

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY GUIDE

**For Directors, Ministers
and Volunteers**

Unity Worldwide Ministries
Lee's Summit, Missouri

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY GUIDE

Project Coordinator: Anna Andes, Ed.D.
Writer/Editor: Anna Andes, Curriculum Development Consultant
Assistant Editor: Bernadette Swanson
Cover Design and Layout: Joanna Carrell
Cover Photo: Photodisc

Creators

Joanne Burns, Youth & Family Ministry Director, Unity Church of the Hills, Austin, TX
Robin Clark, Youth & Family Ministry Director, Unity on the River, Amesbury, MA
Jacquie Hardesty, Southwest Region Children's Ministry Consultant
Rev. Kathryn Kellogg, Children's Ministry/Field Licensing Coordinator,
Unity Worldwide Ministries
Valerie Mansfield, Youth & Family Ministry Director, Unity of Louisville, KY
Marygrace Sorensen, South Central Region Children's Ministry Consultant

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Unity Worldwide Ministries
P.O. Box 610, Lee's Summit, Missouri 64063
816-524-7414
www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org
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In Excel (**only on accompanying CD, not included in this book**)

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1 Introduction and Purpose

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ How Does Youth and Family Ministry Benefit Your Church?
 - ☞ Who Is This Manual for?
-

Our children are sacred. Our role as caretakers of their spiritual growth is sacred. We can consciously commit to deepening our support of youth ministry within our church families. We can open our hearts and church doors to wider communities, sharing our vision and our positive beliefs. Let us join together as a Unity family and clearly answer Myrtle Fillmore's call, "Who will take care of the children?"

—Robin Clark, Youth and Family Ministry Director,
Unity on the River, Amesbury, MA

WELCOME to the new Youth and Family Ministry Guide! This guide is for youth directors and volunteers, ministers and the board. Its goal is to support, educate and guide all whose heart and work is in providing our young people and their families with excellence in ministry. We believe that we have a sacred responsibility to create a safe and loving environment for our children. This environment allows us to see each child as a whole spiritual being and encourages us to call forth their inner greatness through the expression of their spiritual truth. The task can be overwhelming! This guide will help you to create that environment from scratch, support your ongoing program and volunteers, and serve as a resource for best practices in Youth and Family Ministry. We also hope it lowers your human stress so you can truly enjoy the wonder and joy of Youth and Family Ministry.

When the team of experienced Youth and Family Ministry directors came together to create this guide, they wanted to see new areas included such as risk management, Unity basics, and much more about the finances of youth ministry. They also set an intention to keep the information as succinct as possible. Yet, we discovered along the way that Unity youth ministry programs are much larger and serve in more ways than twelve years ago. Thus included in several chapters, such as Chapter 12 "Equipping the Facilities," are recommendations relating to various-sized youth programs in Unity churches.

The creators also made the decision to include as many forms as possible to assist directors. So more than 40 pages of this guide are forms that you can copy and use immediately. Of course, no form will suit every program, so use what works for you and glean ideas from the others as you create your own.

Additionally, the creators wanted the forms to be easily adaptable. This guide includes a CD that contains all the forms. Most are in Microsoft Word while a few are in Excel. On each of the forms is a place for the church's name and address. Some forms will be more detailed than the smaller churches need. Copy the existing form and modify it to fit your individual situation. The Excel forms were designed to assist in tabulating data on your volunteers, youth and finances and may not be needed in some programs.

One of the challenges of any publication is to remain current. We have attempted to speak to this by referencing websites that provide the latest information, especially for risk management. Of course, some of those will change over the years as well. Thus, www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org, the Unity Worldwide Ministries website, will continually update as much information as possible. To go directly to the youth and family ministry portion of the site, go to www.unity.org/yfm.

Over the past twelve years many of you have used the previous guide for youth programs, *New Directions in Spiritual Education*, by Marelu Marson. That manual served us well and will continue to do so. Keep it for ready reference as it contains some detailed information not in this one.

It is impossible to acknowledge all who have in some way contributed to the contents of this guide as the wisdom here is the accumulation of years of youth ministry development. The creation team of six had 169 years in Unity. Eighty-one of those years have been served in Unity leadership. Two of the directors were raised in Unity. And each of those individuals were guided by other wise souls. Additionally, many other directors have shared ideas and resources in the development of this guide. To all those before us who developed youth ministry programs and to all who participated in some way in this creation, we deeply thank you and bless you. *Your gifts and wisdom will impact children and teens, volunteers, directors and ministers for years to come.*

HOW DOES YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY BENEFIT YOUR CHURCH?

Often questions arise about having a spiritual education program for children and teens. Consider these insights gleaned from research and educators of youth.

- Spiritual education of children and teens in a safe, nurturing, empowering environment is a responsibility of the church and the family.
- Unity concepts help children and teens to demonstrate Truth and to know that one person can make a difference.
- Adults can learn from children.
- Children and teens bring a lively energy to the church.
- 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.
- Youth ministry is a great place for congregants to serve as volunteers and to gain leadership skills.
- Teaching strengthens each volunteer's personal learning. It provides a place to put what they have learned into practice.
- The changes in family structure over time have made it necessary to modify how we provide spiritual support to children and families.

WHOM IS THIS MANUAL FOR?

Many people can be directly served through the use of this *Youth and Family Ministry Guide*. Some sections will benefit ministers, the board and directors. Others will benefit directors and volunteers. And all will impact the children and teens as they are effectively served by the adults committed to Youth and Family Ministry.

Especially for Ministers and the Board

Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations” assists the minister and board in looking at considerations for hiring a director, how ministers and directors effectively partner, and training recommendations for the director. The chapter concludes with recommendations on age groupings for the youth as the church grows and guidelines for moving to two or more youth programs for the church.

Chapter 16 “Risk Management” is a critical chapter for ministers and the board to read. Risk management is about keeping our children and adults safe through policies, procedures, and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situations. The numerous questions in this chapter will assist you in assessing your church situations and guide you to some excellent resources. Recommendations for a policy/procedures handbook for youth ministry are included.

Chapter 11 “Financial Foundations” benefits the minister and board through the insight it provides on the financial needs for a growing youth ministry. If your church facility is expanding or remodeling, Chapter 12 “Equipping the Facilities” provides furniture specifications that serve youth best.

Chapter 6 “Getting Started” is what you will want your newly-hired director to read immediately as this chapter details what the director needs to know before the first Sunday and during the first month in this position. The chapter guides both you and the director through critical early discussion so that the transition with a new director moves along as smoothly as possible.

Chapter 5 “Knowing Your Church Culture” provides a number of insightful questions for ministers to discuss with directors.

This YFM Guide can also serve as a discussion basis when you, the minister, meet with the director.

For a New Youth and Family Ministry Director

Reading the entire book initially could be overwhelming. Leafing through various sections is a better approach to become familiar with what it contains.

Read Chapter 6 “Getting Started” immediately as this chapter details what you need to know before the first Sunday and during the first month in this position. The chapter guides both you and the minister through critical early discussions so that the transition moves along as smoothly as possible.

Also read Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations” as it identifies appropriate expectations for directors based on the number of hours they are hired to serve. It also provides training recommendations for directors to sharpen their skills and to keep them current.

Then move on to Chapter 3 “Planning the YFM Program” for a more thorough explanation of what is involved in serving in this position. The second page of chapter 3 lists other director responsibilities and where to turn to in this guide for their descriptions.

Be sure to examine Chapter 19 “Forms” as these forms can be a big time-saver for you in efficient programming. They can either be copied from the chapter or the CD can be downloaded to your computer. Then the church name and address can be added or forms can be customized for your use.

Chapter 11 “Financial Foundations” provides a thorough list of items for consideration in budgeting for a Youth and Family Ministry program. It can easily be tailored for various size programs and can assist in greater accuracy in meeting the financial needs of an effective and growing youth program.

Chapter 16 “Risk Management” is also a critical chapter for you, the director, to read as well as for your ministers and the board to read. Risk management is about keeping our children and adults safe through policies, procedures, and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situations. The numerous questions in this chapter will assist you in assessing your church situations and guide you to some excellent resources. Recommendations for a policy/procedures handbook for youth ministry are described in this essential chapter.

