allergic reactions down to a minimum.

Emergency/Evacuation Plans

- Have you an evacuation plan in case of fire or other threat that would necessitate the immediate removal from the building?
- Are fire extinguishers clearly marked and accessible?
- Are exits clearly marked and accessible?
- Do you have a lock down or “shelter-in-place” emergency plan for severe weather, natural disasters, suspicious person or missing child?

- Are you prepared to handle other emergencies that may be specific to your location? (Hurricane, earthquake, floods, tornadoes, terrorist attacks, bomb threat, etc.) Are these procedures written down, easily accessible, communicated to volunteers and reviewed?
- Do you have a plan for medical emergencies?
- Do you have emergency kits/first aid kits available and easily accessible to those who would need it?
- Does everyone know where to find an incident report and when to use it?
- Is there a communication system connecting the children's spaces to adults? Are there phones, an intercom system, or walkie-talkies that are easily accessible and always ready? How are parents or adults notified in case of an emergency?

Emergency/Evacuation Tips

Plan

It is imperative to have a written plan on how to evacuate the children's areas as well as how to secure (lock down) the area within a relatively short amount of time. Work with the church staff to provide overall safety procedures and then make the plans accessible to everyone. Train the volunteers and church staff. Then review procedures periodically. Educate the children, parents and congregation on the steps to take to evacuate or secure the building. Provide copies of the plans in your family packet.

Determine escape routes out of the building and places to gain cover inside and outside the building. Determine what each volunteer will do and where each class will go. Have you enough adults in youth ministry to move children to safety if an incident should arise? If not, create a plan for other adults to come and help. Always train to the position not the person. That way if another person is filling that position, they are trained to act. Trained volunteers will stay calm and provide the children with calm, clear instructions making evacuation or lock down safer for the whole group. Locate this information in each classroom in a place known to all volunteers.

In creating your plans, there is an abundance of great information on the web. Check several sites out for ideas on what is important to have in your plan according to your location.

Evacuation

For evacuation, choose a meeting place outside the building where everyone meets. **Do not have the parents come to the youth department to get their children.** Instruct the parents to meet their children at the meeting place and nowhere else. You need to move the children to the assigned "safe place" immediately.

Have the teachers grab the sign-in/out sheets as they leave the classroom so a head count can be taken to be sure everyone is accounted for. Then parents must sign out their children from

the teacher before leaving with them. This reduces confusion about whether a “missing” child is really missing.

Communication

An important part of any plan is the ability to communicate between the children’s rooms, the adults and 911. Create a chain of command by job title on who will receive and dispense communication on what the threat is and whether to evacuate or “shelter-in-place.” Consider creating a zone system with a designated volunteer in each pre-determined zone who will communicate what is happening and what plan to implement to that area. This person would also be responsible for the “all clear” sign for a lock down, and a head count of classes at the designated safety point for an evacuation.

Missing child

If a child is missing and cannot be found after a search of the immediate area and restrooms, the teacher needs to notify the director immediately. The director can notify other non-teaching staff to help begin a search of the whole property. If the parent is already aware of the situation, it is advisable for a staff member or teacher to wait with the parent in the office. The parent may know where the child might go to search for the parent or meet up with them. If the parent is not aware of their child missing, then they need to be notified as soon as practical. If the child cannot be located within a pre-determined time period, then the director needs to notify the senior minister and the police. Be sure to fill out an incident report.

Severe weather/Natural Disasters

For severe weather conditions appoint an adult to listen to the radio. Remind the volunteers and children of the steps they will take should it be required. Do this preparation with confidence and calm so a child feels that the adults are in control and know what to do to keep them safe.

It is a good idea to stage an emergency drill once a year to practice. This keeps people aware and tests your emergency plan. These are normal procedures in schools, thus children will accept practice sessions without question.

Lock-down

For an unsafe person, either inside or outside the facility create a plan for lock-down. If the situation is severe, lock yourselves into the space you are in, keep away from the windows, stay flat, and cover your heads. If you are outside, immediately drop to the ground, cover your heads and stay put. Children are probably familiar with the phrase “Drop–cover–hold”.

First Aid

Keep a well-stocked first-aid kit in the office. If your classrooms are far away, have simple kits in each classroom. Volunteers can restock the kits on a regular basis. Post or locate in each classroom procedures for “Safety, First Aid and Emergencies.”

Be sure to have on file a medical release for each child and review it prior to treating anyone for even the smallest cut. Inform the parent of the situation immediately or at the time of pickup if not a critical concern. Prepare ahead for emergencies, to ensure you and your volunteers respond according to the procedures and training you have provided.

Familiarize yourself with the members of your congregation who are health professionals or are First Aid / CPR certified.

Emergency Exits

Be sure to keep emergency exits uncluttered and accessible. It is common in churches to store chairs or tables in the hallways. Be sure nothing impedes the flow of traffic should an emergency arise.

Programming

In Sacred Safety, programming focuses on what happens inside the physical location. It embraces the comings and goings of people, the quality of the time spent together and how these elements create and support dynamic relationships. Keeping people safe is paramount. Consider the following areas.

Registration Forms

Do you have a registration form for each teen participating in your program? Keep a form on file for every teen who attends any of the youth and family programming. This form provides you with vital information to help keep each child safe. The cards are confidential and information, with one copy being filed in the office and a second shared only with individuals with a direct need to know like the Uniteen leader or sponsor.

Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures

Do you have a procedure to check teens in and out on Sunday morning? For activities other than class? This paperwork is necessary no matter how large or small your ministry is as the YFM program is responsible for each person under 18 years of age during regularly scheduled programs. You may elect for Uniteens and YOUers to sign themselves in and out

Be sure the form is dated and used for every activity or organized function involving pre-teens and teens. This helps with attendance and emergencies. This form is what the youth leader grabs in case of evacuation or to check if a youth is missing. Some forms include a space for the adult to write where he or she will be during the hour. (class, usher, service). Save the forms and store them in case there should ever be an allegation of abuse. Check with your insurance agent on how long they recommend.

Attendance Procedures—For Youth in Uniteens and YOU

1. Attendance sheets can be found in the classroom tubs before class.
2. When the classroom is open (classrooms open ONLY after the two staff adults have arrived), have one adult or teen at the door welcoming the teens and making sure they sign in—legibly and with their correct name.
3. At the end of class, have the teens sign out. If there is any question or concern, contact the director immediately.
4. Express your gratitude for the teen's presence.
5. Check the attendance sheet to see if everyone was signed out correctly and put the sheet in the classroom tub.
6. Return the tub to the youth ministry office.

It is important to keep a count of the youth since ministries are required to submit a yearly report that includes a detailed count of the youth by age groups. For an attendance record spreadsheet template, (See Appendix E, page 245)

Snacks

With more awareness of food allergies today, consider posting the “menu” of what you will be serving where the parents and teens can see it. Some churches even post the ingredients so the parents and youth can make informed decisions.

Open door policy

Inform parents that there is an “open door policy” in Teen Ministry but give clearly stated and posted guidelines on what that entails. Parents should always have access to their teen should a need arise.

Who is Responsible?

Who is responsible for the youth before, during and after the services?

Be very clear with everyone about when you have direct and indirect responsibility for youth on church property. The standard has been that for teens, the church's responsibility is between the time they sign in and then out of their class or event.

However, the church is responsible for youth safety anytime they are on church property including before and after service and could be liable for those attending non-church functions on church property. Check with your insurance agent. Risk increases when a youth becomes isolated from adults that know him. Educate parents, staff and volunteers that older youth need to stay in common areas. Classrooms can be off-limits as well as any other nook or cranny that

might provide a risk. If the church provides space for 12-Step groups and other outside groups that use the church facilities, be sure that the group's leader has a sheet of guidelines stating that the youth must be supervised at all times while on the property.

Are adult leaders and youth educated about room limits and off-limits?

Do you have medical releases and permission slips for pre-teens and teens involved with activities?

Medical releases

These are essential to have on file if your group is active and participates in activities off-site, or anytime a parent is not at the same site as the child. Medical releases are rarely needed for youth who just attend Sunday services.

The medical release provides pertinent medical information that may be needed in case of a medical emergency. Keep these forms confidential and in a secured area (such as a locked file cabinet). Inform adults who handle these forms that no information may be shared without permission from the director. Have everyone complete an updated form yearly and provide a way for changes in writing during the year. Keep the original in the director's files and make copies for traveling packs for sponsors to carry for events.

Event permission slips

Anytime a teen participates in a church activity that is outside of the regular Sunday service time, a permission slip is recommended. These are event specific where a medical release is not. The permission slip lets the adult in charge know that the parent/s have given their permission for the child/teen to attend. It may also indicate the pick-up arrangements so the parent confirms when they are picking the child up at the location, at the church, or other designated option. Include a space for the parent to inform the event sponsors of any special arrangements that may have been made such as permission for their child to ride with another family or with grandparents, etc.

To see samples of various sacred safety forms, Appendix F, page 249

Transportation/Travel

Insurance Questions

- Does your insurance cover the children, sponsors or parents when they travel to, during and from a church event? In town? Out of town?
- Will the church's insurance be primary or secondary to the individual's?
- If a church member/parent is driving their own car and something happens, who pays, the church or individual?

- If you rent a vehicle, do you need to take the extra insurance?
- Are seatbelts mandatory? Yes! Do not put more people in a vehicle than you have seatbelts and let everyone know that the vehicle does not move until all seatbelts are fastened and being worn.

Leadership Questions

- Do you check the driver's license and insurance cards of each adult driving or accompanying? (Best practice suggests that you take photocopies of both and keep in a secure file. Be sure you keep the information current.)
- Have the adults filled out paperwork for this event? (Adults need medical releases as well.)
- Will the 2-adult rule cover event travel in town? Out of town? (Two adults in each vehicle are recommended for trips longer than three hours or have vehicles travel in a caravan.)
- Are you providing traveling packs (see below) for the drivers or accompanying adults?
- Are you comfortable with stopping the vehicle until order/rules are restored?
- What will you do if a child doesn't have a medical release on file?

Traveling Packs

- Plastic, expandable closable envelopes
- Copy of parent permission for event
- Copy of medical release form for each individual (use regional form for sub-regional or regional events, international form for international events)
- Copy of photo release form—often on the medical release form
- Map and directions to each child/teen's home

Incident report forms

Have you a way to document any incident that may have resulted in physical injury or put a child at harm? Any time a child is physically injured, given first aid, or puts themselves or others in danger, an incident report needs to be filled out. This form, filled out at the time of the incident, records what happened, when, who was involved and who witnessed. A narrative is included describing the incident with as much detail as possible but without emotional conjecture. Retain the completed forms in a confidential file. See Incident/Accident Report Form in Appendix F, page 257.

Crisis care

What is your plan for handling a crisis issue? Create a plan for how you will deal with crisis issues and care. This includes areas such as suicide, sex, drugs, abuse, etc. Talk with your minister and/or pastoral team on how to support youth and family who are experiencing crisis. Determine

how you will handle situations that may arise in the classroom such as unplanned discussions, something shared in a heart talk, a tragedy in the home, community or nation. Planning ahead helps you to maintain a calm and quiet demeanor that helps those around you feel safe.

First Aid and Emergencies

Know the procedures for handling emergencies. These procedures should include who and how to contact:

- When a child is ill or has been hurt (generally lead teacher, youth director or floater).
- If a doctor, nurse or healer is needed.
- If Emergency Medical Systems (EMS) are needed.
- If parents are needed.
- Always remember that children are never left alone in a classroom. Be sure to inform the Director of Teen Ministry of anything unusual, i.e., an incident or injury which occurred in the classroom. Complete and turn in an incident report. Keep these in each classroom and in the office.

General guidelines for emergencies

1. Stay calm.
2. Examine the victim carefully.
3. If help is needed, send a third person to call for help.
4. Stop any bleeding. Use gloves. (Basic first-aid items should be stored in every classroom and a larger kit should be located somewhere in the youth area.) Any outlying classrooms should have their own first-aid kit
5. Do not move the victim unnecessarily.
6. Do not leave the victim alone.
7. Always inform the parents of any injury that a child has no matter how minor.
8. Complete Incident Report Form as soon as possible and turn into the director.

General guidelines for minor injuries

1. Clean minor cuts, bruises or injuries with soap and water.
Wear gloves anytime you are working with blood or broken skin.
2. Stop any bleeding by applying pressure.
3. Apply ice pack or cold cloths to relieve pain and reduce swelling.
4. A child who becomes ill should be isolated from the other children.
5. Never have non-credentialed medical personnel administer a minor's medication.
6. Complete an incident report and turn into the director.

First Aid Kit contents

- Band-aids (assorted sizes and flexibility)
- Hydrogen peroxide
- Rubbing alcohol
- Aspirin or non-aspirin pain relievers
- Throat lozenges
- Antibacterial ointment
- Antiseptic wipes or spray
- Bug bite cream or lotion
- Tweezers
- Disposable rubber gloves
- Disposable thermometers
- Gauze pads
- Roll gauze
- Medical tape
- Instant ice packs
- First Aid and Emergencies Guide Sheet

Natural options:

Tea tree oil is a natural antiseptic

Water at the first sign of a headache

Natural ingredient throat lozenges

Candle Safety Tips

Due to safety reasons, Unity Worldwide Ministries recommends the use of electric candles rather than open flame to be used in youth ministry classrooms.

Training

Important to this chapter is training on how volunteers and staff are to conduct themselves—their words, actions and reactions. Provide thorough training on all aspects of the policy/procedure manual that impact Teen Ministry at an initial training for new volunteers and staff, either individually or as a group.

The director or other agent chosen by the minister is also responsible for supervising volunteers and staff who serve in youth ministry to make sure all the procedures, principles and policies are followed. Supervising is providing on-going education and training and monitoring the effectiveness of the staff, guidelines and systems when incidents come up. It includes sitting in on classes to support and encourage volunteers and to model best practices that may help the volunteer be more successful.

Reporting

When an allegation of abuse is made within the church you must know what steps to take and when to take them. Reporting is that process. Reporting is governed by law and is determined by the state in which the church is located. (If your city is in a bi- or tri-state area do the research for each state. Allegations of abuse or neglect are to be reported in the state in which it occurred so if you receive information that one of your children has been abused in their home or neighborhood and they live in the other state you need to know what to do.) Be sure to update your information on a yearly basis.

Create a reporting procedure before you need it. Follow the recommendations above and go online to your state's child protection Web site. Check with your insurance agent for any packets, forms, and guidelines they have for reducing the risk in your church. Then check with your lawyer to see if your procedural plan is legally correct. The response steps below are from Chapter 10, "Responding to Allegations of Abuse" in *Reducing the Risk II Making Your Church Safe from Child Sexual Abuse*, Christian Ministry Resources. There you will find much more detailed explanations and guidance.

Remember that a church can no longer defend itself from liability by saying it didn't know what was required of them. The information is out there and you are responsible for knowing and following it. *All of the below information should be included as a part of a policy/procedural manual.*

What constitutes child abuse in your state?