For Experienced Youth and Family Ministry Directors

Many of you could write this book, so suggesting where you should begin is impossible. For you, the index and the forms chapter will probably be primary assets. Do spend time with Chapter 16 “Risk Management” to be certain your program is current in its risk management policies and procedures. Many chapters of this guide can serve as content for training for your volunteers. Chapter 4 “Understanding Our Unity Roots” may assist you in providing Unity background to your new volunteers. Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations” can assist you in clarifying realistic expectations of directors who are employed part-time.

For Teachers and Classroom Assistants

Chapter 8 “Curriculum—Lessons” provides a thorough explanation for directors, teachers and assistants about the Sunday morning experience. It guides you in lesson selection, preparation and facilitation. It also provides insight into music, creating the environment, behavior considerations and agreements. For those teachers and directors who enjoy creating and modifying lessons, a section of the chapter can assist you.

Chapter 9 “Understanding Children and Teens” summarizes developmental information that benefits teachers and assistants as they work with specific age groups. Knowing about the comprehension level a certain age has relating to spirituality is especially valuable to the spiritual education of Youth and Family Ministry. Additionally, the chapter includes insight into various learning styles and the emotional cycle a person goes through when they experience loss and grief. All these topics can strengthen volunteers’ insight and expertise in working with children and teens.

For a Beginning Youth Ministry Program

Begin by assessing your needs, what facilities you have available and what your vision is for youth ministry. You may not be ready to do this in detail yet, but take time to look at Chapter 17 “Creating Vision, Mission and Goals” as it suggests a process that can assist in generating enthusiasm and support for creating a Youth and Family Ministry.

Several chapters in this guide speak specifically to small programs. Chapter 7 “Creating the Sunday Morning Experience” describes numerous responsibilities that need to be handled by someone such as the lead teacher, especially if you do not have a director. Use these steps to determine what needs to be handled behind the scenes. Some responsibilities may be delegated to someone other than the teachers.

Guidelines for selecting curriculum and understanding lessons are thoroughly described in Chapter 8 “Curriculum—Lessons.” This is a critical chapter for creating effective new programs.

Making decisions about supplies and facilities can be done easily if you read Chapter 12 “Equipping the Facilities.” At the beginning of the chapter are considerations for a one-room ministry and for a portable ministry. The tables at the end of the chapter list needed supplies and make furniture recommendations for classrooms.

If you are providing a nursery, be sure to browse through Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care” to find suggested policies and procedures that are best for the special needs of these young souls. Safety, First Aid and Emergency procedures are also summarized there.

Also look at Chapter 19 “Forms” as these forms can provide organization and structure in the program early on. The forms can either be copied from the chapter or the CD can be downloaded to your computer. Then the church name and address can be added, or forms can be customized for your use.

For any size program, Chapter 16 “Risk Management” is essential for youth leaders/directors, ministers and the board to read. Risk management is about keeping our children and adults safe through policies, procedures, and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situations. The numerous questions in this chapter will assist you in assessing your church situations and guide you to some excellent resources. Recommendations for a policy/procedures handbook for youth ministry are included.

TO THE CHILD’S GUIDE...

To you it has been given to walk for a time with a child. You will be to him [or her] a friend, a companion, a guide—an opener of doors. A loving arm to hold him, a source of wisdom and light.

All that you are as a person will enter into what you give him. You will not mold him; instead you will help him unfold. You will not so much direct him in your path as you will help him find his own. You will not so much transmit to him your superior judgement [*sic*], as you will share with him the benefits of your mature judgement [*sic*] and experience...

Teacher of children, do you see the greatness of your task? Look and find it. It will awe you and overpower you. It will teach you life’s message. It will cost you dearly in time, in effort and responsibility. But it will lift you up with the joy which comes only from the giving of oneself to life’s significance, to a task, which affects human destiny!

— Excerpts from *The Best of AGAPE*
Association of Unity Churches



2 Director and Program Considerations

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Considerations for Hiring a Director
 - ☞ Responsibilities of a Director
 - ☞ Qualifications of a Director
 - ☞ Financial Considerations
 - ☞ Partnering With the Director
 - ☞ Training for the Director
 - ☞ Program Sizes/Groupings
 - ☞ Considerations for a Growing Church and YFM Program
 - ☞ Sample Director Job Descriptions
-

TYPICALLY Unity centers and churches begin with a spiritual program for adults. As the number of adults being served increases, the opportunity and need to provide spiritual education for children and teens also becomes apparent. Offering a program for young people attracts a wider age variety of adults who participate in the church which, in turn, brings more energy and resources to all. A program for children and teens moves through many growth stages that can be challenging to a church. This chapter provides ministers and the board guidance in selecting the key person or persons to organize that program along with guidance in program size groupings of the youth.

Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) serves a variety of people in many ways. The primary focus is the children and teens. In small churches with a volunteer leader or director, this may be their only focus. However, when serving young people, inevitably, directly or indirectly, the parents are also served. This may consist of keeping parents informed about what their children are learning, helping them learn about the church, whom to contact for what, and how to incorporate Unity principles into their parenting skills. Or it may become a program which builds family and community relationships among families and/or an intergenerational program focused on building church community.

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

CONSIDERATIONS FOR HIRING A DIRECTOR

Why hire a Youth and Family Ministry Director?

A vital youth program:

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

Having a Youth and Family Ministry Director increases:

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

RESPONSIBILITIES OF A DIRECTOR

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

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

Children and Teens

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

Curriculum

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

Volunteers

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

(continued on p.14)

RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUTH DIRECTOR BASED ON PROGRAM SIZE

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

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

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

Parental Support

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

Minister, Church Staff and Board

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

Congregation

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

Community

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

QUALIFICATIONS OF A DIRECTOR

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

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

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

FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

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

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

PARTNERING WITH THE DIRECTOR **Minister-Director Relationships**

The minister is responsible for the worship and educational aspects of the church. Whether the director is a volunteer or paid staff, the director reports to the minister or a supervisor the minister designates. Both the minister and director are vital in holding and communicating the vision for the Youth and Family Ministry program.

Discuss together the church mission and vision statements, the YFM mission and vision statements, and its structure of operation. See Chapter 5, “Knowing Your Church Culture” for an extended list of considerations for discussion.

Meet together monthly, or possibly weekly for larger programs, to keep everyone informed, to gain insight into the other areas of the church program, and to share what plans are being made that will affect the youth ministry. Building this relationship positions everyone to make confident decisions that are consistent with the overall policies of the church and ministerial leadership. During these meetings set aside time to pray together for the children, the families, and the ongoing revelation of a shared vision.

Board of Trustees-YFM Director Relationships (Partnering)

The Board of Trustees is responsible for major business decisions that include the youth program. The board primarily knows what is happening in youth ministry through the YFM director and minister reports. In many churches, one board member serves as a liaison to youth ministry. This person can serve to advocate special YFM needs that require board approval.

Board members are encouraged to be equally supportive in welcoming and honoring the youth as you are in welcoming and honoring the adults in your congregation. By honoring the Christ presence in all ages, we are working together to create healthy church congregations. All individuals present are fulfilling the Divine appointment within their soul to attend your church on any given day. Speak to all and let your light shine with theirs.

The Church Congregation-Director Relationships

The church congregation is your spiritual family. Encourage the entire congregation, including singles and seniors, to see the youth as belonging to them all. It takes an entire commUNITY to raise a child. Every talent you need to manage a successful YFM is already available within this congregation! Directors and ministries have the opportunity to bring it out!

TRAINING FOR THE DIRECTOR

Ongoing training will assist the director in becoming successful in various elements of his/her position. This guide will be extremely helpful in their ongoing education.

- ***Read immediately:***

- Chapter 6 “Getting Started–The First Sunday!”
- Chapter 7 “Creating the Sunday Morning Experience”
- Chapter 16 “Risk Management”

- ***Read as soon as possible:***

- Chapter 5 “Knowing Your Church Culture”
- Chapter 13 “Volunteer Team Building”
- Chapter 4 “Understanding Our Unity Roots”
- All other chapters

- ***As soon as possible*** Network with your Regional Education Consultants and experienced local Unity directors. (You can locate your regional consultants at www.unity.org/rec)
- Attend regional workshops offered by your Children’s Consultant, Uniteen Consultant, YOU Consultant and NGU consultant.
- Consult Unity Worldwide Ministries’ website for your region and all US regions. (www.unity.org/regions)
- Attend Child/Teen Ministry Week offered in the summer by Unity Worldwide Ministries.
- Take classes in Spiritual Education & Enrichment (SEE) offered through Unity Institute and your local Unity churches.
- Call Unity Worldwide Ministries (816-524-7414) and speak to the Education Department to learn about becoming a Certified Spiritual Educator and/or Licensed Unity Teacher. **See box on next page for more information.**

WHAT IS THE CERTIFIED SPIRITUAL EDUCATORS PROGRAM (CSE)?

The CSE is a spiritual course of study and certification offered by Unity Worldwide Ministries that provides a consistent foundational base of knowledge and skills necessary for effectual and ethical excellence in Unity Youth and Family Ministry.

WHOM IS THE PROGRAM FOR?

Certification as a Spiritual Educator is recommended for individuals who serve Unity youth as volunteer nursery and preschool helpers, children's teachers, teen leaders, and youth ministry staff. It can be taken as a separate program or the beginning tier of a three-tiered curriculum devoted to developing spiritual leaders in Unity Youth and Family Ministry. (The other tiers are Licensed Unity Teacher specializing in Youth and Family Ministry, and Youth and Family Minister.)

WHEN I FINISH WHAT WILL I HAVE LEARNED?

When certified, an individual will have:

- Working knowledge of Unity principles and the twelve powers.
- Familiarity with the Bible structurally, historically and metaphysically.
- Working knowledge of metaphysics including terms, definitions and age-appropriate sequence.
- Foundation in prayer.
- Ability to assess and create an environment for spiritual discovery that is safe, age-appropriate, supportive and encouraging.
- Awareness and application of risk management components.
- Experience in identifying, rating, and writing curriculum for youth ministry classes.

HOW CAN I LEARN MORE ABOUT THIS?

For more information, please contact the Children's Ministry Coordinator at 816-524-7414 or kid@unity.org or go to www.unity.org/yfm

PROGRAM SIZES/GROUPINGS

The Youth and Family Ministry serves children pre-natal through 18, or through the high school experience, depending on the church guidelines and the volunteers who implement the program.

Grouping Possibilities

All children are not the same. Each grows at his/her own rate in many different areas—spiritually, physically, mentally, emotionally and socially. Likewise, each expresses their own uniqueness differently. Our classrooms and our age groupings need to be designed to support growth in all areas. Likewise, available space impacts decisions about groupings.

Very Small Program/One-Room Classroom

Small churches and programs may only have enough children and/or space to provide a single classroom. If at all possible, find a way to also have a nursery-toddler area. This size program usually requires considerable flexibility by those leading it plus the adaptation of materials to have them meet the needs of the various ages.

Teaching and practicing cooperation is probably the most important tool to use in the small program. As many of the youth will probably be siblings, they will be accustomed to adapting to their siblings personality and learning styles. Encourage the older children to read a part of the story and to assist the younger students with their activities once they have completed their own. Additionally, have separate age-appropriate handouts and other activities for the various ages. An extra adult in addition to the required two teachers can assist with children who may not be ready to participate with the group that day.

Growing Program

As more children are attracted to the program, move toward three groups—one of children not yet in school, one for those in elementary school, and a group for teens that includes those in middle school plus high school. Encourage mentorship of older youth to younger ones in their age group. Hands-on activities and experiences within the lesson are important as all ages will respond willingly and assist each other in accomplishing them.

Full Program

Groupings that most effectively meet the needs of the various ages are:

- The nursery (ages 0-2): Children this age need love and a reassuring presence.
- Preschool (ages 3-5): These children like to try things for themselves. They may be silly, loud, active and social. Here the children are learning that God is everywhere, always and loves us unconditionally.
- Elementary (ages 5/6-10): At this age the children are starting to build relationships with other children and adults. They like to move around and are learning to read and write. They understand stories literally but not in abstract thinking.
- Middle school children, Uniteens, ages 11-13, are trying to make sense out of the world, their bodies, their life and where they fit in. They begin to share and connect with others in the region.

- The high school students, Youth of Unity (YOU), are older teens, ages 14-18. They are learning to co-create their own journeys in life using the Bible and Unity Principles to develop a deeper understanding of their daily life. They support and share with each other and those in the regional and international groups.

Depending upon the number of children you are serving or expect to serve, or your facilities and environment, you may combine or divide these groups differently. Each church is unique and no two programs will look exactly alike.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A GROWING CHURCH AND YFM PROGRAM

Do we offer youth ministry at one service or two?

Attendance of children and teens as well as available classroom space and volunteers will determine how many service times you offer youth education programs.

Infants through YOU can easily be offered at two services. However, the social needs of the Uniteen and YOU ages will require the creation of opportunities for both Uniteen classes and both YOU classes to gather together on a regular basis. Consider having fellowship following the end of first service which will be before the start of second service. To create a sense of community, plan outings for each group. Encourage Uniteen Leaders, YOU sponsors and parents to serve as chaperones and drivers for these events.

How does one transition to offering youth education more than once?

When you decide to offer youth education during both services, here are some suggestions to consider as you double your trained volunteer pool.

- Encourage assistants to move up into a teacher position.
- New recruits who have cleared the volunteer process can shadow more experienced teachers and assistants to learn the classroom procedures.
- Offer additional team trainings targeting new volunteers.
- Create program leaders for various age groups. Encourage your most efficient volunteers to assume this role to assist in creating continuity and to promote communication for the benefit of the children.

Moving to two services is both an exciting time of growth and a time of loss of the family intimacy of the smaller church environment. A child's best "church friend" may choose to attend a different service time, resulting in a sense of loss.

Providing three or more services entails a thoughtful examination with the worship staff over what the early service might look like. What are the demographics of the people expected to attend this service? Knowing the makeup of this congregation will help you design what pieces to offer, such as the nursery and perhaps a couple of multi-age classrooms. Multi-age classes are great to advertise to parents who want their children to attend the same class.

What other factors need to be considered?

Also consider how to handle the children of volunteers when the volunteers serve at one service and attend another. One way is to create a fun, relaxing enrichment or game-oriented group/class that is just for volunteer's children. This includes the children of all the volunteers serving church-wide that morning. Unless you have a lot of children you will only need to provide it during one service (perhaps the middle service) with the understanding that only children staying at the church for more than one service can attend the enrichment time and that those children are expected to attend one hour of ministry class.

Perhaps a third service is later in the afternoon or you offer Saturday services or Wednesday evenings. Again, consider the demographics of the adults attending, the numbers of people expected, and plan accordingly. During the week, take into consideration that children have been in school all day and need time to be in community and to relax. Wednesday evenings are a great time to offer teen groups.

For any size of ministry, remember that what you offer depends on the vision, time and talent available to successfully support each program.

Do not settle for little dreams. God meant you for more.

Listen, be still, can you hear?

—James Dillet Freeman

PART-TIME DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION SAMPLE

Name of Unity Church

Position Title: Director of Youth and Family Ministry
Reports to: Minister(s)
Status: Part-time
Date:

General Description: The Director of Youth and Family Ministry is responsible for the spiritual education of youth, ages birth through high school, in the church community. In keeping with Unity principles, the director implements the elements of an inspiring youth program including relevant curriculum, age-appropriate classroom environments, community-building activities, and a team of well-trained adult volunteers who are themselves Unity students.

Activities and Responsibilities: The Director of Youth and Family Ministry will have a passion for working with youth and will demonstrate experience and qualifications in this area. He/she will fully embrace the Unity teachings and have an ever-unfolding vision of youth ministry and its possibilities in the 21st century. The Director of Youth and Family Ministry will recognize the infinite potential that each child possesses.

1. Develop youth programs for children from birth through high school.
2. Recruit, train, appreciate and nurture youth ministry volunteers and staff.
3. Select age-appropriate curricula and program materials used in all programs.
4. Communicate and collaborate with the minister and staff in the service of youth.
5. Engage the services of regional and national youth ministry consultants as needed.
6. Attend scheduled staff meetings and meet regularly with your supervising minister.
7. Attend seminars and workshops for professional development.
8. Provide articles for church communications.
9. Provide a quarterly report to the minister(s) and board.
10. Create an annual financial vision and be accountable for youth ministry expenditures.
11. Maintain a system of administrative records and equipment inventory.
12. Perform other duties as requested.