Both federal and state laws establish definitions of child abuse and neglect, but each state defines what is and isn't covered by law in that state. Be sure you are clear about this as it is your first step to determining whether or not you report.

Who is legally responsible for reporting?

Learn who is considered a mandated reporter in your state. Most of the time professional groups such as teachers, social workers, health care workers, are mandated reporters. But in some states all individuals are considered responsible reporters. Find out if reporters can delegate reporting to a supervisor and whether they are still responsible if the supervisor does not make the report. Check to see whether your state lists clergy as mandatory reporters and whether privileged communication is covered. A line of reporting must be established within the church so all suspicions and concerns go to the director first and then to the minister.

Designate a church leader (position not person) to which allegations or suspicions can be brought and whose job it is to make sure state law and church policy is followed by having the mandated reporter contact the proper authorities. The senior minister has to be informed before such a report is made. The senior minister can then decide on whether to contact the designated church spokesperson and the board of trustees. Remember that only the people who have a need to know should be included in this line of reporting. Confidentiality is supreme.

The only exception is if the minister is the suspected perpetrator. Then a second person, perhaps the board president, would be the designated church authority and holder of information. All staff needs to be trained in the reporting procedure.

What is the time frame for reporting before one is in violation of the law?

Here again, this varies from state to state. If you have a reporting procedure in place, you will not waste time trying to figure out what to do.

Which agency do you call to report?

Every state lists their agencies and contact numbers. It may include an 800 number or a 24-hour hotline. If there is a number for anonymous reporting and you choose this option, be sure to have a second independent person (like the minister or youth director) with the reporter at the time the call is placed. This provides a witness to that fact the call was made and made in good faith.

Who do you contact if the child is in immediate danger?

If a child's life is endangered and you believe that releasing the child from your custody could be life-threatening, call 911. The police are trained to handle these situations and can keep the child safe while everything is worked out. Of course, if you see a child being abused you must step in at that moment, stop the abuse, remove the child from the perpetrator's presence and influence and call 911.

What is the penalty for failure to report?

This can include anything from a monetary fine to jail time.

Is the reporter protected under the "good faith" reporting practices?

Most volunteers are protected under some type of "good faith" reporting meaning that a report was made in good faith and not maliciously with intent to harm.

Responding to Allegations

Take all allegations seriously. If a child confides in you, realize that a child rarely lies about sexual abuse. Know the symptoms and signs of abuse and neglect for those instances when a child is unable to confide with a "safe" person. Do not take it upon yourself to determine if the allegation is true or not—a professional can better handle that part.

Provide a caring response and support.

Treating the allegation as serious goes a long way in insuring the child and family that you care for their well-being and will not tolerate any of this behavior in your church. Keep your energy calm and your heart open to help the child and family move through this difficult time. Do not express dismay, anger or disbelief. Keep your responses supportive and non-accusatory. Let the child/family know that the church has a procedure to follow and all the steps will be taken. With

your words and your manner express the church's ongoing support and care for them during this difficult time. Do not refute or deny any accusations or blame anyone especially the victim or victim's family. Reassure the family that the church takes allegations seriously, will take the steps to report it to the legal authorities and that the church seeks to support the child and family through this difficult time.

Document the allegation.

Fill out an incident report form. (See Incident/Accident Report Form in Appendix F, page 257) This is not an investigation but a gathering of information that you will need to report the allegation or suspicion to the proper authorities.

An incident report form includes this information:

- Name, age and gender of child
- Address, phone number of child
- Description of suspected abuse or neglect, date of event and location
- Current condition of the child
- Name of person who is witness to abuse; when information is shared
- Name of person who is reporting; date of report

Seek professional assistance.

Confidentiality is a must, so only those who have a need to know should be informed. These include your insurance company, the church attorney and the Executive Director of Ministry and Minister Services or the Chief Operating Officer of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Fulfill state reporting obligations.

If you have answered the questions about reporting in your state you know what you legally need to report, when to report and who does the reporting. Customize the checklist given in this manual (See Incident/Accident Report Form in Appendix F, page 257) to list all the steps for reporting in your state. Then make sure that the steps are taken.

Decide on options regarding the alleged perpetrator.

If the person works, volunteers or attends the ministry, you may choose to restrict their participation at the church denying them access to any youth program or location where youth are located. You may also deny them any church participation until the investigation is completed; or you may suspend employment until the allegations have been investigated. If the person works directly with children, they are denied any access to anyone under the age of 18 whether before, during or after church services or events.

Respond to congregational concerns.

Each case will be different so you will have to decide if something needs to be shared, then when and with whom. This includes speaking with the board, the staff or the congregation. What

doesn't change is a person's right to privacy and protection from defamation. This includes the victim and the alleged perpetrator. Please consult your church lawyer or other professional for the limits of what you can share and with whom.

Respond to media.

Designate a spokesperson to handle all the communication to the media. No one else should speak for the church or about the church or say anything about the allegation except the designated person. Have a prepared statement that has been reviewed by the church's attorney before releasing it.

It is very helpful to communicate the church's stance on child abuse and what steps have been taken to prevent and report. This is a strong document created while putting your manual together. It states three things: that the church will not tolerate abuse, molestation, sexual misconduct in any way, shape, or form; that the church has taken steps to prevent this behavior (and what those steps are); and that the church has a reporting procedure in place which will be followed and abided by in strict concordance with the law.

Once the report is made, then the church must be faithful in prayer—to hold to the truth that God is in the midst of all of this embracing both the victim and the perpetrator, their families, the church and the community in love, healing and the right outworking for all concerned. The church must be faithful in continued support to the child and family, while being available to the ongoing investigation.

Maintain strict confidentiality in all of the above communicating on a need-to-know basis.

Developing a Policy and Procedure Handbook

This handbook has procedures and policies for the care and safety of the youth ministry congregation, the facility, programming, and staffing. Just about anything that pertains to how, when, where, and why you do something on a regular basis should be in the handbook. Consider everything from job descriptions to how to take attendance to what to do in case of an emergency. The church's policy and procedures on suspected child abuse and neglect may also be included.

This handbook is a compilation of all the "rules and regulations" that create order and oversee safety in the ministry. Depending on the size of your ministry, this may be just for Teen Ministry or it may encompass the whole ministry with the youth piece being part of it. The handbook is very helpful in educating new workers to the church culture as to what systems are in place to make sure the department or church runs smoothly and within the parameters of legal liability.

For the parts of the handbook concerning the safety and well-being of children and teens, expect the person being trained to read and then sign off that they have read and understand the material. Anything not understood is a great place to start training.

Essentials

- What forms are necessary
- How to manage the structural part of Sunday morning
- Attendance and bathroom procedures
- Where to find the first aid kits, get hold of parents
- How and when to notify the director when you can't be there Sunday
- Care of facility and equipment
- Spiritual Code of Ethics
- What needs to be reported to the director (or minister)–suspected child abuse, an incident or injury, etc.
- What are the reporting procedures
- What to do in case of evacuation, lock-down, staff redirection or reprimand

Procedures

A procedure is a course of action taken to secure a certain outcome. It usually progresses in logical, orderly steps. Following procedure insures that nothing “drops through the cracks” and makes it easier to function on a daily basis. Procedures can be rewritten anytime to make the system more effective and efficient. It is immensely helpful anytime a procedure or policy is made, to write it down and add it to the handbook immediately so that staff and volunteers can expect ongoing consistency.

Writing Procedures

Each youth program will want to develop policies and procedures specific to their situation. To illustrate this, consider the Classroom Attendance Procedure at the end of the chapter. The following considerations direct the provisions of the procedure.

- We are responsible for the well-being of any child or teen from the time they have signed into the class/event/activity until the time that an authorized adult has signed them out or, in the case of a teen, they have signed themselves out.
- Thus attendance is mandatory for every youth class, event or activity whether on or off-grounds. Attendance sheets are available in the YFM office and must be returned after the class/event/activity. These sheets will be kept for a minimum of 15 years with the YFM director being responsible of storing and keeping track of storage.
- Children from infants through 5th grade are signed in and out by an authorized adult. Teens may sign themselves in and out after their parent(s) or other authorized adult is notified of the attendance policy. Siblings may not sign for their younger brothers or sisters without a parent's permission and the director's approval.

Policies

The policy part of the handbook is composed of principles and policies. Principles are guides to behavior/conduct and are general in nature. Principles direct our decision-making when we need to assess a situation. Though broadly stated, they can be applied to specific circumstances. Policies are specific actions taken for specific situations creating binding agreements and strict accountability.

Writing Sacred Safety Policies

In writing Sacred Safety principles and policies, the authors of *Reducing the Risk II* propose three risk factors to consider in creating principles that assess risk levels: isolation, accountability, and power and control.

- Isolation takes into consideration the number of people around, the time and location of the activity and the physical layout of the location.
- Accountability is determined by whether the activity has transparency—in other words how many people know about the activity and its particulars; how many people are involved including other adults; and the personal integrity of the adults involved.
- Power and control is concerned with the difference between age, size, and authority. Individuals can use any or all of these to exert control over someone younger, smaller, and voiceless.

Using these three risk factors you can assess the risk level involved in different situations and create principles that will guide you in making decisions for lowering the risk of harm, danger or injury to a child or teen.

For example: When two or more screened and trained adults are supervising a class, event, or activity the risk significantly decreases. Two adults not only lower the risk factor but also provide a better situation for ministry to happen. However, if there is only one adult in your children's room, the classrooms are small and open out to a general area where people are walking by and the doors are open or have a window in them, then the risk decreases because the isolation and accountability decrease. In contrast, if the room is away from a general area and the door has to be kept closed and there is only one adult, the risk dramatically increases.

A must in reducing risk is the general principle that the greater the risk— isolation, power and control, accountability— the more supervision needed. This is how the two-adult rule benefits the church. (Read Chapter 8 in *Reducing the Risk II* for more detailed information on principles and policies.)

Procedures when concern is about a child/teen molesting or harming another child:

- Never let the child/teen be alone with other children or adults.
- When the child is on site, have a responsible adult shadow him/her.
- Have a supportive, attentive adult become a buddy and keep an eye on the child the minute

the child arrives on site until child leaves.

- Befriend the mother/father and support the parent; become a listening friend.
- If the parent would disclose the problem, then coach someone to follow/stay and protect child.
- Go to teachers and instruct them that the child has a problem with boundary issues so child is not to be left alone or go to the bathroom with a buddy.

Spiritual Code of Ethics

A spiritual code of ethics describes what behavior is acceptable and what is not when a person is working with children and teens in the church. This code is based on the beliefs and principles of right conduct with God and the law. Plan to read this together, discuss it and then have each individual sign in agreement. Secure these in their personnel file.

As expressions of God, we remember that in all actions, we come from a place of respect—beginning in prayer and holding all situations and involved people in God’s love and grace. In taking action, we come from a place of integrity—that our words and beliefs hold meaning and power to safe keep our spiritual home, be it the physical/emotional body or church facility.

This chapter may seem overwhelming but as adults we are powerful models for a child’s image of and relationship with God. Because of this sacred responsibility we follow the words of Jesus when he said, “Let the children come to me and do not hinder them, for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs.” We take the steps to promote and protect a healthy environment to aid in the development of our young people’s mental/emotional/spiritual and physical growth.

In Case Of Emergency

If your class has to evacuate the building or move into lock-down, take the attendance sheet with you to double-check that you have everyone accounted for.

Event or Outing Procedures

An event or outing is transparent; meaning that the church, senior minister, youth ministry director and parents know the “who, what, where, how and why” of the event. (See Appendix G, page 259 for event-related forms.)

- Church and senior minister approve of the event.
- Appropriate event paperwork has been filled out and on file.
- Event is staffed by known adults and led by adults screened and approved.
- Church insurance covers the type of event. (Be sure to check whether events with a high level of risk are covered such as river rafting, skateboarding, trips out of country, etc.)
- Medical releases and permission slips are on file or provided for every minor participant.
- Drivers have current licenses and insurance information on file with church.
- No adult shares a bed with a child or teen, even their own. Sleeping arrangements are designed for the lowest level of risk.

Sponsors code of ethics is gone over with the leadership and supporting adults.

Sharing Information with Ministry Leaders

Legally we are to promptly report to and/or share information with ministry leadership. At an event, what this means is that the Event Coordinator—(whom the parent has given permission to oversee the health & wellbeing of the minor) has the right to be aware of an issue to get proper support and ensure safety of the minor and others.

The Event Coordinator is assuming responsibility for the supervision and/or ongoing support of a minor—and should expect to be informed of need-to-know information that is not legally required to be reported to the state or tribal authorities and/or the parent/guardian.

What that means for Leaders & Sponsors

Ministry staff must weigh a minor's reasonable Expectation of privacy, in light of their voiced and unvoiced support needs, along with legal and ethical obligations to report &/or share need-to-know information with ministry staff (including volunteer Youth Ministry staff) assuming responsibility for the minor's well-being, supervision or ongoing support.

Code of Ethics and Agreements

Unity Worldwide Ministries Spiritual Educator's Code of Ethics

1. I, a Unity Spiritual Educator of children and/or teens, dedicate myself to the principles of Truth as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ, and interpreted by Unity School of Christianity and Association of Unity Churches.
2. I daily dedicate myself to listen to the indwelling Christ for inspiration to guide, govern, and prosper me.
3. I will emphasize the importance of prayer in every person's life, and especially, I will use prayer to make my life an example of living Truth.
4. I serve in this position in order to support the overall vision, mission, and goals of this church and our spiritual family.
5. I will give my minister my full support and cooperation as the spiritual leader of our church.
6. I will, under Divine Guidance and the best of my understanding and ability, endeavor to teach classes of a quality that will inspire our children and/or teens to live in Truth.
7. I will teach Unity principles and Living Curriculum. In this, I will avoid teaching any subjects which may be deemed incompatible with Unity Principles. I will prepare my lessons well, knowing that the students deserve excellence. My lessons will be presented with integrity in a practical, beautiful and inspiring manner.
8. I will always be mindful of the specific needs for the developmental level of those I am teaching. I will create an experience that meets individual needs and learning styles.
9. I dedicate myself to creating a loving environment in which all children and teens may unfold their Divine Potential.
10. I will be above reproach in my behavior with children, teens and other spiritual educators.
Specifically:
 - I will not tell jokes or speak words which contain sexual innuendoes.
 - I will not prolong hugs, or return/initiate a kiss.
 - I will not touch anyone in a sexual manner, specifically on any area covered by a bathing suit.
 - I will not be alone with children and teens in any compromising location.
 - I will not allow any child or teen to touch me in a way which makes me uncomfortable.
11. I will come from integrity when I am in disagreement with the direction our church is taking, following the proper procedures and going through proper channels to voice these concerns. I choose to deal with conflict constructively, thus strengthening and building our spiritual community, rather than in a way that could be destructive to the life of our church.
12. I will avoid innuendoes, rumors, blame, and putdowns. I focus my energy on the issue, not the personalities, always open to the expression of unconditional love.