Position Specifications:

1. Half-time position: 20 hours/week
2. Time requirements: Sunday mornings before and after service(s) required. Scheduled meetings, office hours, and planning time.
3. Training: On-the-job and through organized training offered regionally and nationally. May include site visit to other Unity church(es).
4. Employee Benefits:
 - i. Salary is \$_____ per hour.
 - ii. Hours are 20 per week, flexible.
 - iii. Vacation is _____ per year (eligible after 6 months), _____ after two years in service.
 - iv. Paid holidays falling on scheduled work days
 - v. Personal time (in lieu of health days): 4 days

Position Qualifications:

- Must be at least 25 years of age.
- Must have been an active Unity congregant for a period of at least one year.
- Grounded in Unity teachings with a demonstrated commitment to personal spiritual growth established through at least one year attendance at church services and Unity adult education.
- Training and one year of experience in youth ministry or youth education (or an equivalent).
- Team-oriented leadership style compatible with children and adults.
- Talent for organized thinking and action.
- Clear, inspirational writing and interpersonal skills.
- Computer proficiency.
- Commitment to and alignment with church purpose, intention and core values.
- Experience supervising adults as employees or volunteers is a plus.

Preferred Qualifications:

- B.A. or B.S. in Education or Child and Family Development (or the equivalent)
- Certified Spiritual Educator or Licensed Unity Teacher

FULL-TIME DIRECTOR JOB DESCRIPTION SAMPLE

Name of Unity Church

Position Title: Director of Youth and Family Ministry
Reports to: Minister(s)
Status: Full-time
Date:

General Description: The Director of Youth and Family Ministry is responsible for the spiritual education of youth, ages birth through high school, in the church community. The director implements the elements of an inspiring youth program that includes relevant curriculum, age-appropriate classroom environments, community-building events, and a team of well-trained adult volunteers who are themselves Unity students. The director provides a fun, safe, orderly, loving and nurturing environment of discovery, in alignment with Unity Principles, for all (youth, parents and volunteers) involved in the programs. The director works with the supervising minister regarding programs, budget, space, and planning for the department.

Activities and Responsibilities: The Director of Youth and Family Ministry will have a passion for working with youth and families and will demonstrate experience and qualifications in this area. He/she will fully embrace the Unity teachings and have an ever unfolding vision of youth ministry and its possibilities in the 21st century. The Director of Youth and Family Ministry will recognize the infinite potential that each child possesses and will create an environment that will bring forth that spiritual potential to its fullest.

1. Design, coordinate, support, evaluate and hold the vision for a comprehensive spiritual program for all ages of youth and their families.
2. Create a child-centered and enriching environment where children are welcome and spiritual exploration is encouraged.
3. Recruit, screen, train, schedule, mentor, appreciate, nurture, and support youth ministry volunteers and staff. Develop orientation, training and ongoing education to support the volunteers' growth. Maintain a roster/database for all volunteers and registered youth.

4. Research, assess, select and/or develop and implement age-appropriate curricula, program resources and supplies used in all Youth and Family Ministry programs.
5. Communicate and collaborate with the minister and staff on procedural, space and scheduling needs and issues in the service of youth ministry through scheduled staff meetings and meetings with the minister.
6. Plan and conduct YFM programs and special activities including seasonal programs, community outreach projects, parent education and family ministry offerings. Maintain an annual calendar for all events.
7. Promote all youth and family programs through articles for the church newsletter and the YFM section of the church website, promotional literature, and other correspondence.
8. Obtain the services of and contribute to regional and national youth ministry resources and consultants.
9. Consult with parents of children in the program when needed.
10. Attend seminars and workshops for professional and business development.
11. Provide a quarterly report to the minister(s) and board with attendance, program information and plans. Attend board meetings as requested.
12. Create annual financial vision and be accountable for monitoring and overseeing all Youth and Family Ministry expenditures within a board-approved budget.
13. Maintain a system of administrative records and equipment inventory.
14. Perform other duties as requested.

Position Specifications:

1. Full-time position: 37-40 hours/week
2. Time requirements: Sunday mornings before and after service(s) required. (One Sunday off every quarter.) Arranges the remainder of hours as desired with availability scheduled at church during business hours at least three weekdays per week, including scheduled staff and minister meetings.
3. Training: On-the-job and through organized training offered regionally and nationally. May include site visit to other Unity church(es).

4. Employee Benefits:
 - i. Salary is commensurate with education and experience and as agreed upon with the minister(s) and as approved by the board.
 - ii. Health insurance as approved by the board.
 - iii. Vacation is aligned with other church employees.
 - iv. Paid-for scheduled church staff holidays (approximately 9/year)
 - v. Personal time (in lieu of health days): 4 days

Position Qualifications:

- Must be at least 25 years of age.
- Demonstrates a commitment to Unity teachings, prayer and personal spiritual growth established through at least one year's attendance at church services and the completion of at least 40 hours of SEE Unity adult education or similar coursework.
- Enthusiastic love for children and youth ministry. Possesses training and at least one year of experience in youth ministry or youth education.
- Team-oriented leadership style compatible with children and adults.
- Clear writing and interpersonal skills compatible with children and adults.
- Talent for organized thinking and action.
- Computer proficiency.
- Commitment to and alignment with church purpose, intention and core values.
- Experience supervising adults as employees or volunteers is a plus.

Preferred Qualifications:

- B.A. or B.S. in Education or Child and Family Development (or the equivalent)
- Certified Spiritual Educator or Licensed Unity Teacher in Youth and Family Ministry



3 Planning the Program— What Is Mine to Do?

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Director Responsibilities
 - ☞ Planning Guidelines
 - ☞ Event/Activity Planning
 - ☞ Planning Specific Events
 - ☞ Other Possible Responsibilities
 - ☞ Training for the Director
 - ☞ Special Event Planning Timeline—
Christmas Celebration
-

CONGRATULATIONS on answering the call to serve our Unity youth and families! As the Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) Director, the physical tasks associated with your position will vary according to the size of your church and number of young people. Regardless of church size, the spiritual intention of your position remains the same:

- To be an advocate for youth and families in the life of your church.
- To be a living example of the God-centered/principle-centered life you desire for the youth. Maintain a personal practice of prayer and meditation.
- To educate, facilitate and support children's right to ministry that is designed to encourage and empower their spiritual unfolding.
- To affirm that each child, teen, parent, and volunteer is whole and complete, and in his or her perfect place for recognizing and developing their Christ potential.
- To co-create a safe, supportive and loving environment for individual growth to take place.

DIRECTOR RESPONSIBILITIES

As Director for Youth and Family Ministry, planning effective use of your time and abilities is essential to the creation of a quality spiritual education program for all those under your direction. The responsibilities of a director, listed in Chapter 2, clearly suggest

the areas a director needs to consider in organizing and implementing the program. Understanding exactly what is required for each of the responsibilities varies from one church to another. To understand all that is involved in each of these responsibilities, read thoroughly these recommended chapters. This will help you to plan how to use your time and energy effectively in serving as the director.

Major Responsibilities for a Director

Where Explained

- | | |
|--|-----------------------|
| • Overseeing the Sunday morning program for children and teens | Chapters 6, 7, 8 |
| • Organizing and distributing curriculum and supplies for lessons | Chapters 3, 8, 12 |
| • Writing lessons for various ages* | Chapter 8 |
| • Recruiting and interviewing volunteers | Chapter 13 |
| • Planning and conducting training for volunteers | Chapter 14 |
| • Scheduling and supporting volunteers* | Chapters 13, 14 |
| • Creating and using communication systems with volunteers* | Chapter 10 |
| • Visioning for Youth and Family Ministry | Chapters 3, 17 |
| • Supervising/overseeing special or extra youth programs such as Uniteens and YOU* | Chapters 3, 9, 11, 16 |
| • Handling financial responsibilities relating to the YFM program | Chapter 11 |
| • Writing news articles and program reports* | Chapter 10 |
| • Maintaining relationships and communication with other staff members, the minister and parents | Chapters 2, 10, 11 |
| • Planning, promoting and conducting special events for youth, intergenerational groups and parents* | Chapters 2, 3 |
| • Assisting in planning holiday and intergenerational worship* | Chapters 2, 3 |

Director Job Descriptions

If you do not already have a written job description, assist in creating one. Learn what the minister's expectations of your position are. Write a draft from your discussion and present it to the minister for editing, clarification and acceptance.

* These items would not be a part of the responsibilities of a director hired for 10-15 hours per week. See Chapter 2, Table: "Responsibilities of Youth Director Based on Program Size."

PLANNING GUIDELINES

The larger the youth ministry and the larger the event, the more planning time should be allowed. Once you understand the repeating events of the church and youth ministry, it becomes easy to plan out the calendar a full year in advance.

- Organize the various types of work you have to do. Ex. Short-time tasks—email, phone calls, sorting/filing; Mid-time tasks—planning and making supply purchases, writing reports and newsletter submissions; Long-time tasks—writing lessons, planning an event.
- Prioritize your work—know what must be done by when. Block out time to accomplish the preparation well before the final minute.
- Encourage your fellow staff members to respect when you need to have messages taken or calls held.
- Know your most creative time of each day and use it for doing those responsibilities that require the most creativity. Allowing blocks of time to focus uninterrupted on a project is a gift you give to yourself.
- Delegate what can be delegated—possibly recruit a volunteer to organize supplies and prepare them for Sunday morning.
- Watch amount of time spent in relationships and evaluate importance of each one. Building relationships is essential as director, and can be a time eater. Use wisdom in determining an appropriate amount of time for each of these.
- Develop systems—for communication, for organizing and filing, for calendars, etc.
- Take time daily to be still, pray and listen.
- Taking care of the needs of others begins with taking care of your needs.

Weekly Planning

- Prepare lesson plans for teachers to pick up at least two weeks ahead so they can prepare properly and prayerfully. This is especially needed when teachers teach every other week. In larger programs, prepare lesson plans at least a quarter in advance.
- Prepare activities and collect resources needed for Sunday.
- Review calendar of events and determine next areas of planning for various functions: recruitment, training, youth events, intergenerational/family events, etc.
- Meet with minister and those who assist you.

Calendar Planning Tips

A “Year-at-a Glance” wall calendar (Keep available to YFM volunteers.)

- Use a permanent thin-line marker—can refer to it in the years to come. (Rubbing alcohol or Soft Scrub® type cleanser on a cotton swab removes permanent markers.)
- Indicate church ministry mandated dates, i.e. holiday and other celebrations, congregational meeting date, etc.
- Use different color markers to indicate youth ministry dates, big church dates, and major adult activities.
- Include dates of school or community events to avoid.
- Include dates you want to hold tentatively using a washable marker.
- Also mark what curriculum the elementary, Uniteen and YOU students are using especially if you rotate curriculum every three or four years.
- Train your key volunteers to review the calendar before proposing dates for outings and program events.
- Consider creating a tentative calendar for the year. (See Sample Yearly YFM Calendar suggesting key church activities.)

A Personal Monthly Calendar (planner, PDA, etc.)

- Travels with you to keep track of the same schedule.
- Use to record the smaller appointments you will have with your minister, staff members and volunteers.
- Include blocks of time to prepare lessons, research and create holiday and other programs, etc.
- Include time to write proposals, newsletter submissions and reports as necessary.
- Keep a current copy of your volunteers’ contact information in it for times when you receive a message from someone who will not be able to be present Sunday morning.

SAMPLE YEARLY CALENDAR

January

- White stone ceremony
- Holiday decorations down
- Family ministry event
- Uniteen monthly event
- Volunteer training—Goal-setting activities
- Parenting workshop
- Season of Peace/Non-violence begins

February

- Valentine's Day
- YOU Winter Rally
- Curriculum meeting
- Easter event planning meeting
- Lent begins
- Uniteen monthly event

March

- Invite Chaplains into classrooms—review prayer
- Easter event planning meeting
- Service work party—playground & landscape team
- Uniteen monthly event
- Palm Sunday

April

- Daylight Savings Time
- Good Friday Service—need child care
- Easter Sunday
- YOU Fundraiser Luncheon
- YOU Service Rally
- Uniteen monthly event
- Family ministry event—Special Game Night

May

- Uniteen monthly event
- Spring picnic—Family ministry event
- Mother's Day & Ladies Tea—offer child care

- 4th/5th grade outing

- YOU fund raiser—yard sale
- Last day of school for kids
- Memorial Day weekend

June

- Graduates Celebration
- Father's Day Picnic—YFM facilitate games
- YOU Summer Rally
- Service Project—Uniteens & YOUer's
- Uniteen monthly event

July

- July 4th
- Youth week activity—Vacation Church School
- YOU Sunday Service
- YOU International Conference
- Uniteen monthly event
- Family ministry event—boat trip
- Adventure in Faith planning meetings

August

- Youth fly-up celebration & pool party
- School begins
- Volunteer training & commitment ceremony
- Uniteen monthly event

September

- Labor Day
- Teachers/Volunteers Retreat and Training
- Men's/Women's Retreat
- Family ministry event—Special Movie Night
- Uniteen monthly event

October

- YOU Fall Rally
- Adventure in Faith Program begins

- Regional Teacher Training or Retreat
- Uniteen Leader training
- Uniteen monthly event
- Family ministry event—Halloween Party

- Parenting Workshop
- Daylight Savings Time

November

- Pet/Animal Blessing
- Annual Church Membership meeting
- Thanksgiving
- Thanksgiving Eve Service—child care required
- Uniteen monthly event
- Family ministry event—Christmas Crafts day
- Decorate for Christmas
- Advent begins
- Christmas Program/Pageant Rehearsals begin

December

- YFM Children's Christmas Celebration & Party
- Christmas Program/Pageant
- Holiday Party—Adult Ministry
- Hanukkah
- Kwanzaa
- Uniteen monthly event
- Teen Christmas party
- Candle Lighting Service—child care required
- Burning Bowl Service—child care required

EVENT/ACTIVITY PLANNING

When planning any event, numerous areas need to be considered. Develop your plans in writing and create a system for keeping track of the details. Identify which of these areas need to be considered for various types of events. Check Chapter 19 “Forms” to see what forms are available that can be easily adapted for your event planning.

- **Purpose:** What is the purpose? Who is the target audience? How will they benefit? How does this event align with the church mission/vision? With the Unity philosophy? The church culture?
- **Approval:** What are channels for approval? Timeline for this? Forms to use?
- **Room/facility needs:** Are needed areas reserved on church calendar? What space is needed? One large room? Breakout area? First aid area? Refreshment area?
- **Event setup:** What room setup is needed? (tables/chairs) Who will do that? When?
- **Planning:** What are various details that need to be handled? Timeline for these? What planning meetings need to be held and when? With whom? Will registration be needed? If so, who will handle them?
- **Finances:** What is budgeted? What is expected attendance? Will there be a charge? Who will handle money? What checks are needed the day of the event?
- **Timing:** What is the timing of the event/day? What schedule is needed?
- **Program needs:** Will there be a speaker? Musician? What multimedia and equipment needs?
- **Volunteers:** What volunteers are needed? What responsibilities are they needed for? What record-keeping is needed about this?
- **Other Staffing:** What are office staff needs? How much director time is required? What responsibilities can be delegated?
- **Promotion:** How will this event be promoted? Where?—bulletin for 3 weeks, newsletter, email, website, take-home fliers for children? When? Who will do this?
- **Transportation:** What are the needs? Are permission slips required? Insurance? Medical release forms? Is driver documentation on file?
- **Supplies, food:** What supplies, equipment, food, etc. are needed? Who will plan and purchase these?
- **Cleanup:** How and who will handle this? How will spills be handled?

- Evaluation: How will event be evaluated? Will there be a staff/volunteer post-event wrap-up meeting? Who will be responsible for these?
- Event completion: How will appreciation be expressed to volunteers? What needs to be returned? What recommendations need to be recorded about the event?

PLANNING SPECIFIC EVENTS

Special activities are a way of building community through the event as well as through the event planning and creation process. Every event is an educational opportunity for the Unity teachings to be expressed and lived by putting them into practice in relationships with others. Networking with other directors can be a helpful way to learn about successful events and what to avoid. Create a joyous celebration and bring to life the Truth that you know.

Easter

- Begin planning early in January.
- Discuss with minister whether the bunny and traditional secular activities will take place or a more Biblical approach be taken to celebrate this holiday.
- Consider the youth ministry focusing on the Biblical approach and the family ministry providing an egg hunt and related social activities.
- Refer to the *Holiday Spirit Resources* book (#6825) available from Unity Worldwide Ministries as a starting point for plays and other holiday ideas.

Graduation/Promotion Sunday—acknowledges movement of youth to the next level of spiritual maturity and grade in school.