Adult NGU / Uniteen Leader / YOU Sponsor Code of Ethics

By choosing to attend this event, I agree to do my part to help create a fulfilling spiritual experience for all. I understand my choices not only affect my own experience, but others' in the group as well. My commitment is to support an environment that creates opportunities for spiritual self-discovery, and maintains physical & emotional safety for all.

I understand that certain behaviors which may be appropriate elsewhere are not appropriate during this event. In addition to Regional policies and applicable laws, I willingly agree to:

- 1. Attend & participate at all scheduled activities and remain at the event for the entire weekend, unless otherwise authorized by event leaders. I also agree to arrive on time for the event and for all scheduled activities.**
2. Work in harmony with event leaders. Should I disagree with their plans, I will address the issue directly with them. I will promptly report any heart agreement violation to event leaders and will discuss with the Regional Consultant or event leader any concerns about a fellow adult's decision or conduct.
3. Respect a teen's expectation of **confidentiality** when sharing, **but** I will not take on the responsibility of keeping a secret that could cause harm to the teen or someone else. I will make sure that teens understand my obligation to report any threat of physical harm to oneself or others. I will discuss any suspicion of abuse or suicidal tendencies immediately with the Regional Consultant or event leader.
4. Be above reproach in my behaviors with teens and other adult leaders. I will maintain appropriate physical boundaries and avoid compromising situations. Specifically I will:
 - not tell jokes or speak words which contain sexual innuendoes, nor discuss with youth about my activity or experiences.
 - not prolong hugs, return a kiss or pull youth close to my body. I will not touch anyone on the genitals, breasts or buttocks (which includes not allowing a teen to sit on my lap.)
 - not pursue a romantic or intimate relationship with a youth or adult, and remember others may not interpret my intentions accurately. I will honor personal boundaries of others.
5. Not use, possess, or participate under the influence of, alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs or other restricted substances. I understand any such use is neither appropriate nor welcome in this group setting. If needed, I can bring whatever is necessary and within agreements (e.g., gum or candy) to aid in abstaining from the unwanted substance.
6. To stay within designated boundaries at all times, remain in assigned groups and housing, not entering housing of the opposite sex and staying in my room at lights out and honoring others' needs for sleep.
7. To demonstrate honest, responsible, trustworthy behavior by extending courtesy to the facility staff and to be a good steward of the facilities and grounds
8. Not be a part of character assassinations, put-downs or judgments of other people. I will use appropriate language and look for ways to create a special experience for myself and others.

9. Be centered during group meditation & prayers; remain silent and respectful to the experience.
10. Not have in my possession a CD player, mp3 player or radio at any scheduled event. These may be used only at free time or at bedtime with headphones so long as it does not disturb anyone else. I will leave cell phones & beepers OFF and stored in the car. (Unless prior arrangements have been made with the Regional Consultant or event leader.)
11. I understand I am here to facilitate the youths' experience, not to be one of them, serve as their parent or "fix" anyone. Nor will I use the youth as my support group, but seek out the chaplain or an event leader if I am in need of personal support.
12. I agree that I am here to create a sacred and safe space for the maximum benefit of the youth from the time of their arrival at church to travel to the event until the return arrival and parent pick up of their youth.

Sample Uniteen Leader Agreements for an event

1. I will prepare myself for classes and events through prayerful meditation and study.
2. I understand that I am there to facilitate the Uniteens' experience. I am not there to be one of them, serve as a parent or 'fix' anyone. Nor will I use Uniteens as my support group. I will seek out my minister or peers for advice and counseling on personal matters.
3. I will adhere to all church policies and state laws. I will work in harmony with my minister, youth and family ministry director, regional consultant and fellow Uniteen leaders. Should I disagree with their plans, decisions or leadership style, I will address the issue directly with them.
4. I will not preach my own personal value system. I will stick to teaching Unity Truth principles and help Uniteens understand their own beliefs. I will be honest with students, and let them know that my beliefs come from my own spiritual awareness. I will make sure they understand I am not telling them what to think. I will encourage Uniteens to discuss why they feel as they do.
5. I will respect the parents' authority in matters relating to their child. I will support both Uniteens and their parents by not taking sides about problems they may be having. I will support efforts of everyone in the group to discover how they can apply Truth principles to situations that challenge them, but I will not try to solve their problems for them.
6. I will not become a Uniteen's private counselor, or counsel parents about their Uniteen, even if I am professionally trained. This does not mean I will avoid being there for them when they need to talk. If I am asked to counsel a Uniteen, I will not do so in a compromising location, nor without the knowledge and consent of their parent(s) and minister.
7. I will respect a Uniteen's expectation of confidentiality when sharing, but I will not take on the responsibility of keeping a secret that should be shared with the minister or a child's parent. I will make sure Uniteens understand my obligation to **report to the director or minister any threat of physical harm to oneself or others.** If I suspect abuse or suicidal tendencies, or am

concerned about a Uniteen's behavioral choices (e.g., use of controlled substances), I will discuss such matters FIRST with the director or minister, who will decide what action is necessary.

8. I will be above reproach in my behaviors with Uniteens and other leaders both in and out of the classroom. I will maintain appropriate physical boundaries and avoid compromising situations. Specifically, I will:
 - Not tell jokes or speak words which contain sexual innuendoes
 - Not prolong hugs, return a kiss or pull children close to my body. I will use words, instead of touch, to show I care
 - Not touch anyone on the genitals, breasts or buttocks (which includes not allowing a Uniteen to sit on your lap). Neutral areas include the shoulders, back and top of the head.
 - Remember that others do not always interpret my intentions accurately. Teens already may have experienced trauma in this area, or may confuse adult leaders as romantic interests.
 - Not use alcohol or drugs around Uniteens or at any events.
9. When Uniteens ask about sex, I will answer their question directly and encourage them to talk with their parents. Before teaching a class on sexual issues, I will clear the subject matter with our youth and family ministry director, and have parents sign a permission slip. I will not talk about any of my personal sexual experiences.
10. I will use my role as a leader to encourage and support all participants. I will not engage in put-downs or any physical, mental or emotional harassment of participants.

Sample YOU Sponsor Agreements for an Event

The following agreements apply during the event:

Process Support: I agree to fully engage and support others in sharing their perspectives.

Harmony: I will work in harmony with event staff, attendees and sponsoring ministries. Should I disagree with their plans, decisions or leadership style, I will address the issue directly with them.

Attendance: Unless otherwise authorized by the event coordinator, I will arrive during the designated check-in time, stay through event closing, and participate in all scheduled activities. If I am unable to fulfill my event responsibilities, I will notify event staff of my situation and make sure my responsibilities will be covered by others.

Standards: I will adhere to all event agreements and state laws. I will promptly report any agreement violation or medical situation to event leaders, and will discuss with the event coordinator any concerns about an attendee's conduct.

Age-Appropriate Behavior: I agree to participate as an event sponsor, and interact appropriately with YOUers and adults. I will honor risk-management agreements, and be above reproach in my behaviors with YOUers and others. I will maintain appropriate physical boundaries and avoid compromising situations. During the event activities, I will:

- not tell offensive jokes, use sexual innuendoes, or share about my sexual histories
- not engage in sexual activity; unwanted physical contact; public displays of affection which cause others present to feel uncomfortable; or touch another's genitals, breasts or buttocks
- not possess, use or attend under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs; smoking is not allowed at IYOU events
- seek out a chaplain or peer for advice and counseling on personal matters, rather than YOUers

Reporting: I recognize my responsibility as an adult to report any concern or circumstance that endangers the well-being of any participant or others. I am to share such concern with designated event staff, as well as appropriate state agency (if abuse or neglect) and sponsoring ministry.

If I should become aware of sensitive information or potential support needs related to a YOUers life challenges or behavioral choices outside of YOU (e.g., drug or sexual behaviors) which are potentially harmful and concern me, I will discuss such matters with the event coordinator, the youth's sponsor or his/her minister to clarify follow-up steps and support needs.

q I have read, understand and agree to comply with these agreements. I understand that if I am in violation of a risk management agreement, I will be required to leave the event. I will contact the event coordinator if I am unclear about an agreement or its application to a situation. I fulfill the requirements of the "Event Sponsor Agreement" and support YOUer's in upholding "Group Agreements for a YOUer."

(Insert Unity Ministry Name) **Children and Teen Ministry Social Media Policy**

The bullets below provide guidelines for professional Youth Ministry staff and adult volunteers for participation on social media sites and internet communication. This policy may be updated and modified at any time.

Unity Ministry staff and volunteers:

- Shall appropriately communicate with the youth of *Unity Ministry* via general instant messenger programs or email and will limit that contact to Unity youth ministry-related business.
- Agree to refrain from any proactive one-on-one communications with *Unity Ministry* youth under 18 on social networking sites. They may accept invitations to profiles, groups, and events, but may not initiate any type of private communication with the youth. Responses to minor-initiated communications should only be accepted on professional public social media sites and not personal pages. Communications should be limited to those that are Unity youth ministry-related. Private one-on-one communications are discouraged at all times.

- Must recognize that they are role models for the youth of *Unity Ministry* at all times, and should limit their public profile to information, comments, photos, etc. that are appropriate should a youth or parent view them.
- Agree to be respectful of *Unity Ministry*, its youth and adult leaders, congregants and its policies in all postings in profiles, blogs and other mediums of Internet communications.
- Agree that blogs, social media sites and other mediums of internet communication are not the place to disparage individuals or ministries.
- Agree not to use a social networking profile, group page, blog, or other Internet medium to discuss behavior that is contrary to the *Unity Ministry* Youth Ministry Code of Conduct, including, but not limited to, alcohol or drug use, sexual behavior, delinquent behavior, etc.
- Understand that any pictures of youth posted on the *Unity Ministry* website, Facebook page, blog, or other types of social media must have written permission from the parent (if minor under 18) or the youth (if 18 or older).
- Understand that any pictures of youth posted on the *Unity Ministry* website, blog, or social media should not be associated with names without the written permission from the parent (if minor under 18) or the youth (if 18 or older).
- Understand that private, personal pictures of youth other than family members, are prohibited to be posted on personal, individual social media platforms (Facebook, websites, blogs, etc.) without written permission from the parent (if minor under 18) or the youth (if 18 or older).
- Agree that any site directed toward youth under the age of 18 should be designed to limit access to authorized members and leaders of such sites, and should take steps to ensure that unauthorized users will not have access to the site (by use of password protection or similar methods.)
- Agree to be responsible for what is written or posted—electronic communication with youth and adults should always be “TAPed”: **Transparent**—maintain openness, visibility and accountability; **Accessible**—consider all electronic communication to be a matter of record; **Professional**—use correct grammar and tone, choose appropriate subject matter and choose words that are courteous.
- Shall refrain from posting any comment or picture involving an employee, volunteer or congregant of *Unity Ministry* without their expressed consent.
- Agree that organizational policies that regulate off-duty conduct apply to social media activity including, but not limited to, policies related to illegal harassment, code of conduct, nondiscrimination, and protecting confidential and/or proprietary information.

My signature below indicates agreement to follow the Social Media policy. Violation of this policy may result in termination of staff or volunteer position.

Section Ten: Creating a Vision and Mission Statement

Section Ten, *Creating a Vision/Mission Statement*, gives step-by-step instructions for creating a vision and mission statement for your youth program.

Creating a Vision Statement for your Youth and Family Ministry

“You must hold in consciousness a faithful belief that God is All-good, and the Good is awaiting our thoughts to shape God-substance into the resources we desire. This means that your vision must not be limited by your consciousness. It needs a sense of grandness.”

—Rev. Diane Venzera, Great Lakes Children’s Consultant

What is a vision statement?

A vision statement is the dream of the ministry, what it intends to become, the destination, what the ministry is about. An inspiring vision gives hope and meaning.

A youth ministry vision or a teen ministry vision states what the program is being called to accomplish—how it will best serve the children, youth and teens. It is God’s vision for this specific program of things we cannot do on our own.

Why create one?

The Youth and Family Ministry vision statement creates alignment within the entire ministry. Thus everyone—staff, congregants and volunteers are working toward the same desired future. This statement can be used daily in decision-making as it focuses on what is wanted long term for the program.

What does it look like?

An effective vision statement includes the significant purpose of the program as it looks toward the future. It is large enough to need God’s presence and power to accomplish it. Yet, “a vision statement should be no longer than one sentence long. It should be easily understood and it should be easy to remember.” —Laurie Beth Jones, *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and for Life*

Who creates it?

For a vision to be effective, it must be created by individuals who are passionate about the program—those who want more for the people that the program is intended to serve. In the case of Youth and Family Ministry, include youth, parents, volunteers, staff and others from the congregation who hold a larger vision of what the ministry can offer their youth.

How is it created?

Bring together those who want to dream big about the future of the Youth and Family Ministry program. Avoid limiting this to those currently involved in the program. Your current youth group participants may give the greatest ideas that help meet the needs of today's youth.

- Begin with prayer.
- Ask key questions and look for guidance.
- Summarize the key desires into a vision statement.
- Submit statement to the board for approval.
- Affirm the vision and communicate it often.

The Process

Before the meeting, write the following "Creation Statement Outline" on a large sheet of easel paper.

Through our _____ we commit to _____ in order to create _____.

"Vision is about seeing clearly what you desire to manifest. You are all visionaries because you show up for children either physically, emotionally or spiritually. You hold a vision that they might experience a kinder, safer world by the conscious use of spiritual principles and practices."

—Rev. Kathryn Kellogg, Children's Ministry, UWM

Assemble a vision team

Invite a vision team of between 6-10 people. Consider asking for a commitment to participate for one year. Initially, meetings may be monthly. Once the vision and mission are in place quarterly meetings may be sufficient. Remember that some meetings may be by email or teleconference calls. By maintaining the visioning team to do ongoing assessment, your vision continues to grow as action is taken. Always let people know that they are important to the process. Acknowledge them, send thank-you notes, or just say thank you and re-invite them to the next meeting. When someone leaves the team, thank them and let them go, then invite someone else into the space. This creates new birth and energy.

Organize the meetings

Begin with prayer to set the intention. Recognize that all ideas are from God. Be open to Spirit's presence in the process.

List key words that seem to relate to who the group is, why people are there, and the direction in which they wish to focus. (Sample words: oneness, harmony, connection, flow, unity, divine purpose, prayer, gratitude, love, joy)

Explore specific questions. This may be done individually first or as a whole group. Briefly write on chart paper the comments from everyone. It may take more than one session to explore all the questions.

- What is your greatest desire for your Youth and Family Ministry program?
- What would you like those outside the ministry to know about your program?
- What does our program offer that can't be found elsewhere? What would we like it to offer?
- What parts of our program are working well? What do we want to keep? What parts are ready to be released or transformed?
- What benefits will the children, youth, teens and families receive by participating in our program?
- Where do you want the Youth and Family Ministry to be in five years, ten years?