- In the spring, plan for graduating class visits for large program shifts (i.e. nursery to preschool, preschool to elementary, elementary to Uniteens and Uniteens to YOU), so that everyone has an opportunity to preview the program they will be moving to with the safety of their classmates and known teachers.
- Allow six to eight weeks to prepare a graduation ceremony for the youth. Some churches plan the ceremony when school lets out and have a special program and staff for the summer, giving regular volunteers the summer off. Other churches plan the ceremony when school starts back up, so as not to have to recruit and have new volunteers begin in the summer, amid vacation schedule planning.
- Discuss the possibility of a church-wide celebration as a part of the worship service or a separate youth ministry celebration and gathering.
- Certificates or a physical token may be appropriate, but not necessary.

- When moving children and teens into a new classroom for the first time, provide a lesson plan that includes creating group heart/trust agreements, as well as group-bonding exercises. (See Chapter 8 “Curriculum Lessons.”)

YOU Sunday (and Other Special Youth Performances)

- Allow a minimum of two months to walk the teens through the process of creating a worship service.
- Be clear on the order and timing of the service including meditation and lesson.
- When your teens have the opportunity to facilitate the Sunday worship service, do everything in your power to make this a huge success. Bless your minister for allowing the teens to share their spiritual awareness.
- Work with the teens in planning the service.
 - Use guided meditation and silence for Spirit to speak to them regarding the theme for the service and their individual role.
 - Have each person share his or her guidance and find similarities and topics that create a spark within them.
 - As the theme is revealed, one or two teens will step forward to do the lesson, and another to lead a meditation.
 - Have the teens write their ideas for your review; discuss language and content with them to help clarify ideas; include examples the adult congregation will relate to; and include Unity principle.
- Coach the speakers personally or have them mentored by a speaking specialist.
- Invite other teens to handle other portions of the service as steps to build their skills.
- Have teens select a favorite joysong to sing. Use youth musicians or enroll assistance from your music team to work with the YOUers to have complimentary and appropriate music for their theme.
- To encourage each teen to speak with confidence, hold a dress rehearsal. The teens have a way of performing beautifully on the day of their service, although they “appear” unfocused in the preparation.
- Trust the Spirit in them to be present and affirm it every time the minister asks how it’s going.
- Conducting a service after participating in a rally or International YOU Conference provides teens with a great opportunity to share what they experienced.

Christmas

- Begin to plan four to six months in advance when having a holiday pageant or program.
- Be on the watch for an existing play that can be easily translated to portray Unity philosophy. Network with other directors for successful programs they have used. It takes time and many volunteers to create an hour of pageantry. (See Chapter 18 “Resources.”)
- Enroll all appropriate volunteer teams within the church to assist you. Be sure to encourage and invite the adults to participate.
- Invite the prayer team and chaplains to pray for the participants.
- Ask a few choir members to lead a sing-a-long for the opening of the event and/or to work with preparing the children’s musical portion.
- For a sample detailed planning timeline of a Christmas celebration, see the end of this chapter.

Family Worship Services

- When the opportunity presents itself, offer to assist in coordinating a family worship service. These child-friendly services are fun for the whole family.
- The service may follow the regular format but plan it with consideration to the attention span and joyful spirit of our youth.
- Include music enjoyed by all. Sing uplifting songs and songs with motions, possibly taught by the children.
- Suggest that the sermon or lesson portion of the service be short, interactive and expressed in a language all ages can understand.
- Create ways for congregation participation.
- Assure that the atmosphere is welcoming to the children.

Special Summer Program or Vacation Church School

Depending on the culture of your church and community, a special summer program or Vacation Church School program may be an exciting event to hold. The event could be several hours during the day or an evening one that includes the entire family.

- What is the purpose of offering a Vacation Church School? The spiritual focus?
- What timing works best? Daytime? Evening? Weekly—midweek? Weekend?

- What frequency works best? Does the congregation live locally where a weeklong event is feasible? Or some distance from the church that makes it impossible to attend on a daily basis? Would one night several weeks in a row be better?
- Are ample volunteers available during the time it is offered?
- How can community building be most effective?
- Can our teens be enrolled to facilitate portions of the program?
- What is the success rate of other similar-sized Unity churches in providing this type of offering?

Service Projects

- Provide a lesson for children and teens to learn about the connection between what they and Unity believe and doing service.
- Provide opportunities to demonstrate Unity principles—doing God’s work; seeing our interconnectedness; understanding as we give, we receive.
- Consider involving several ages in a project for building relationships. Build the leadership skills of the Uniteens and YOU by having them coach the elementary students in a service project.
- Consider service to your church and to congregants with special needs. Or to the surrounding community.
- Encourage the consciousness of service among all ages. Service can be as simple as practicing random acts of kindness.

SERVICE POSSIBILITIES

- Adopt a nursing home or give them a party.
- Help plant flowers at church or elsewhere.
- Serve Sunday refreshments.
- Assist with church service.
- Wash windshields and leave an uplifting affirmation for the congregants.
- Create cards to send to shut-ins.
- Collect food, gifts, blankets, stuffed toys, etc. for community.
- Clean seniors’ yards.
- Volunteer at soup kitchen, Special Olympics, etc.
- Consider international projects like Heifer International.
- Offer assistance to Unity programs outside of your area.

Summer Camp or Retreat Programs

Depending on the culture of your church and community, a camp-type program might be a desirable alternate. For this use the questions above and also consider:

- Where can we host a camp-type event?
- What are the costs?

- Will participants be willing to drive that distance?
- What food service and lodging facilities are needed?
- How many youth and families will attend?
- What special needs will attendees have?
- Who in the congregation is an RN or first-aid- or CPR-qualified, and would be willing to attend and serve?
- What about a lifeguard for swimming and boating?
- What activities to offer?
- What spiritual aspect/theme will we focus on, teach and strengthen in us?

OTHER EVENT IDEAS

Kids' night out
 Halloween party
 Family carnival
 Christmas decorating party
 Christmas candle-wrapping party
 (affirmations)
 Christmas crafts workshop
 Department open house
 Games/activities for church picnic
 Game and/or movie night
 Un-birthday parties
 Presenting plays

Family/Intergenerational Ministry

In Unity we recognize that family includes all who participate in Unity. Our congregation is an intergenerational one. Small centers and churches value the sense of community and family that they have as a byproduct of being small. As churches grow, maintaining that sense of community is both a concern and a deep desire. Thus Family/Intergenerational Ministry can serve as a bridge to maintaining the sense of community within the church family. This ministry is one that can serve every stage of life through interactive, creative experiences. These events enhance and enrich the mind, body and soul, and allow for the fullest expression of the Christ self.

Responsibility for family/intergenerational programs varies from church to church. The size of program and the number of hours of employment for the youth director are important considerations in deciding who becomes responsible for Family/Intergenerational Ministry. The focus of the events is toward building friendships and relationships among all ages in fun and caring ways. Nearly all the suggestions above for events and activities can easily become intergenerational events.



OTHER POSSIBLE RESPONSIBILITIES

Child Care

The YFM Director may be asked to coordinate child care for workshops, midweek classes and worship services. If possible, enroll a team leader to be the Nursery/ Child Care Coordinator to oversee this scheduling of volunteers. In a large ministry, this can be a paid position. Review Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care” and Risk Management in Chapter 16.

Parenting Workshops and Family Support Services

You may be asked to offer parenting workshops. What a wonderful opportunity to serve parents as they guide their children and teens, especially spiritually! You may have people resources in your congregation that are trained to present these. Consider offering them on a bi-annual or quarterly basis. Also, see Chapter 18 “Resources” of this guide for parenting program possibilities.

Get to know the members of your congregation that are trained professionals in the areas of counseling, child advocacy, social work and teaching. They can assist you in providing up-to-date information and services to families in need within the congregation. The church office or chaplain team should have some contact information as a starting point. Work with other staff to create a resource notebook and a handout sheet with local phone numbers and web site addresses to have available at a moment’s notice.



TRAINING FOR THE DIRECTOR

Training assists every director in becoming successful in various elements of his/her position. Recommended training for directors is described in Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations.” Discuss the suggestions with your minister or supervisor and develop a plan for your growth in serving as the church’s Youth and Family Ministry Director.

SPECIAL EVENT PLANNING TIMELINE— CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Event: Youth & Family Ministry Christmas Celebration

Date: First Saturday in December

Time: 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Now and for all meetings and rehearsals, start with prayer. Affirm that God provides all the resources necessary and co-creates with us a joyous experience for all involved. Email Silent Unity at: www.unityonline.org and click on “Submit a Prayer Request.”

Summer

- Research ideas for upcoming children’s play.

End of August

- Make decision on one or two ideas for future planning meeting.
- Begin promotion by providing basic information for the newsletter.

September

- Create database spreadsheet of key elements to enroll volunteers. Include tasks, responsible person, deadline date, task-complete indicator, notes, date thank-you was sent.
- Determine key volunteers needed: director, song leader, accompanist, costumes, props, promotion, etc.
- Create a flyer or email to enroll interested volunteers. Include a space for parents to share how they would like to volunteer on this project.
- Facilitate a planning meeting including all interested parties to create a plan of action.
- Start with prayer and affirm that God provides all the resources necessary and co-creates with us a joyous experience for all involved. Email Silent Unity at: www.unity.org/prayer
- Empower key persons to enroll additional volunteers to assist with their areas of responsibility. Delegate as much as possible and be a constant source of support and encouragement to your volunteers and children. Provide adult volunteer information to project leaders.
- Present minister or supervisor with budget considerations.

- Create “audition form” for youth actors requesting personal and parental contact information, height, clothing sizes.
- Select actor or crew support to participate in planning rehearsal schedule.
- Schedule evening and Saturday rehearsals including dress rehearsal.

October

- Facilitate a planning meeting to review progress, confirm rehearsal schedule, consider new details, and confirm specialized persons needed such as sound technicians.
- Hold youth auditions, begin rehearsals. Director of the play will be in charge of this.
- Use same or similar process for singing talent or children’s choir.
- Plan the party portion of the event, including refreshments and holiday gifts for the youth and volunteers.
- Order children’s gifts from Oriental Trading Company, Inc. (See Chapter 18 “Resources.”)
- Add to spreadsheet additional volunteers for refreshments, set-up and clean up. Recruit two individuals to photograph and video the event.

An appropriate gift to all the youth ministry students is a keepsake Christmas tree ornament that depicts the theme of the play.

November

- Attend rehearsals and encourage and affirm all the children and volunteers frequently and regularly.
- Create an event program acknowledging each child and adult involved.
- Actively promote event through repeated, consistent, clear communication using the weekly bulletin, newsletter, flyers, email messages, etc.
- Meet with party coordinator regarding details, refreshments, etc. Invite Santa if that is acceptable in your church culture.
- Complete program and print at least two days prior to the event.

December

- At dress rehearsal, start with prayer. Affirm that God provides all the resources necessary and co-creates with us a joyous experience for all involved.

- Tie up all loose ends, purchase gifts for play director and assistants.
- Continue to enroll last-minute volunteers.
- Encourage children to let their light shine and know that they are loved.
- It's Show Time! Start with prayer and affirm that God provides all the resources necessary and co-creates with us a joyous experience for all involved.
- Have fun! Whatever happens is perfect!
- Send thank-you cards to all volunteers.
- Review the process with your team and take notes on improvement ideas for next year's event. Share ideas and successful programs with other directors.
- Schedule next year's program on the church calendar.



4 Understanding Our Unity Roots

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ What Is Unity?—A Brief Description
 - ☞ How Did Unity Evolve?—Historical Roots and Development
 - ☞ What Does Unity Teach?—Principle Beliefs
 - ☞ Twelve Powers of Man
 - ☞ Key Terms—A Unity Point of View
 - ☞ Unity Prayers
 - ☞ Unity Songs
 - ☞ Organizational Structure: Internationally and Regionally
-

WHAT IS UNITY?—A BRIEF DESCRIPTION

“Unity is positive, practical Christianity. It teaches the practical application in everyday life of the principles of Truth taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ, as interpreted in the light of modern-day experience by Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries. Unity is a way of life that leads to health, prosperity, happiness, and peace of mind.”

—“Twenty Questions and Answers About Unity” pamphlet
Association of Unity Churches
(now Unity Worldwide Ministries)

HOW DID UNITY EVOLVE? —HISTORICAL ROOTS AND DEVELOPMENT

Unity was begun by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore at the end of the 19th century. They were spiritual seekers, life-long learners and fellow travelers on a spiritual journey that led them to seek a deeper understanding of Truth and its practical application to everyday living. The seed of Unity was planted in 1886 when Myrtle was desperately ill with

tuberculosis. The Fillmores, seeking healing alternatives, attended a lecture by Dr. E. B. Weeks, where Myrtle heard one statement that changed her life forever: “I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.” She took this statement into her prayer time, affirming the truth of it and applying it to her life. For two years she was constant in her faith and study of this truth until her body was healed. As she shared her beliefs and healing, people began to seek her out with their own healing requests. Charles, watching Myrtle’s transformation, began to explore prayer on his own until he, too, experienced and embraced the presence and power of Truth.

In 1890, the Fillmores began praying together at 10 p.m. nightly with friends and neighbors. They encouraged others to join them wherever they were. Thus the Society of Silent Help began to pray for all who requested prayer, whether it was for the healing of the body, finances, or other seeming challenges. Today prayer requests come from thousands of people throughout the world. Silent Unity is now available 24 hours a day by telephone and email. (www.unity.org/prayer)

In 1889 Charles and Myrtle began publishing *Modern Thought*, a forerunner of *Unity Magazine*. It was through the publishing of Truth magazines, books, booklets and pamphlets that Unity began to spread. In 1893, Myrtle, observing the undisciplined behavior of children in a crowd asked, “Who will take care of the children?” She heard “You are to take care of the children; this is your work.” Thus began *Wee Wisdom*, a children’s magazine that was published continuously for 100 years.

Healing, prayer and teaching became the basis for the Fillmores’ work. Unity School of Practical Christianity was incorporated in 1903 as a scientific and educational institution. Their teachings included an emphasis on positive thinking and the joy experienced in releasing old thoughts and limitations; that life is consciousness and we change our life by changing our thinking; that it is through affirmative prayer and meditation that change occurs; that happiness is our divine right as God’s will for us is ultimate perfection; and that Jesus’ teachings were to be applied to one’s daily life. Charles’ deep study led him to develop a metaphysical interpretation of the Bible.

In the early 1900’s the Fillmores taught extensively on Truth principles, prayer, healing, prosperity and other related subjects. Out of this developed the Unity Training School, now known as Unity Institute. Unity Institute offers ministerial education, personal development for individuals, leadership development leading to becoming a licensed teacher, and retreats for personal contemplation and enrichment.

In the summer of 1925 a group of Unity teachers formed “The Unity Annual Conference” and adopted a set of rules to govern the teaching and conduct of leaders of Unity centers and classes in order to maintain the same practical teaching of the Fillmores. In 1946 this group changed its name to “Unity Ministers Association.” In 1966 the centers formed an organization to take responsibility for their own affairs and the Association of Unity Churches was formed. In 2010, as part of a branding initiative, the name was changed to Unity Worldwide Ministries.

During the last century Unity teachers and prayer centers have touched the lives of millions of people. Today Unity is a well-developed yet still evolving spiritual philosophy; its uplifting system of belief continues to speak to the heart of essential life issues.

Unity offers a voice of peace and positive thought for the modern world. Unity beliefs are intended to support the practical application of sacred teachings into everyday lives. The Truth within all pathways of faith is honored and diversity is celebrated as Unity teachers and ministers nurture a sense of connection and oneness, co-creation and discovery. They gently support and empower spiritual beings on a physical journey through lessons of love and affirmation. Unity programs honor the natural process of spiritual unfoldment and the remembering of wholeness in the students as well as in the teachers. Offering practical tools for daily living and metaphysical views of spiritual development, the Unity movement inspires transformation in consciousness and experience.

For more fascinating details on the Fillmores and Unity, read *The Story of Unity* by James Dillet Freeman, *Myrtle Fillmore: Mother of Unity* by Thomas E. Witherspoon and *The Unity Movement: Its Evolution and Spiritual Teachings* by Neal Vahle.

WHAT DOES UNITY TEACH? **—PRINCIPLE BELIEFS**

Unity is a link in the great educational movement inaugurated by Jesus Christ; our objective is to discern the truth in Christianity and prove it. The Truth that we teach is not new, neither do we claim special revelations or discovery of new religious principles. Our purpose is to help and teach humankind to use and prove the eternal Truth taught by the Master.