Once the questions have been adequately explored, use the Creation Statement Outline (from “The Process” on previous page) to reduce the words to the clearest useful vision statement. Fill in the key words, provided by participants, to finish the phases. Refine the statement after all have contributed. Check to see that it aligns with the ministry’s vision statement.

As a covenant to the commitment, ask all participants to sign the statement as their agreement.

Implement the vision

Submit the Youth and Family Ministry vision statement to the minister and/or board for approval.

Use the vision statement.

- Post the statement. Affirm it together aloud at the beginning of each youth department meeting. It may also be helpful to reread the statement when an impasse occurs within the group process.
- Always ask the question “Does this action, program or activity support the vision?” before embarking on a new project, program, etc. Vision directs your decision making.
- Consider designing a flyer for your Youth and Family Ministry program. This is a great place to include your vision, mission and goals.

Reassess the vision and mission regularly.

Once the vision and mission statements are developed set up regular (quarterly) meetings to review the ministry: are we on target, where do we see new opportunities?

Creating a Mission Statement for Your Youth and Family Ministry and/or Teen Ministry Programming

What is a mission statement?

A mission statement answers the questions “What are we about? Why do we exist?” It is a simple statement of purpose, one clear and precise sentence, that reflects core values and how we are going to make the vision happen.

A mission statement does not attempt to define what the program will look like (such as when or where it meets). It is not a vision of weeknight classes, regular outings, or other things which may change in time. The mission statement will not change until there is a reassessment of the ministry’s needs and the program’s purpose.

A good mission statement:

- Is concise
- Offers direction, but not undue limitation
- Is one that all members of the group can commit to, even if they do not all agree on how best to achieve that mission

Why do we need a mission statement?

Without a clear understanding of its mission, your program may lose direction and you will have no idea if it’s serving its intended purpose.

Teen programs lend themselves to an incredible diversity of activities. After all, if your group is trying to understand God, you can bring their awareness to God anywhere that God exists: in a garden, at the zoo, on a boat, in each other. If your mission includes creating a loving, supportive environment for fellowship and fun, then going bowling or ice skating together is also a valid part of that experience.

So how do you know whether the classes and activities you offer youth and teens are in line with the program’s objectives? First, you need to know what those objectives are. And second, whether your group is playing cards together, picking flowers, meditating or debating current events, you should be able to answer this question:

“How is this class/lesson/activity offering an age-appropriate opportunity that supports our mission?”

Creating a Mission Statement with a Small Group

1. Ask everyone to individually pick out 10 verbs from the list on page 268, then choose three of those verbs and write them down. Have each person say their words. Every time the

same verb is used, make a note of the number of times it was chosen. Write down the most commonly used verbs and have the group choose three verbs from the new list.

2. Write your core value(s). Create a consensus from the teams' core values. What do you stand for? (Examples: joy, service, justice, family, creativity, freedom, equality, faith, excellence)
3. Write the people or groups that you would like to impact in a positive way. Choose the one that excites you the most. Once again take the individual answers and create a consensus for the team. Whom or what are you here to help? (Examples: environment, education, media, health care, elderly, children, the poor, the homeless, energy, performing arts, animals, ministries, spirituality, literacy, civil rights)
4. Write out the mission statement. This model may assist you.

Our mission is to _____, _____,
and _____ (Fill in the three verbs) (for or with)
_____ (Fill in your core value or values) (for)
_____. (Fill in the group/cause that most moves or excites you)

Sample Mission Statements

We are dedicated to creating a nurturing, supportive, and loving environment that will empower our children to discover their spirituality and unfold their divine potential.

—Youth Education, Unity Ministry of the Valley, Vacaville, CA

We envision a spiritually energizing, living program, in a safe, loving environment that inspires children to discover and express their gifts and a sense of oneness with God, each other, our ministry community and our world.

—Youth & Family Ministry, Unity Church of Fort Worth, TX

Our purpose is to be an empowering force for spiritual evolution, creating conscious lives and an awakened world. —Unity Church of Christianity, Houston, TX (Youth and Family Ministry likes the ministry's statement and has also adopted it as their own.)

Creating Goals

After determining the vision and mission statements, set goals to clarify and define how the vision and mission will be fulfilled over a specific time, such as the next three years. Goals are specific and the results can be recognized. Goals clarify the vision as they define what steps are to be taken toward the vision over a period of time. The vision team will want to revisit the vision, mission and goals with the director yearly to see how the program has progressed in fulfilling its vision and goals.

Sample Goals

Unity of Fort Worth Youth & Family Ministry Education Goals

- Provide meaningful experiences for our children to discover and express their individual gifts and explore their oneness with God, with each other, with our ministry community, and with our world.
- Encourage discussion of Unity Principles and how they can work for our good and the good of all.
- Raise the awareness of our ministry community to more fully recognize and celebrate the unfolding Christ Spirit in each of our children.
- Provide opportunities and activities that bring the youth and the general ministry community together
- Provide the tools for our children to use in their daily lives to discover, express and explore their individual good.
 - Prayer/meditation
 - Bible study
 - An introduction to “wisdom” as passed through the ages by those sages who have been enlightened

Section Eleven: Resources

Section Eleven, *Resources*, contains resources especially appropriate for teen ministry leaders.

Teen Ministry Program Assessment

This is a comprehensive assessment tool to discover the areas of excellence in your teen programming as well as the opportunities for growth. This assessment tool will help you to celebrate your successes and find new ways to enhance your programming by giving you a snapshot of your current program's expression. To use this tool:

1. Look over the entire assessment tool on the following pages.
2. Create a team to oversee the assessment process. The team should include Youth and Family Ministry Director and/or minister, staff, parents, Youth and Family Ministry volunteers, a board representative, and a YOUer.
3. Complete an honest and in-depth assessment of where the program stands.
4. The team reports its findings to the ministry leadership.
5. Take the required action steps and identify additional steps for future action in your Youth and Family Ministry.

This assessment is divided into seven modules. To complete it, answer the following questions, make note of required action steps (if any) and report to church leadership to both inform them and to seek approval for needed actions.

Glossary of terms used in this assessment

Uniteens: ministry for middle-school youth, usually 11–13 years of age

YFM: Youth and Family Ministry (refers to the entire program)

YOU: Youth of Unity, a ministry for high school ages, usually 14–18.

Module #1—Welcoming

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is the teen information easy to find on the church's website?			
Are there easy-to-read signs clearly marking the church entrance and teen ministry areas?			
Is the teen ministry area easy to find in the church?			
Are ushers and greeters informed and helpful in directing families to the teen area?			
Are printed materials containing information about teen ministry easily accessible?			
Are the youth group rooms labeled?			
Are classrooms in reasonably close proximity to the sanctuary?			

Module #2—Experiencing the Presence

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is there a prayer time for Uniteen Leaders and YOU Sponsors before each church service?			
Are there prayer request forms available?			
Is a prayer chaplain available?			
Is there a time of prayer/meditation in each class?			
Are there heart-centered practices used to open the heart? (i.e. HeartMath®, Loving Kindness Meditation, etc.)			
Do you use "Oneness language" when talking about God that describes "God within" rather than "God out there?"			
Are different methods of prayer utilized, such as movement, dance, mandala, art, creative expression?			
Is music incorporated in the lesson (joy songs, meditation music, etc.)?			

Module #3—Programming

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is there a clear vision statement for the teen ministry that is aligned with the center's overall vision?			
Is there a clear mission statement for the teen ministry?			
Are regular evaluations of our YFM ministry goals, objectives and action plans done?			

Is the teen program funded appropriately for the organization's mission?			
Does teen ministry have a budget?			
Is the budget reviewed by the board of trustees and minister?			
Are the teen activities scheduled on the church calendar?			
Does the YFM Director and Uniteen Leader meet regularly?			
Does the YFM Director and YOU Sponsor meet regularly?			
Does the Uniteen Leader communicate regularly to parents and the congregation?			
Does the YOU Sponsor communicate regularly to parents and the congregation?			

Module #3—Programming—Multigenerational Activities

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are programs in place that encourage and support interaction of congregants of all ages?			
Are there recurring multigenerational activities that happen with intention?			
Are there times for multigenerational play (i.e.: picnics, plays, family activities and outings?)			

Module #3—Programming—Planning and Support

Item	Yes	No	Required Action
Do you have a copy of the Youth and Family Ministry Guide? (See www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org or call 816.524.7414 and ask for the ordering department)			Order for your ministry #6010 (\$36.95)
Do you know where to find past issues of Education Links?			Go to www.unity.org/el
Are you signed up to receive the online bi-weekly update, The Path and Unity Leaders Journal? www.unity.org/enews			Sign up for this free resource
Do you know the names and contact information for your Regional Education Consultants and your International Youth Coordinators?			Find out at www.unity.org/rec
Have you visited the Youth and Family web pages on Unity Worldwide Ministries' site?			Visit www.unity.org/yfm

Module #3—Programming—Sunday morning teen ministry

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are youth group rooms ready, with teen leaders prepared to welcome students 15 minutes before service time?			
Is there a pre-session activity?			
Are 15 minutes before service time?			
Have they prepared a lesson ahead of time?			
Is there a planned opening for each session?			
Does the opening include time for the youth to connect?			
Are heart agreements used?			
Are the heart agreements current?			
Did the youth help create the heart agreements?			
Have the youth and teachers signed the heart agreements?			
Do teachers know where to locate needed supplies?			
Are the supplies organized and easy to find?			
Are old supplies recycled or discarded?			
Are teens actively engaged in their classes?			
Are teens invited to lead portions of the lesson?			
Do teen leaders check to determine if the youth understand the lesson and its practical life application?			

Module #4—Curriculum

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is the Living Curriculum philosophy being used? See www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/living-curriculum-education-philosophy			
Have you chosen a curriculum, or curricula, that reflect your church's mission and vision?			
Does each curriculum utilize multiple intelligences? See 217.			
Is each curriculum used age-appropriate?			
Does it engage both boys and girls?			
Does it demonstrate Unity principles?			
Does it honor family diversity?			
Is the curriculum teacher-friendly?			
Does it utilize supplies that are easily acquired and within the budget?			
Do you have special holiday lessons and activities?			

Module #5—Staffing/Volunteers

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is there a list describing all YFM volunteer ministry positions available?			
Are the positions regularly evaluated and updated?			
Do volunteer job descriptions include what is expected of the volunteer and how long they will serve in that position?			
Are people given an accurate picture of time and effort necessary to fulfill the requirements of the position they are being recruited for?			
Do YFM volunteers understand how their work contributes to the mission of the church?			
Is there sufficient staff? Are all the positions filled?			
Are personal invitations extended to prospective YFM volunteers?			
Is an application process used and followed consistently?			
Are references checked and documented?			
Are background checks run on all volunteers and staff working with children and updated every 2-3 years?			
Is there an established procedure for a conducting one-on-one interview with potential volunteers?			
Is a volunteer orientation and training program in place?			
Is sacred safety training available for YFM volunteers? See www.unityworldwideministries.org/sacred-safety-background-checks-and-resources			
Do volunteers understand how your church defines and practices confidentiality and privacy?			
Do YFM volunteers have an opportunity to “try out” a position before making a commitment to serve?			
Is there a current commitment statement for each team member on file?			
Is there a performance review process in place for volunteers?			
Are complaints or concerns about volunteers’ behavior handled immediately?			
Are there written procedures for terminating volunteers?			
Are complaints or concerns about youth behavior handled immediately?			

Module #5—Staffing/Volunteers—Training/Meetings/Development

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are meetings/trainings held on a regular basis?			
Are meetings organized? Engaging? Well-attended?			
Are the teachers and minister kept up-to-date regarding announcements, scheduling, upcoming events, etc.?			
Is the staff trained in YFM practices?			
Is the staff trained in Sacred Safety?			
Is the staff trained in how to use the Bible?			
Is the staff trained in multiple intelligences?			
Is the staff trained in Unity teachings?			
Is the staff trained in first-aid procedures?			
Is the training current?			
Is there a planned, intentional calendar in place for group recognition events and/or a system for recognizing volunteers individually?			
Do volunteers have a mentor available to encourage and assist them in developing and growing in their roles?			
Are volunteers given an opportunity to give feedback and suggest changes that would improve the position?			
Are volunteers given an opportunity to change positions on a regular basis?			
Is there an exit interview process in place?			
Are records kept in the YFM of the volunteer service of each member?			
Is there regular planning for YFM leaders to identify needs and establish goals?			

Module #6—Policies and Procedures/ Sacred Safety

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Does the ministry have a Sacred Safety Policies and Procedures (SSPP) manual (examples available on UnityWorldwideMinistries.org)?			
Is the above manual available to parents and YFM teachers?			
Do you provide SSPP training for volunteers?			
Are the board members and other church staff trained in SSPP practices?			
Are the SSPP formally reviewed on a regular basis?			

Do you diligently adhere to the SSPP practices?			
Are emergency numbers posted and easily accessible?			
Are contact numbers posted for emergency utility issues?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for evacuation?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for severe weather?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for Shelter In Place (missing child, suspicious person)?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for medical emergency?			
Does the SSPP manual include a policy for convicted sex offenders?			
Is an incident report process for volunteers in place?			
Is there an adequate emergency communication system for informing parents, staff, adults in service, other classes, etc?			
Are there first-aid kits? Do the kits have current and appropriate supplies?			
Are the fire extinguishers labeled, accessible and does the staff know how to use them?			
Are volunteers and staff aware of the location of utility safety mechanisms, i.e. water shut off valves, alarm systems and circuit breakers?			
Do you have room usage guidelines?			
Are harmful supplies stored safely? (anything that would be harmful when ingested or skin/eye contact)			
Are youth adequately supervised according to the time, place and activity?			
Do you have a policy of two-adults per room?			
Are there guidelines on who is allowed in the classrooms on Sunday and/or during the week?			
Are attendance records kept?			
Are allergies noted on records?			
Are old records retrievable?			
Is there a registration form completed for each youth?			
Is this information accessible to teachers who have a need to know?			
Are there sign-in and sign-out procedures?			
Is it followed, reviewed, communicated?			

Is it used outside Sunday classes?			
Is there a medical release completed for each youth?			
Is the medical release accessible to the adults who have the need to know?			
Are permission slips used for attendance at events?			
Are pictures only taken of youth with photo permission releases?			
Do teen leaders know when and how to contact church staff in an emergency when YFM Director is not present?			

Module #6—Policies and Procedures/Sacred Safety: Insurance/Travel

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have general liability coverage for the volunteer program? Who is covered and when?			
Is the liability coverage reviewed periodically?			
Have you assessed your programs for, and are you within, the level of liability coverage required?			
Has YFM Director developed a relationship with your insurance representative and know best practices?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage for youth on playground during the week?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage for everyone on grounds at any time?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage for outside groups using or renting space?			
Are these groups aware of your policy and procedures for young people?			

Module #6—Policies and Procedures/ Sacred Safety: Insurance for Drivers

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Does the ministry have insurance that covers volunteer drivers?			
Is it primary or secondary to the drivers' insurance?			
Are the drivers involved informed of this information?			
Are all vehicle types covered, including 15-passenger vans?			

Are volunteers made aware that they may need to notify their personal auto insurance carrier of their volunteer driving activities?			
Do you check driving records?			
Does each driver have all the appropriate forms for youth and adults in the vehicle?			
Does each car have emergency kits for weather and driving conditions?			

Module #7—Teen Leadership—Uniteens (11 – 13 years)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have a copy of the Teen Ministry Manual?			
Have the Uniteen Leaders been trained on the Teen Ministry Manual?			
Do the Uniteens attend local and/or regional Uniteen retreats?			
Is there a procedure for event paper work to be completed and processed?			
Is participation in service projects available and encouraged?			
Do you have a policy about Uniteen fundraisers?			
Are the current fundraisers working?			
Do the Uniteens have the funds to do the activities they desire?			
Are there social events in addition to the regional retreats?			
Do you have a Rites of Passage program for graduating Uniteens?			
Do the youth take appropriate levels of leadership both in and out of the classroom?			
Is there a process for Uniteens to ask questions and give input to the church board?			

Module #7—Teen Leadership—YOU (Youth of Unity 14–18 yrs)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have a copy of the Teen Ministry Manual?			
Have the YOU Sponsors been trained on the Teen Ministry Manual?			
Do the YOUers attend regional rallies and international YOU events?			

Is there a procedure for event paper work to be completed and processed?			
Is participation in service projects available and encouraged?			
Do you have a policy about YOU fundraisers?			
Are the current fundraisers working?			
Do the YOUers have the funds to do the activities they desire?			
Are there social events in addition to the regional retreats?			
Do the youth take appropriate levels of leadership both in and out of the classroom?			
Is there a teen representative on the board?			
Is there a process for YOUers to ask questions and give input to the church board?			
Is there a process in place for the next level of participation in the ministry for graduating YOUers?			
Is there an NGU group locally or regionally to share information with high school seniors and college students?			

Leading Prayer and Meditation

Leading Prayer

Whether you are giving a spontaneous prayer or are using a prepared script, relax and let God be in charge of the moment. When you pray, deeply acknowledge the truth of what you are saying in your own mind and heart. When you do, everyone who hears your words will know it is the Spirit of God doing the work.

- Prepare the group by inviting them to relax.
- Keep the prayer simple. Use short statements.
- Allow time for silent reflection.
- Use statements of affirmation and thanksgiving such as:
 - “We are one with the loving presence of God. All is well.
 - “We are grateful for the abundant good poured into our lives. We are richly blessed.”
 - “We are creative, loving expressions of God.”
 - “We are one in Spirit.”
- Clearly conclude the prayer by saying a simple, “Amen,” and/or by inviting people to refocus on their bodies and breathing.

Leading a Silent Meditation

- Prepare the environment ahead of time. Set the stage by thinking about:
 - The lighting
 - Comfortable seating
 - The Music
 - The privacy
- Prepare the group by letting the participants know that their physical comfort is very important during a mediation. Share with them that they can:
 - Lay on the floor
 - Support their backs by leaning against the wall
 - Lay a blanket or coat over their legs if they get cold
- Begin relaxation techniques. One of the most effective relaxation methods is done through slow and precise breath control. Have the teens:
 - Inhale slowly through the nostrils
 - Pause at the top of the breath
 - Exhale slowly
 - Repeat 3 to 5 times
- Begin a conscious communion with God. Let the people in the room know it is time to enter into a sacred communion with the God of their own being. You can do this by saying:
 - “Open your minds and hearts to receive the wisdom God has for you this day.”
 - “I invite you to come to the altar of your own heart and listen for that still, small voice within.”
- Speak clearly and reverently. In meditations, there is a tendency for the leader to withdraw, turning his or her thoughts inward. Instead of becoming quieter, you must speak clearly and loudly enough that others will be able to hear your message. Try to:
 - Speak slowly, do not rush
 - Use simple statements
 - Speak with reverence
 - Repeat statements you stumble over
 - Avoid preaching
 - Allow time in the silence
- Guide them back. Let them know when the meditation is ending and allow plenty of time to gently return. Give thanks for the sacred time together.

Leading Games and Activities

It is important to be completely familiar with the game or activity you plan to lead. Make sure you know in advance:

- What equipment is needed
- The time limit for the activity
- What you want people to know
- How you will share the instructions

Besides being prepared in advance, it is vital that you give clear and concise directions all at once. If you have a flip chart or a black board at your disposal, list the rules or steps for the activity. That way, the group can refer to the directions as they complete the exercise. Give clear instructions, such as;

“Everyone who has brown eyes will be moving to the left side of the room. All others will be moving to the right.”

“Okay, begin.”

“Look in the envelope under your chair and complete the instructions in silence.”

Take the group’s temperature as they complete the activity.

If they don’t understand what you want from them, say it again. Use different words the second time around. That way, you won’t be repeating something they really didn’t understand the first time. If they are really enjoying it, allow it to continue as long as you possibly can. If the activity is dragging, wind it up in a creative way.

Leading Group Discussions

Note: Use the following information as a handout for group members who need information about leading lessons.

Check any of the following you believe to be true.

- Few facilitators would argue the benefits of classroom discussion in which the students can express their ideas, opinions, and feelings.
- A facilitator who knows how to ask pointed and pertinent questions can create very powerful and meaningful discussion times.
- It is important to provide an open forum where students can react to others’ views, formulate and clarify their own ideas and attitudes, and practice critical thinking skills.
- Group discussions are not always easy to hold.

If you checked each of the available boxes, you understand the importance of discussion activities. In the following section you’ll learn valuable tips for using questioning as a means for opening dialogue during a discussion session.

Discussion and the Art of Processing

Processing is the act of examining information (an activity, a film, and a book) in order to learn as much as one possibly can. Processing is important in helping a student or group determine how the activity or lesson applies, and is often as valuable as the lesson or activity itself. There are two types of processing—direct and indirect.

Direct Processing

This involves carefully observing the comments, body language, and behaviors of the youth during activities, discussions, and lessons.

- Example #1
 - You are leading a discussion and a teen says, “Well, that’s what he thinks!”
 - Processing would involve following up on the comment by asking, “It sounds like you’ve had a different experience than the one that was described. What is your experience?”
- Example #2
 - You are leading a trust activity and a student seems eager to be the first participant. Direct processing might involve comments to explore her willingness behavior. “I noticed you seemed unafraid to be first. What are some reasons for your trust?”

Indirect Processing

This means asking questions about the subject matter or the activity itself. The most successful processing occurs when the questions have been thought out prior to the class. It is helpful to think of the discussion questions at the same time that you prepare the lesson.

The Art of Asking Questions

One of the best methods to get students involved in their own learning is to ask questions. When you ask a valid and thought-provoking question your listeners become active participants. They begin to think of answers and examples to support their ideas and they learn from what other people have shared in the classroom as well.

Types of Questions

- Fact-finding: Questions that seek data.
- Ambiguous: Questions that have more than one meaning.
- Leading: Questions that give clues in order to help move the dialogue along.
- Provocative: Questions designed to incite an argument or debate on a specific subject.
- Direct: Aimed at a specific person.
- Relayed: A question that is asked of one person and then opened to the rest of the group.
- Reverse: Questions asked of the facilitator and then returned to the individual questioner.

Questioning Skills

- Plan questions in advance.
- Have your questions written out beforehand. Don't be afraid to ask questions that arise naturally out of the discussion.
- Avoid asking questions that can be answered "Yes" or "No".
- Use questions that begin with who, what, when, where, why, and how. Open-ended questions create the most dialogue.
- Acknowledge the responses.
- Whether or not you agree with the response, give appropriate feedback on **all** responses.
- Validate their comments by saying, "That's a good point" or "I've felt that way, too."
- Clarify what you think they are saying by asking another question.
- Refrain from repeating back exactly what they've just said. Instead, paraphrase.
- Only ask questions that you are willing to answer.
- Don't expect the youth to address difficult topics if you're not willing to look at your own attitudes and ideals.
- Be specific.
- Don't ask questions that are too vague ("What do you think about that?"). Instead, ask, "How does that affect you?"
- Keep questions hypothetical not personal.
 - Instead of asking, "How do you manage your anger?" Ask, "How can a person control their anger by using affirmations?"
 - Graciously accept the answers
- For some people, answering questions in a classroom setting takes enormous courage. No matter what response you get from your questions, be gentle and kind.
 - Create a safe setting where people can risk sharing ideas without risking rejection.
 - Carefully consider the wording of your questions.
 - If you already know the answer you want, say it.
 - Allow silence and time to think.
 - Resist the urge to answer the question yourself. Become comfortable with the silence. If you wait long enough, someone will usually answer. If no one does, try another question or ask a leading question.

List of Possible Discussion Questions

- What challenges did you encounter during this activity?
- How did this activity relate to the lesson content?
- What did you like best about this activity?
- Do you have anything to share for the good of the group?
- How did you feel about the group you were in?

- How was the leader chosen? Did everyone get a chance to participate?
- How would you have felt if you were the person in this story?
- After hearing the story (watching the film or doing the activity) how do you feel right now?
- Have you ever had something like this happen to you before?
- If we did this exercise again, how could we do it differently?
- What do we need to know about you that will help us be a better community?

The Multiple Intelligences

For an overview of Multiple Intelligences, see 125.

Verbal/Linguistic—The Intelligence of Words

This is the ability to express yourself and to understand your world through the use of words, both written and spoken.

People who are strong in this Intelligence have well developed verbal skills and are sensitive to the sounds, meanings and rhythms of words. They have the ability to take in information by hearing it. They are also able to use language to express their thoughts and to understand other people orally or in writing.

They tend to be good listeners and speakers and they love to read. They also like to tell stories, use analogies, metaphors and good grammar.

Incorporate the Verbal/Linguistic Intelligence into your classroom experiences

Since the Living Curriculum Philosophy is story based, this Intelligence is present in all of our lessons because “story” can be defined as a life story, video, song, etc.

- Spin tall tales, tell jokes, poems and stories
- Begin a story and encourage the students to write the rest of it
- Become pen-pals with another ministry
- Create a teen newsletter and encourage them to write articles for it
- Play games like Scrabble, Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy, crossword puzzles and word search
- Use email or letters to connect with your students

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do I like to read?
- Do I like word games, puns and rhymes?
- Do I enjoy verbally communicating my ideas to others?
- Do I enjoy a conversation in general?
- Do I keep a journal of my writing?
- Do I look for opportunities to write, speak and/or share my ideas?

How can I use the spoken or written word, gestures, facial expressions?

Small group discussion	Picture with captions
Read Bible	Chalk board
Research	Storyteller
Asking questions	Writing activities
Brainstorming	Agree/disagree
Reporting	Newspapers
Interview	

Logical/Mathematical—The Intelligence of Numbers & Reasoning

This is the ability to think conceptually and to understand the underlying principles of different systems.

People who are strong in this Intelligence excel at “critical thinking” and inductive and deductive reasoning. They enjoy logical thinking, hypothesizing, testing, drawing conclusions, calculating, and recognizing patterns. These learners like information to be presented logically and systematically. They prefer problem solving approaches and the opportunity to make connections and identify relationships between concepts.

Incorporate the Logical/Mathematical Intelligence into your classroom experiences

This group of people is also very comfortable with structure and likes to see a logical progression in the things they are working on so having a structure to your lesson plan is helpful to them.

- Create mind benders, memory and word games based on your lessons
- Encourage the students to develop strategies for coping with specific difficulties
- Do science experiments that relate to your lesson theme
- Create and solve logic games
- Encourage them to help create order and analyze and interpret information
- Devise experiments to test out things not easily understood

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do I like to make lists, set priorities and make long-range plans?
- Do I enjoy solving puzzles and playing strategy games like checkers and chess?
- Can I analyze numbers quickly?
- Do I routinely use statistical data and higher math routinely?
- Do I like an established routine?
- Do I look for patterns?
- Do I use a graphic organizer?

How can I encourage exploring and bring in patterns, logic, classifications, numbers?

Problem solving	Ask questions
Categorize	Use reasoning
Metaphysics	Opinion poll
Puzzles	Mental games
Brainstorming	Case studies

Spatial/Visual—The Intelligence of Pictures & Images

This is the ability to think in pictures and images and the capacity to visualize accurately and abstractly

People who are strong in this Intelligence tend to think in pictures and learn best from visual presentations such as movies, pictures, videos, and demonstrations using models and props. They need to “see it” in order to comprehend it. They can also be distracted if there is too much visual stimulation in the room.

Other ideas to encourage the development of this Intelligence

Creative expression activities that involve art, crafts, clay or other artistic methods are an outlet for those strong in the Spatial/Visual Intelligence. Many times we assume that teens not interested in creative activities so we confine our lessons to talking and sharing.

- Encourage students to reflect their mood or feelings through drawing, painting or sculpting
- Encourage daydreaming, imagining and thinking about “what if?”
- Supply journals so they can take notes. They need to see the words on the paper in order to more easily grasp them.
- Create opportunities for the students to develop visual representation of content, concepts and relationships using strategies such as mind-mapping or concept mapping, flow charts and other graphic representations
- Show video clips that pertain to your lesson

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Am I able to picture something that doesn't yet exist?
- Am I interested in colors and patterns and what my environment looks like?
- Do I enjoy tinkering with things?
- Am I good with directions and enjoy looking at maps?
- Are the memories in my head in picture form?
- Do I enjoy doing visual art?
- Am I able to think in three dimensions?

How can I use visual aids, visualization, color, art, pretending?

Creative activities
Flannel board
Pictures with story
Playdough/clay
Visualization

Map study
Chalkboard
Drawing
Magazine pictures
Debate

Bodily/Kinesthetic- The Intelligence of the Whole Body & Hands

This is the ability to use your whole body or parts of your body to learn and experience your world.

People who tend to be strong in this Intelligence learn by connecting movement and knowledge. They process information through the sensations they feel in their body. They need to move around frequently and they tend to touch the people they are talking to. They are good at both small and large muscle skills and enjoy physical activities and sports of all kinds.

Engage this Intelligence

Since they prefer to receive information through demonstration or modeling, people strong in the Bodily/Kinesthetic Intelligence need class experiences that allow them to move around and interact with others. They are going to have a difficult time in a classroom that requires them to sit still or in one place for long stretches of time. They are generally the ones that move, twitch, tap, or fidget while sitting.

- Inviting our students to role-play
- Offering open space for movement and drama
- Incorporating games, sports and movement into the lesson
- Using a light shoulder touch to get their attention if they are distracted

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do I need to “act out” knowledge physically in order to remember?
- Do I enjoy expressing emotions or moods through dance, drama or theater?
- Do I like to be physically active?
- Do I have a hard time sitting through long meetings or lectures without the opportunity to move around?
- Am I accomplished in a specific physical activity?

How can I involve the whole body, hands-on experience and expressing emotion?

Active games
Field trip
Creative movement
Crafts
Choices

Drama/role playing
Puppets
Cutting and gluing
Learning centers
Group hugs

Interpersonal- The Intelligence of Social Understanding

This is the capacity to detect and respond appropriately to the moods, motivations and desires of others and the ability to understand other people.

People who tend to be strong in this Intelligence enjoy working in groups, learn while interacting and cooperating. This is evident in the person who enjoys friends and social activities of all kinds and is reluctant to be alone. These are the people who often serve as mediators in case of disputes, both in a school situation and at home. This intelligence is at work when we discern and understand the differences in other people's actions, moods and feelings.

Incorporate this Intelligence into your classroom experiences

The Interpersonal Intelligence can be expressed in our classrooms by allowing students the opportunity to process their information by talking it through and inviting them to work in groups and to collaborate on projects.

- Encourage the students to discuss things and see from another perspective
- Pair students up to solve a problem
- Create interview sheets and activities for students to get to know one another
- Offer group bonding activities
- Create scenarios of conflicts that pertain to preteens and teens and encourage them to brainstorm and negotiate solutions
- Encourage group problem solving
- Encourage games and team work that relate to the lesson purpose
- Engage in social activities

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Can I accurately interpret facial expressions, voices and physical gestures?
- Do I enjoy debating and discussing topics that are important to me?
- Do I need an organized system of communication and staying in touch with friends and co-workers?
- Am I comfortable in social situations, even if I don't know many people?
- Am I interested in making friends and meeting new people?
- Do I process my thoughts as I am talking about them?

How can I engage students in learning cooperatively, gaining social understanding?

Small groups

Sharing

Cooperative learning

Partners

Interviewing

Games

Intrapersonal- The Intelligence of Self-Knowledge

This is the capacity to be self-aware and in-tune with your inner feelings, values, beliefs and thinking processes.

People who are strong in this Intelligence have a deep awareness of their inner life. They have an understanding of themselves, their abilities, and their options. They operate through reflection, metacognition (thinking about thinking), self-awareness, a focus on feelings and a sense of spirituality. They generally like to work alone and tend to be independent and self-directed and have strong opinions on controversial subjects.

Incorporate this Intelligence into your classroom experience

People strong in the Intrapersonal Intelligence need time to think and can often appear to be introverted. They can also have a difficult time breaking into a conversation or knowing when it is their turn to speak in a group of talkers so we can be more inclusive of this Intelligence in our classrooms when we allow space for thought.

- Offer an area for private reflection
- Offer some self-directed activities
- Encourage journal writing since they prefer their own private inner world
- Know that SILENCE is OK
- Use informal conversation rather than calling on people
- Allow time for individual processing before going into a group activity
- Encourage meditation—They have a deep awareness of inner feelings, strengths and weaknesses

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do you enjoy working on your own projects?
- Are you able to focus your concentration well?
- Do you enjoy alone time?
- Are you able to step back and observe yourself?
- Do you need some quiet time in order to process your thoughts?
- Do you march to the beat of a different drummer in style of dress, behavior, or general attitude?
- Are you self-motivated to do well on independent study projects?

How can I evoke personal feelings and self-understanding and give students choices?

Individual projects
Read and present
Work alone

Self-paced instruction
Focus inward
Being original

Musical—The Intelligence of Tone, Rhythm & Timbre

This is the ability to think in music and to hear patterns; also the ability to create, communicate, and understand meanings made out of sound.

People who are strong in this Intelligence usually have some ability to compose music, to sing, and/or to keep rhythm. They are sensitive to sounds, environmental as well as musical. They often sing, whistle or hum while engaging in other activities and can sing on key and can remember and vocally reproduce melodies.

Incorporate the Musical Intelligence into your classroom experience

Music is an area that can easily be incorporated into your classroom experiences. Encouraging the singing of Joy Songs not only promotes music and fun but is a community bonding experience. Using music to interject a mood or feeling is also a way to help preteens and teens connect. Music videos or favorite songs, (with appropriate lyrics) can also be a source of great classroom discussions.

- Invite students with musical abilities to lead the class in song
- Invite the students to bring in their favorite songs and discuss the deeper meaning of the lyrics
- Use meditative music to create a mood or feeling
- Invite the students to create a rap that talks about a universal Truth principle
- Use your voice to express emotion—no monotones

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Can you move rhythmically in time to music?
- Do you enjoy making up rhythms or songs?
- Are you stimulated by music, rhythms, the human voice and environmental sounds?
- Do you frequently tap your hands or feet to music you hear live and/or in your head?
- Are you sensitive to discordant sounds in the environment?
- Do you prefer to have music on when studying or working?

How can I bring in music and environmental sounds, use rhythm and melody?

Music—song as basis for lesson

Rhythm—heart beat in meditations

Joy songs

Music—as background, to set tone

Rhythm instruments

Songs with motions

Naturalist- The Intelligence of Nature & Classification

This is the ability to recognize and categorize plants, animals and other objects in nature.

People strong in this Intelligence learn through observation and discovery of natural phenomenon and they relate their learning to nature and life. They have a deep need to connect with nature in some way each day. They love to garden and to observe nature in action.

Incorporate this Intelligence into your classroom experience

It is very important to people who are strong in the Naturalist Intelligence to have something of nature in their physical environment. Having an area to the classroom dedicated to plants and/or flowers is a wonderful way to incorporate this Intelligence, especially if there are no windows in the classroom.

- Allow students to face the window so they can see nature and/or open the windows
- Create analogies to nature, such as: seeds growing into trees to Truth principles
- Go on nature walks, labyrinths, etc
- Bring nature in through rocks, feathers, sticks, a fountain...
- Make art from nature
- Create a litter collage
- Get involved in a planting project (e.g. planting trees, flowers, grass, etc.) either in your own home, or somewhere in your community
- Go for a walk and consciously focus on the impact of the environment on your five senses, on emotions and spiritual awareness

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do I love to be involved in nature?
- Do I have the capacity to recognize and classify various flora and fauna?
- Do I have knowledge of and a deep desire to communion with the natural world?
- Am I drawn to and fascinated by animals and their behavior?
- Do I notice the effect on my mood and sense of well-being when someone brings plants and/or cut flowers into an otherwise sterile, humanly-created environment?
- Do I like to head for “great nature” when I want to relax, ‘unwind’, or find inner renewal?

How can I involve students in nature and understanding it?

Outside activities—garden walks

Include animals & plants in discussion

Use nature items & pictures in classroom

Collect, sort & classify nature items

Stories about nature and animals

Do nature experiments

Existentialist—The Intelligence of Spirituality

Sensitivity and capacity to tackle deep questions about human existence, such as the meaning of life, why do we die and how did we get here.

People who are strong in this Intelligence understand the claims that individual human beings have full responsibility for creating the meanings of their own lives. These people enjoy pondering abstract ideas and concepts and can easily go from A to Q when processing said concepts. They are able to bring clarity and understanding to the fundamental spiritual and philosophical questions of human existence.

Bring the Existentialist Intelligence into your lesson experiences

This Intelligence shows up in our classrooms through our metaphysical interpretation and discussions on the stories and events in our lives.

- To encourage discussion of “abstract” ideas and concepts
- To encourage self-exploration of beliefs
- To encourage deep questions
- To make meditation and contemplation a regular part of every lesson experience

Questions to ask yourself to see if you are strong in this Intelligence

- Do I enjoy philosophy?
- Do I enjoy practicing meditation, the study of koans, the study of Zen stories, and learning about the different types of religion such as Buddhism and Shintoism?
- Do I enjoy exploring such questions as: “Why are we here?” and “What is our role in the world?”

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Tattoos on the Heart, Fr. Gregory Boyle,

Teambuilding with Teens, Mariam MacGregor

What Do You Stand For? A Kid's Guide to Building Character, Barbara A. Lewis

Youth in Decision Making: Research Highlights From a Study on the Impacts of Youth on Adults and Organizations (Downloadable Report) Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development and National 4-H Council

Youth Leadership Life Skills Development Scale, Dormody and SeEVERS

Websites and Contact Information for Resources

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Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development www.innovationcenter.org

KidLead www.kidlead.org

Language of Listening www.languageoflistening.com

Love and Logic www.loveandlogic.com

Promise Neighborhood www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org
www.promiseneighborhoodsinstitute.org

Search Institute www.search-institute.org

Youth Leadership Resources www.youthleadership.com

Grief Resources www.whatsyourgrief.com

Sacred Safety Websites

Bureau for At-Risk Youth www.at-risk.com

Child Welfare Information Gateway www.childwelfare.gov

Children's Defense Fund www.childrensdefense.org

Childsworld www.childsworld.com

Emergency Response Handbook www.grouppublishing.com

Toll-free Crisis Hotlines

Suicide Hotline—1-800-SUICIDE

National Runaway Switchboard—1-800-RUNAWAY

Covenant House Neline—1-800-999-999

Boys Town National Hotline—1-800-448-3000

The Trevor Lifeline (suicide)—1-866-U-TREVOR

National Sexual Assault Hotline—1-800-656-HOPE

Childhelp USA National Child Abuse Hotline—1-800-4-A-CHILD

National Domestic Violence Hotline—1-800-799-SAFE

National Center for Missing and Exploited Children—1-800-THE-LOST

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration—1-877-SAMHSA-7

Appendix

Appendix A:

Application Youth & Family Ministry Volunteer—Confidential

Application Youth & Family Ministry Volunteer—Confidential

(Name of Unity Church)

This form is to be completed by all persons who volunteer directly with minors in our church.

Personal Information

Name (Please Print)		Email
Address		Alternate Email
City, State, Zip	Day Phone	Cell Phone
Evening Phone	Date of Birth	Social Security Number

Unity Background & Volunteer Work Preferences

How long have you been attending our church?	Are you a member? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes If yes, date joined _____
What Unity classes have you taken?	What students do you prefer to work with? <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool <input type="checkbox"/> K-2nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3rd-5th <input type="checkbox"/> Uniteen (6th-8th) <input type="checkbox"/> Y.O.U. (9th-12th) Why?
What role do you prefer? <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Chaplaincy <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	When are you available? Check one per column. <input type="checkbox"/> Sunday mornings per month <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday(s) <input type="checkbox"/> ___ times per week <input type="checkbox"/> ___ times per month <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Special Gifts

List passions, special skills and gifts, interests, hobbies. Also include languages spoken other than English.
What interests or motivates you most about serving in the Youth & Family Ministry department?

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Personal References

In order to process your application, please provide complete mailing addresses, including zip codes, for three character references (over 18 years of age). Select two references who attend our church, as well as someone outside the church community, preferably someone who has observed you with children. Please print clearly. Please do **not** use relatives, spouses, or significant others as references.

Name	Name	Name
Street Address	Street Address	Street Address
City, State, Zip	City, State, Zip	City, State, Zip
Home or Cell Phone	Home or Cell Phone	Home or Cell Phone
Work Phone	Work Phone	Work Phone
Email Address	Email Address	Email Address

Applicant’s Statement *(Please read carefully before signing.)*

I certify that the facts contained in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. During the application process and at any time during any subsequent employment or volunteer time, I hereby authorize _____ *(Name of Unity Church)* to conduct an inquiry into my background to include personal and public record information. I specifically release any references, schools, institutions and/or churches listed in this application, from any liability so that they may freely and completely respond to any inquiry relating to my character and fitness for working with children/youth. I hereby release all such references including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature in regard to their release of information. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by those personal references identified on this application. I understand that any falsifications or omissions may result in my application being rejected or may result in my termination from volunteer service.

I have read, understand and agree to be bound by the applicant statement as stated above.

Applicant’s Signature _____ **Date** _____

Appendix B:

Lesson Plan Worksheet

Lesson Outline

Title _____ Group _____ Date Used _____

Intention _____

Pre-session Activity (arrival) _____

Supplies needed

The Gathering

Welcome/Introductions/Announcements _____

Prayer/Meditation _____

Music and/or Movement _____

Exploration

Story _____ Source _____

Creative Experience (may be before or after questions)

Supplies needed

Discussion Questions _____

Appendix C:

Medical/Liability Release

Medical/Liability Release

For Activities Sponsored by

(Name of Unity Church)

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Complete form in **INK**. Form can be kept on file until following September 1, if information stays current. Form must be **UPDATED** if any information changes. Copy of form is to be carried with participant to every event. Copy of form is to be held at the church office.

Participant _____ Birth Date ___/___/___ M F Grade _____

Parent/Legal Guardian, if under 18 _____ Relationship _____

Address _____ City, State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work/cell (____) _____ Email _____

Emergency contact(s) if parent cannot be reached _____

Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____ (____) _____

Medical History

I certify that the above named person is in good health and able to participate in all normal activities of the group.

Yes No If no, specify limits of participation. _____

Allergic to any food or medication? Yes No (If Yes, specify) _____

Is the participant currently under a doctor's supervision for:

Epilepsy Diabetes Asthma ADD/ADHD Allergies (not listed above) _____

Other conditions or special care needs and current medications (specify) _____

Date of last tetanus shot _____

Group leaders must be informed of any prescription medication brought by participant with clear information as to proper use and dosage. If medication is "as needed," the participant must understand the symptoms of their condition and know when to ask for help. **Please check which over-the-counter medications you will NOT allow to be dispensed to this participant:**

aspirin acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) nasal decongestant (e.g. Sudafed®)
 Pepto-Bismol® ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®, Motrin®) cough suppressant (e.g. Robitussin®, menthol cough drops)

Insurance Information, Medical Consent & Liability Release

Family Physician (name & phone number) _____

Medical Insurance (company, policy and ID number) _____

Phone # to verify coverage or submit claim _____ Policyholder's name _____

** Attach copies of Insurance Card(s) front and back. **

As the above-named parent or legal guardian, if the participant is a minor under the age of 18, I hereby attest that I have read this complete document; all information provided is complete and true; I have legal standing to make decisions which affect the rights of the above named participant; and I understand and consent to all terms outlined on both pages of this document (including release of photographic images & personal information).

MEDICAL/LIABILITY RELEASE (Continued) (page 2 of 2) **Name of Participant** _____

I hereby voluntarily and knowingly assume all risks and dangers inherent and incidental to _____ Church activities and travel understanding that some activities may pose a risk of injury. I will not hold liable the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and/or Unity Worldwide Ministries, their employees, agents and event group leaders for any injury, illness or property damage involving the above-named participant no matter how caused. Whenever deemed necessary by group leaders, I authorize the calling of a doctor and/or the providing of other medical services and, unless covered by insurance, agree to pay for same. If the above-named participant is incapacitated or under age 18, I do hereby authorize group leaders as agent for the undersigned, to consent with respect to such participant to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, dental or surgical diagnosis or treatment, and hospital care which is deemed advisable by a state-licensed physician or surgeon.

Signature (Participant, or Guardian if under age 18)

Printed Name

Date

SIGNATURE MUST BE NOTARIZED OR WITNESSED BY CHURCH STAFF OR TRUSTEE

Signed and Sworn before me:

Witness _____

Signature

Printed Name

Date

PARENTAL CONSENT for minor under age 18

As legal guardian of the above named participant under the age of 18, I give my permission for him/her to be involved in the Youth and Family Ministry program(s) of the Church, Region and Unity Worldwide Ministries. I am familiar with the general goals and purpose of the program(s). I understand I will be notified of any special activities and trips away from church including location, form of travel and cost. Should my child choose to attend such activities, I agree to send them with the appropriate clothes, personal items and money needed. Unless I have made special arrangements with a group leader, transportation to/from church or group activities or to a common drop point for group travel is the child's and parent's responsibility. If my child needs to be sent home for any reason, including behavior problems or medical reasons, I agree it will be at my expense.

OTHER RELEASES **Photography release**, I hereby grant the Church, Region, Unity Worldwide Ministries and its representative permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from local and regional Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever, such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

Confidentiality. I understand that health information on this form will only be shared, as needed, with group leaders, church staff and medical professionals to safeguard and support the participant. This information will not be publicly disseminated or released to any outside organization. However, since it is common practice for the Church (or Region) to publish a participant's contact, birth date and/or school on the group's roster if they actively participate in the group (or attend a regional event), I authorize the Church (and Region) to publish such information on a local (or event) roster **EXCEPT** for the following (*please specify*):

Limit of consent. The consent outlined in this Medical/Liability Release, concerning my child's participation in Youth Ministry activities, expires next September 1 (or earlier, if listed here: _____). **It is my responsibility to notify group leaders or Youth and Family Ministry Director if any information changes or I decide to withhold consent.**

ABOUT INSURANCE CARDS—THIS IS IMPORTANT!

A hospital may require a Social Security number and/or insurance card (as proof of insurance) before treatment or admittance. Make sure the participant carries that information to events, or you can provide that information here:

Above-named minor's SS# _____ - _____ - _____ Attach copies (front **and** back) of **insurance card**.

Appendix D:

Group Agreement Example



John Choplin
 Teen Ministry Consultant
 816.405.4800call/text
 teenministry@unitysouthcentral.org
 Revised July 2015

 Last Name, First Name
Youth Of Unity Member
 Valid only for event listed below.

Give the original to your church, each church will take a copy, and your chapter travels with the original.

South Central Youth Of Unity Trust Agreements

By attending this event, I agree to lovingly agree to each of these, on the way to and from the events.

Respect *Be Kind. Rewind.*

I agree to keep all music, language and interactions rally appropriate including participating in put ups only.

Present *Your Presence Is Your Present.*

I agree to attend and be on time to every scheduled event. I will fully participate in each event, free from distraction of electronics except during bedtime and free time.

Love *Your Body Is A Temple.*

I agree to refrain from the use of alcohol or drugs including tobacco in any forms, and to wear only clothing that is not offensive or disrespectful.

Honor *We Foster Friendships.*

I agree to respect personal boundaries and to participate in only safe and appropriate touch while at a regional event. I will not participate in sexual energies or behavior during, on the way to, or on the way home from any regional events.

Trust *Love Our Truth.*

I agree to give all meds to the designated wellness staff and take them at the appropriate times. I also agree to only ride in a motor vehicle with an approved sponsor 25 years old or older on the way to, from and during any regional event.

I know that should I chose to break any of the previously listed agreements, I could be sent home and banned from further regional events.

This is a permission form to attend _____.

List event name

I have read and agree to each agreement listed. I understand that any breach in these agreements can have me not only sent home from the event that I am at, but also keep me from attending future events.

I agree to give permission to attend this event. I have read and discussed these agreements with my teen and understand that **any** breach of these can have my teen sent home at **my expense**.

 Youth Of Unity Member Signature

 Date

 Parent/Guardian Signature

 Date

Appendix E:

Attendance Sign-In

Appendix F:

Sacred Safety Forms

Registration Card—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Please fill out a form for each young person in your family. Circle one of the following.

Infant Toddler 3 years Preschool K 1st 2nd 3rd 4th 5th 6th
7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

Please Print

Today's Date _____

Student's name _____ Age _____ Birth date _____

Nickname they prefer (if applicable) _____ Gender _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Youth email _____

Home phone _____ Youth cell phone _____

Mother's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Father's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Student lives with: Mother Father Father & Mother Other _____

Comes to Unity with _____

Address of responsible adult _____

Emergency contact & number _____

Medical conditions: include allergies & medications _____

Special needs _____

Special interests & activities _____

Other religious experiences _____

School attending _____ Graduation year (teens) _____

Activities involved in _____

Part-time work (teens) _____

Talents others see that your youth does not recognize in self _____

What else do you want us to know about the youth? _____

Parent signature _____

Change in Registration—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

When changing registration information, one form is adequate for the whole family.

Please Print

Today's Date _____

Student(s) name(s) _____ Effective _____

Street address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Youth email _____

Home phone _____ Youth cell phone _____

Mother's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Father's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Student lives with: Mother Father Father & Mother Other _____

Comes to Unity with _____

Address of responsible adult _____

Emergency contact & number _____

Medical conditions: include allergies & medications _____

Special needs _____

Parent signature _____

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Change in Registration—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

When changing registration information, one form is adequate for the whole family.

Please Print

Today's Date _____

Student(s) name(s) _____ Effective _____

Street address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____ Youth email _____

Home phone _____ Youth cell phone _____

Mother's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Father's name _____ Email _____ Work phone _____

Student lives with: Mother Father Father & Mother Other _____

Comes to Unity with _____

Address of responsible adult _____

Emergency contact & number _____

Medical conditions: include allergies & medications _____

Special needs _____

Parent signature _____

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Event Permission Form—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

A signed permission form is required for any event other than Sunday morning class.

Event _____ Date(s) _____ Time _____

For whom? _____ Cost _____

Where _____ Address _____

Drop-off at _____ (am/pm) Return/pick-up at _____ (am/pm)

Need to bring _____

Event details _____

_____ Permission slip & fees due _____
Date

A current medical/liability release form must be completed or on file for the current school year.

For more information, contact _____
Name Phone Number

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone



(Keep top portion. Return bottom portion to the Youth Ministry Department.)

Being familiar with and approving the mode of transportation, the leadership accompanying the group, and other circumstances of the event, I give my permission for _____

to attend and participate in _____ on _____.
Event Name Date

Please check all that apply.

- Sorry, I can't help this time.
- I give my permission for another parent or Unity volunteer to transport my child to this event.
- Special arrangements are already set up with a church representative. (Explain below)

Special instructions or limits of participation _____

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Emergency Contacts & Phone Numbers

#1 _____ #2 _____

(There may or may not be t-shirts and/or meals at this event.)

This will be my _____ church event. T-shirt size: S M L XL XXL
Enter numeral Circle one

Meal requirements (circle all that apply): Vegetarian Vegan No Red Meat No Dairy

Other (please specify): _____

Event Planning Form—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Complete both sides of this form and submit to YFM Director, not less than ____ working days prior to the proposed event. The YFM Director will review the information, obtain necessary approvals and notify the chairperson if there are conflicts or problems.

All YOU events are to be chaired by a chapter member, working with a sponsor. Events for other age groups are to be chaired by an adult, though Uniteens are encouraged to act as assistant chairs for Uniteen events. Please complete all items to avoid delays in approval.

Today's Date _____

Event Date(s) and Day(s) Requested:

First Choice _____ Second Choice _____

Name of Event _____

Event Group Children Uniteens YOU Parents Families
Primary purpose of event Spiritual Social Service
Type of Event Church Sub-regional Regional

Event Details

Times Set-up start _____
 Event beginning _____
 Ending _____
 Clean-up ending _____

Location _____

If on-site, has room request been submitted? Yes No Date _____

If off-site, contact person and phone number _____

Travel Plans

None Van (# & size) _____ Van driver _____

Private cars: List drivers _____

Departure location _____

Departure time _____

Return time _____

Return location _____

Travel coordinated by _____

Adult Leadership/Chairperson

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Teen Leadership/Chair or Assistant

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Check one item for each of the following.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Permission slips | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Trust agreements | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Medical releases | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Registration form | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Registration fees | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Amount _____ |

Costs: For participant _____ For church _____

1. Please list all jobs and who is responsible, such as announcements, making signs or flyers, contacting speaker or facilities, music, food supplies, etc.

<u>Task or Job</u>	<u>Who Responsible?</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

2. List materials and supplies that will be needed.

Supplied by church:

Provided by individuals (list items & person):

3. What will participants need to bring? (sleeping bag, swim suit, etc.)

For Church Office Use Only

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church calendar checked for conflicts | <input type="checkbox"/> Room Request—Date approved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation arrangements made | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity submitted—Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity submitted—Announcements & Sunday Bulletin |

Event Approval

Youth and Family Ministry Director	Date	Minister
------------------------------------	------	----------

Please retain this form until event is completed.

Incident/Accident Report Form— Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Please fill out this form for any incident or accident that occurs while you are serving in Youth and Family Ministry, whether or not the incident resulted in injury. Provide as much detail as possible and turn in this report as soon as possible after the event.

Today's date _____

Date and time and place of incident/accident _____

Name of affected party (1) _____ Age _____ Male Female

Address (1) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parent/legal guardian (1) _____ Phone _____

Name of affected party (2) _____ Age _____ Male Female

Address (2) _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Parent/legal guardian (2) _____ Phone _____

Witness 1 _____ Phone _____

Witness 2 _____ Phone _____

Place of incident _____

Description of incident: *Relate as much detail as possible, including quotations if possible. Explain action taken and by whom. Use back of sheet as needed. Draw a diagram on the back of this sheet, if useful.*

Condition of each person involved when they left your care: _____

Print name of person completing report _____ Phone _____

Signature _____ Address _____

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Photography Release and Assignment

(Name of Unity Church)

I understand that my child might be photographed as a member of a group, as a Youth Ministry participant, or in a voluntary photograph. I hereby assign all of my rights, title and interest in and to any photographs and videotape images to the Church. I grant the Church and its representatives permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from all Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

I specifically authorize the Church to reproduce, publish, and distribute copies of said photographs or videotape images, as well as authorize the Church to submit said photographs for publication by the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries.

I understand that no compensation for efforts or participation of the above named participant is promised or implied. I do hereby release to the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries any and all interest in and to any proceeds from the sale or production of photographic or videotape reproductions.

Name of Participant

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Phone Number

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian name printed

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Photography Release and Assignment

(Name of Unity Church)

I understand that my child might be photographed as a member of a group, as a Youth Ministry participant, or in a voluntary photograph. I hereby assign all of my rights, title and interest in and to any photographs and videotape images to the Church. I grant the Church and its representatives permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from all Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

I specifically authorize the Church to reproduce, publish, and distribute copies of said photographs or videotape images, as well as authorize the Church to submit said photographs for publication by the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries.

I understand that no compensation for efforts or participation of the above named participant is promised or implied. I do hereby release to the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries any and all interest in and to any proceeds from the sale or production of photographic or videotape reproductions.

Name of Participant

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Phone Number

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian name printed

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Appendix G:

Event Forms

Event Permission Form—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

A signed permission form is required for any event other than Sunday morning class.

Event _____ Date(s) _____ Time _____

For whom? _____ Cost _____

Where _____ Address _____

Drop-off at _____ (am/pm) Return/pick-up at _____ (am/pm)

Need to bring _____

Event details _____

_____ Permission slip & fees due _____
Date

A current medical/liability release form must be completed or on file for the current school year.

For more information, contact _____
Name Phone Number

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone



(Keep top portion. Return bottom portion to the Youth Ministry Department.)

Being familiar with and approving the mode of transportation, the leadership accompanying the group, and other circumstances of the event, I give my permission for _____

to attend and participate in _____ on _____.
Event Name Date

Please check all that apply.

- Sorry, I can't help this time.
- I give my permission for another parent or Unity volunteer to transport my child to this event.
- Special arrangements are already set up with a church representative. (Explain below)

Special instructions or limits of participation _____

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Emergency Contacts & Phone Numbers

#1 _____ #2 _____

(There may or may not be t-shirts and/or meals at this event.)

This will be my _____ church event. T-shirt size: S M L XL XXL
Enter numeral Circle one

Meal requirements (circle all that apply): Vegetarian Vegan No Red Meat No Dairy

Other (please specify): _____

Event Planning Form—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Complete both sides of this form and submit to YFM Director, not less than ____ working days prior to the proposed event. The YFM Director will review the information, obtain necessary approvals and notify the chairperson if there are conflicts or problems.

All YOU events are to be chaired by a chapter member, working with a sponsor. Events for other age groups are to be chaired by an adult, though Uniteens are encouraged to act as assistant chairs for Uniteen events. Please complete all items to avoid delays in approval.

Today's Date _____

Event Date(s) and Day(s) Requested:

First Choice _____ Second Choice _____

Name of Event _____

Event Group Children Uniteens YOU Parents Families
Primary purpose of event Spiritual Social Service
Type of Event Church Sub-regional Regional

Event Details

Times Set-up start _____
 Event beginning _____
 Ending _____
 Clean-up ending _____

Location _____

If on-site, has room request been submitted? Yes No Date _____

If off-site, contact person and phone number _____

Travel Plans

None Van (# & size) _____ Van driver _____

Private cars: List drivers _____

Departure location _____

Departure time _____

Return time _____

Return location _____

Travel coordinated by _____

Adult Leadership/Chairperson

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Teen Leadership/Chair or Assistant

Name _____ Phone _____

Name _____ Phone _____

Check one item for each of the following.

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| Permission slips | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Trust agreements | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Medical releases | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Registration form | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Due date _____ |
| Registration fees | <input type="checkbox"/> Required | <input type="checkbox"/> Not required | Amount _____ |

Costs: For participant _____ For church _____

1. Please list all jobs and who is responsible, such as announcements, making signs or flyers, contacting speaker or facilities, music, food supplies, etc.

<u>Task or Job</u>	<u>Who Responsible?</u>	<u>Due Date</u>
--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

2. List materials and supplies that will be needed.

Supplied by church:

Provided by individuals (list items & person):

3. What will participants need to bring? (sleeping bag, swim suit, etc.)

For Church Office Use Only

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Church calendar checked for conflicts | <input type="checkbox"/> Room Request—Date approved |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation arrangements made | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity submitted—Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Expenditures approved | <input type="checkbox"/> Publicity submitted—Announcements & Sunday Bulletin |

Event Approval

Youth and Family Ministry Director	Date	Minister
------------------------------------	------	----------

Please retain this form until event is completed.

Medical/Liability Release

For Activities Sponsored by

(Name of Unity Church)

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Complete form in **INK**. Form can be kept on file until following September 1, if information stays current. Form must be **UPDATED** if any information changes. Copy of form is to be carried with participant to every event. Copy of form is to be held at the church office.

Participant _____ Birth Date ____ / ____ / ____ M F Grade _____

Parent/Legal Guardian, if under 18 _____ Relationship _____

Address _____ City, State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone (____) _____ Work/cell (____) _____ Email _____

Emergency contact(s) if parent cannot be reached _____

Relationship _____ Phone (____) _____ (____) _____

Medical History

I certify that the above named person is in good health and able to participate in all normal activities of the group.

Yes No If no, specify limits of participation. _____

Allergic to any food or medication? Yes No (If Yes, specify) _____

Is the participant currently under a doctor's supervision for:

Epilepsy Diabetes Asthma ADD/ADHD Allergies (not listed above) _____

Other conditions or special care needs and current medications (specify) _____

_____ Date of last tetanus shot _____

Group leaders must be informed of any prescription medication brought by participant with clear information as to proper use and dosage. If medication is "as needed," the participant must understand the symptoms of their condition and know when to ask for help. **Please check which over-the-counter medications you will NOT allow to be dispensed to this participant:**

aspirin acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) nasal decongestant (e.g. Sudafed®)
 Pepto-Bismol® ibuprofen (e.g. Advil®, Motrin®) cough suppressant (e.g. Robitussin®, menthol cough drops)

Insurance Information, Medical Consent & Liability Release

Family Physician (name & phone number) _____

Medical Insurance (company, policy and ID number) _____

Phone # to verify coverage or submit claim _____ Policyholder's name _____

** Attach copies of Insurance Card(s) front and back. **

As the above-named parent or legal guardian, if the participant is a minor under the age of 18, I hereby attest that I have read this complete document; all information provided is complete and true; I have legal standing to make decisions which affect the rights of the above named participant; and I understand and consent to all terms outlined on both pages of this document (including release of photographic images & personal information).

MEDICAL/LIABILITY RELEASE (Continued) (page 2 of 2) Name of Participant _____

I hereby voluntarily and knowingly assume all risks and dangers inherent and incidental to _____ Church activities and travel understanding that some activities may pose a risk of injury. I will not hold liable the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and/or Unity Worldwide Ministries, their employees, agents and event group leaders for any injury, illness or property damage involving the above-named participant no matter how caused. Whenever deemed necessary by group leaders, I authorize the calling of a doctor and/or the providing of other medical services and, unless covered by insurance, agree to pay for same. If the above-named participant is incapacitated or under age 18, I do hereby authorize group leaders as agent for the undersigned, to consent with respect to such participant to any x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, dental or surgical diagnosis or treatment, and hospital care which is deemed advisable by a state-licensed physician or surgeon.

Signature (Participant, or Guardian if under age 18) Printed Name Date

SIGNATURE MUST BE NOTARIZED OR WITNESSED BY CHURCH STAFF OR TRUSTEE

Signed and Sworn before me:

Witness _____
Signature Printed Name Date

PARENTAL CONSENT for minor under age 18

As legal guardian of the above named participant under the age of 18, I give my permission for him/her to be involved in the Youth and Family Ministry program(s) of the Church, Region and Unity Worldwide Ministries. I am familiar with the general goals and purpose of the program(s). I understand I will be notified of any special activities and trips away from church including location, form of travel and cost. Should my child choose to attend such activities, I agree to send them with the appropriate clothes, personal items and money needed. Unless I have made special arrangements with a group leader, transportation to/from church or group activities or to a common drop point for group travel is the child's and parent's responsibility. If my child needs to be sent home for any reason, including behavior problems or medical reasons, I agree it will be at my expense.

OTHER RELEASES **Photography release**, I hereby grant the Church, Region, Unity Worldwide Ministries and its representative permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from local and regional Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever, such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

Confidentiality. I understand that health information on this form will only be shared, as needed, with group leaders, church staff and medical professionals to safeguard and support the participant. This information will not be publicly disseminated or released to any outside organization. However, since it is common practice for the Church (or Region) to publish a participant's contact, birth date and/or school on the group's roster if they actively participate in the group (or attend a regional event), I authorize the Church (and Region) to publish such information on a local (or event) roster **EXCEPT** for the following (*please specify*):

Limit of consent. The consent outlined in this Medical/Liability Release, concerning my child's participation in Youth Ministry activities, expires next September 1 (or earlier, if listed here: _____). **It is my responsibility to notify group leaders or Youth and Family Ministry Director if any information changes or I decide to withhold consent.**

ABOUT INSURANCE CARDS—THIS IS IMPORTANT!

A hospital may require a Social Security number and/or insurance card (as proof of insurance) before treatment or admittance. Make sure the participant carries that information to events, or you can provide that information here:

Above-named minor's SS# _____ - _____ - _____ Attach copies (front **and** back) of **insurance card**.

Photography Release and Assignment

(Name of Unity Church)

I understand that my child might be photographed as a member of a group, as a Youth Ministry participant, or in a voluntary photograph. I hereby assign all of my rights, title and interest in and to any photographs and videotape images to the Church. I grant the Church and its representatives permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from all Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

I specifically authorize the Church to reproduce, publish, and distribute copies of said photographs or videotape images, as well as authorize the Church to submit said photographs for publication by the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries.

I understand that no compensation for efforts or participation of the above named participant is promised or implied. I do hereby release to the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries any and all interest in and to any proceeds from the sale or production of photographic or videotape reproductions.

Name of Participant

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Phone Number

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian name printed

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Photography Release and Assignment

(Name of Unity Church)

I understand that my child might be photographed as a member of a group, as a Youth Ministry participant, or in a voluntary photograph. I hereby assign all of my rights, title and interest in and to any photographs and videotape images to the Church. I grant the Church and its representatives permission to use, without compensation or restriction, photographs and videotape images (from all Unity events) in which the participant appears, in any manner whatsoever such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide shows, etc.

I specifically authorize the Church to reproduce, publish, and distribute copies of said photographs or videotape images, as well as authorize the Church to submit said photographs for publication by the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries.

I understand that no compensation for efforts or participation of the above named participant is promised or implied. I do hereby release to the Church, the Regional Association of Unity Churches and Unity Worldwide Ministries any and all interest in and to any proceeds from the sale or production of photographic or videotape reproductions.

Name of Participant

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Phone Number

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian name printed

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Event Evaluation—Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Name of event _____ Date of event _____

1. How did you hear about this event?
2. What made you decide to come to this event?
3. What were your expectations for this event?
4. On a scale of 1 to 10, how were your expectations met? (with 10 being high, 1 being low)
5. What was your favorite thing about this event?
6. What about this experience could be improved?

Rate the following areas from 1-10. (with 10 being high, 1 being low)

_____ Opening/Closing	_____ Facility
_____ Small break-out groups	_____ Facilitators
_____ Large group activities	_____ Other—specify activity_____
_____ Food	_____ Other—specify activity_____

Additional Comments:

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Appendix H:

Other

List of Verbs

Accomplish	Compliment	Embrace	Heal	Mold	Reduce	Support
Acquire	Compose	Encourage	Hold	Motivate	Refine	Surrender
Adopt	Conceive	Endow	Host	Move	Reflect	Sustain
Advance	Confirm	Engage	Identify	Negotiate	Reform	Take
Affect	Connect	Engineer	Illuminate	Nurture	Regard	Tap
Affirm	Consider	Enhance	Implement	Open	Relate	Team
Alleviate	Construct	Enlighten	Improve	Organize	Relax	Touch
Amplify	Contact	Enlist	Improvise	Participate	Release	Trade
Appreciate	Continue	Enliven	Inspire	Pass	Rely	Translate
Ascend	Counsel	Entertain	Integrate	Perform	Remember	Travel
Associate	Create	Enthuse	Involve	Persuade	Renew	Understand
Believe	Decide	Evaluate	Keep	Play	Resonate	Use
Bestow	Defend	Excite	Know	Possess	Respect	Utilize
Brighten	Delight	Explore	Labor	Practice	Restore	Validate
Build	Deliver	Express	Launch	Praise	Return	Value
Call	Demonstrate	Extend	Lead	Prepare	Revise	Venture
Cause	Devise	Facilitate	Light	Present	Sacrifice	Verbalize
Choose	Direct	Finance	Live	Produce	Safeguard	Volunteer
Claim	Discover	Forgive	Love	Progress	Satisfy	Work
Collect	Discuss	Foster	Make	Promise	Save	Worship
Combine	Distribute	Franchise	Manifest	Promote	Sell	Write
Command	Draft	Further	Master	Provide	Serve	Yield
Communicate	Dream	Gather	Mature	Pursue	Share	
Compel	Drive	Generate	Measure	Realize	Speak	
Compete	Educate	Give	Mediate	Receive	Stand	
Complete	Elect	Grant	Model	Reclaim	Summon	

Background Check—Confidential

(Name of Unity Church)

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

Personal History

Name (<i>Please Print</i>)		Valid Driver's License Number
		State
Previous Names Used (Including Maiden or Married Names)		Social Security Number
Street Address	Apt. #	Are you 25 years or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Birth date ____/____/____
City, State	Zip Code	Day Phone
Email	Evening Phone	Cell Phone
List all addresses, including zip codes or county, where you have lived during the last five years.		

Are you willing to submit to a background check?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offense?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Do you have any charges of a criminal offense pending?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please explain.	
Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to child abuse or a crime involving actual or attempted sexual molestation of a minor?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
If yes, please explain.	

Do you have any charges of child abuse or molestation pending? Yes No

If yes, please explain.

Have you ever been convicted or are there charges pending for motor vehicle negligence?

Yes No

If yes, please explain.

Applicant's Statement *(Please read carefully before signing.)*

I certify that the facts contained on this form are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. During the application process and at any time during any subsequent employment or volunteer time, I hereby authorize _____ *(Name of Unity Church)* to conduct a background check inquiry to include personal and public record information. I specifically release any criminal information repositories, courts, state transportation department, schools and institutions from any liability, so that they may freely and completely respond to any inquiry relating to my character and fitness for working with children/youth. I hereby release all such references including record custodians, both collectively and individually, from any and all liability for damages of whatever kind or nature in regard to their release of information. I waive any right I may have to inspect any information provided about me by those personal references identified on this application. I understand that any falsifications or omissions may result in my application being rejected or may result in my termination from volunteer service.

Applicant's Signature _____ **Date** _____



Commitment Agreement

I willingly commit to:

- Pray for the children during the week.
- Share information with others as appropriate.
- Seek support when needed and maintain open communication with the Youth and Family Ministry Director, including concerns.
- Practice Unity principles with the youth. Strive to respond to children and co-teachers from a point of love, appreciation, and support.
- Give attention to preparing thoughtful and interesting lessons. Allot at least one hour per teaching week for lesson planning and preparation.
- Follow requested procedures such as having children signed in and out.
- Attend trainings when scheduled.
- Follow requested procedures to make arrangements for a substitute in the event of an absence.
- Tidy up and organize classroom after class.
- Teach/assist in the classroom _____ times per month for _____ months.
- Other _____

The Youth and Family Ministry Department agrees to lovingly provide for me:

- A director to guide the program and coordinate activities.
- Resources, equipment, and supplies for all activities.
- Training opportunities.
- Ideas and current resources.
- A safe, supportive, responsive and loving environment.
- A CD or other copy of the minister's lesson without charge.

Name _____ Date _____

YFM Director _____ Date _____

New Volunteer Checklist— Youth & Family Ministry

(Name of Unity Church)

Name _____ Today's date _____
 Address _____ Home phone _____
 City, state, zip _____
 Email _____ Cell phone _____ Work phone _____

Initial Screening

- Application completed
- 3 references provided and checked
- Photo I.D. taken
- Background screening submitted
- Background screening completed
- Interview conducted

Date

Training

- Classroom observations completed
- Agreement signed
- Received Policies/Procedures Handbook
or policies and procedures explained
- Overview of program explained
- Orientation/Training attended
- Toured youth ministry area
- Other _____

Added to System

- Nametag requested
- Added to roster
- Added to appropriate email mailing lists
- Added to database
- Nametag made
- Sent welcome email introducing to team
- Other _____

Reference Request Letter (sample)

Name of Church
Address of Church
City, State and Zip Code
Phone
Fax
Email

Date

Recipient Name
Recipient Street Address
Recipient City, State, Zip

Dear _____:

Hello. My name is _____ (name) and I'm the _____ (title) at _____ (name of church). I am contacting you for a personal reference for _____ (name of applicant). He/She is volunteering to work in our Youth Ministry department as a _____ (name of position). As with all our volunteers, we request that they give us three personal references, which we then proceed to check.

_____ (name of applicant) listed you as one of his/her references. I will be calling you within a week for brief answers to the following questions.

- 1) How long have you known _____ (name of applicant)?
- 2) In what capacity have you known the applicant, or how did you meet?
- 3) What is your overall impression of the applicant as a person?
- 4) How do you feel he/she works or would work with children, even if you have not personally seen him/her do so?
- 5) Would you have any reservations whatsoever about the applicant working with children?

I appreciate your assistance with this and I look forward to talking with you.

Sincerely,

Name, Title

Room Request Form

Today's Date _____

Activity _____
(name of class/group/activity)

Requested by _____

Conducted by _____

Room Requested (name/number)

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

Date(s) of Activity _____

New Request
 Re-submit
 Move to new location
 Date and/or time change
 Cancellation
 Child Care*
 *If child care is needed, please contact the Nursery Coordinator or Youth and Family Ministry Director.

Time _____ am/pm To _____ am/pm

Day(s) of Week _____

Details to Follow

Room Set-Up

Audio

- None
- Stand mic(s) # _____
- Handheld mic(s) # _____
- Lavalier mic(s) # _____
- Portable CD
- Room sound system
- Sound Tech, set-up/operator
- 2-way Radio

Media

- None
- TV/VCR/DVD
- Overhead projector/screen
- Laptop
- PowerPoint projector/screen
- Screen
- Video camera/monitor
- Record on video in Sanctuary

Equipment Set-Up

- None
- Stools # _____
- Whiteboard & Markers
- Chalkboard & Chalk/eraser
- Flip chart & Markers
- Podium
- Music stand
- Collection bag
- Other _____

Chair Set-Up

- # of Chairs _____
- Plastic Cushioned

Table Set-Up

- Rectangular tables # _____
- Round tables # _____

Kitchen Needs

- Use of kitchen
- Use of refrigerator
- Tablecloths (Fabric Plastic)
- Plates (small/large), napkins, utensils, cups: # of ea _____

Diagram on back

Beverage Set-Up #of People _____

Check: Coffee: Reg. Decaf. Tea: Hot Cold Ice Water Other _____

Comments _____

Office Use Only

Date Scheduled in Computer _____ By _____

Revised _____ By _____

Revised _____ By _____

Copies to:
 Facilities _____ Requester _____ Other _____