—Charles Fillmore, Cofounder of Unity

5 BASIC UNITY PRINCIPLES

From the children's poster published by Unity Worldwide Ministries

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

5 BASIC UNITY PRINCIPLES

From the adult poster published by Unity Worldwide Ministries

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

More information and appropriate scripture on the basic principles is on the *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training Program* available on CD through Unity Worldwide Ministries.

TWELVE POWERS OF MAN

Charles Fillmore encouraged everyone to align themselves with the will of God. Some faculties or indwelling gifts we all have are the “twelve powers,” qualities that can be activated more fully in expression of our God self. Our aim is a perfect balancing of all our faculties and their use. (See charts at the end of the chapter.)

KEY TERMS—A UNITY POINT OF VIEW

Charles Fillmore, Unity's cofounder, inspired students to be particularly mindful of the language they used. As we believe in the power of the word, the attracting force of an image held in mind, and the co-creative energy channeled through our conscious focus, Unity teachers and students select their words with careful intention.

As the Youth and Family Ministry Director, it is important to have a solid grounding in the meaning of key terms used in Unity lessons. Frequently parents and students alike will turn to you for on-the-spot clarification of essential religious phrases from Unity's perspective. *The Revealing Word* and the *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* are handy resources for such moments. However, Unity believes the individual finds Truth and understanding through personal growth. Unity is not bound by dogmatic limitations on interpretation.

Nature of God: God is not a person that is somewhere. God is Spirit that is everywhere present and only good. God expresses as the life, love, intelligence, and power which permeates all creation.

Nature of Man/Woman: There are three aspects to the nature of man/woman. We are spirit (our Divine Christ identity), soul (the sum of our thoughts and feelings), and body (the physical expression of our souls).

Jesus Christ: In Unity, Jesus is recognized as a Way-Shower. He understood his own divine nature, which is the Christ. He provides for us the true example of how each human being is capable of becoming more Christ-like.

The Bible: "The Bible is Unity's basic textbook. It is accepted as a body of history, as a moral and ethical teaching, and as a great literary work. Beyond this, Unity finds deep significance in the Bible through its metaphysical interpretation, wherein names of places and people and their experiences symbolize the unfoldment of human consciousness. Through the study of Unity, the Bible is made more meaningful to individuals. Scripture comes alive when it is understood as a clear and helpful guide for today's experiences. The Bible reveals the spirit of Truth and the word of God. Holy Spirit, working individually through those who study Scripture and listen within, is the final authority in spiritual awakening."

—"Twenty Questions and Answers About Unity's Teachings and Beliefs" pamphlet
Association of Unity Churches, Rev. 4/04

Heaven: Jesus taught that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us (Luke 17:21). Heaven is an experience which is immediately available to us whenever we align our souls (thoughts and feelings) with the awareness of our divine inner nature and our oneness with God.

Hell: Hell, like heaven, is an experience that is always “available” to us. When we allow circumstances or appearances to interrupt our awareness of our oneness with God, then our lives begin to reflect a sense of separation. Hell is the experience of “not-at-one” with God.

Sin and Evil: Sin can be best understood as error thinking. Any thought that does not reflect our oneness with God or the divine nature of man/woman is an error thought. Error thinking can lead to conditions of lack or limitation in our lives, such as sickness or poverty. These “evils” (limiting conditions) can be erased from our lives through correct thinking.

Affirmations and Denials: By holding in mind Truth statements—affirmative statements that reflect our true Christ nature—we can manifest similarly positive experiences in our outer world. The use of denials helps us to avoid error thoughts; we can deny the power of negative thoughts or lack consciousness over our lives. In Unity teachings, this was first witnessed by Myrtle Fillmore’s powerful and healing revelation, “I am a child of God and therefore I do not inherit sickness.”

Prayer and Meditation: Prayer and meditation are key life tools for Unity students. Positive, affirmative prayer is used not to change God but to change the person praying and to more closely align the individual’s thoughts and attitudes with the Divine. Meditation, sitting in the silence, is a way of listening to the small still inner voice of God within. The Fillmore’s described it as silent soul communion with God. Explore prayer with Unity at www.unity.org/prayer.

Healing: Healing is more than recovery from illness or accident. It is spiritual advancement, awakening to the Christ consciousness within. Prayer helps us align with the Mind of God allowing healing energy to flow through us. Charles Fillmore often affirmed, “Healing currents of life are freed and flow into and through soul and body, healing, redeeming, uplifting the whole man.” (from *Teach Us to Pray* by Charles and Cora Fillmore) Belief in healing is the first step to receiving.

The Law of Mind Action: The Law of Mind Action teaches us that the thoughts we hold in our mind produce experiences of their own kind. Lack consciousness generates circumstances of scarcity. Prosperity consciousness creates circumstances of abundance.

Prosperity (The Law of Abundance): Unity teaches that we live in a limitless universe and there is an abundance of all good. God is our constant and abundant source. We must be open and receptive to the flow of abundance. The more comfortable you are with accepting your good, the more the universe will be able to give to you. Giving as well as receiving in gratitude are essential to the divine flow of prosperity. Abundance can show up as good health, loving relationships, and financial resources to meet all our needs and desires.

Silent Unity: Silent Unity is the prayer ministry of Unity, available to all people of every faith. All requests are sacred and confidential. People are present all hours of the day and night to pray with you either by phone (1-800-669-7729), online (www.unity.org/prayer) or by mail (Silent Unity, 1901 NW Blue Parkway, Unity Village, MO 64065-0001).

Tithing: We move into greater alignment with the natural law of circulation when we intentionally participate in the continuous flow of abundance. By tithing of our time, talent, and our treasure we acknowledge that God is our source. When we give freely of our treasure by tithing to the true source of our financial income, we are demonstrating prosperity consciousness as a spiritual practice. The Bible defines a tithe as ten percent of a total amount but individuals are encouraged to start the practice of regular and consistent giving at any amount and work to the goal of ten percent. The realization soon comes that in giving one receives so much more in return.

But strive first for the Kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be given to you as well. —Matthew 6:33 NRSV

 **UNITY PRAYERS****The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.
Thy kingdom come.
Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:
For thine is the kingdom, and the
power, and the glory, for ever.
Amen.

—Matthew 6:9-13 KJV

Prayer For Protection

The light of God surrounds me.
The love of God enfolds me.
The power of God protects me.
The presence of God watches over me.
Wherever I am, God is.

—James Dillet Freeman

The Prayer of Faith

The Story of Unity, James Dillet Freeman, p. 74

God is my help in every need;
God does my every hunger feed;
God walks beside me, guides my way
Through every moment of the day.

I now am wise, I now am true,
Patient, kind, and loving too.
All things I am, can do, and be,
Through Christ, the Truth that is in me.

God is my health, I can't be sick;
God is my strength, unfailing, quick;
God is my all; I know no fear,
Since God and love and Truth are here.

—Hannah More Kohaus

Love Offering Prayer

Divine Love, radiating as me
Blesses and multiplies all that I am,
All that I have, all that I give,
And all that I receive.

 **UNITY SONGS**
(Listed with original lyrics)

Our Thoughts Are Prayers

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Our thoughts are prayers,
And we are always praying
Our thoughts are prayers,
Take charge of what you're saying
Seek a higher consciousness,
A state of peacefulness,
And know that God is always there,
And every thought becomes a prayer.

I Am Walking in the Light

Traditional,
Words by Elizabeth Caspari

I am *walking in the light,
In the light, in the light,
I am walking in the light,
In the light of God.

In the light, in the light,
In the light, in the light,
In the light, in the light,
In the light of God.

*Other words may be used: happy,
healthy, prospered, learning, playing,
living.
Music available in *Wings of Song*, #331

Wings of Song published by Unity®. Used
by permission.

Let There Be Peace on Earth

by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson
Copyright © 1955, Renewed 1983, by Jan-
Lee Music (ASCAP)

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Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me;
Let there be peace on earth,
The peace that was meant to be.

With God as our Father
Brothers all are we,
Let me walk with my brother
In perfect harmony.*

Let peace begin with me,
Let this be the moment now;
With every step I take,
Let this be my solemn vow:

To take each moment and live each moment
In peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth
And let it begin with me.

*Copyrighted alternate lyric:

With God our Creator
(His) Children all are we,
Let us walk with each other
In perfect harmony.

Music available in *Wings of Song*, #3

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE: INTERNATIONALLY AND REGIONALLY

The Unity movement is supported by many arms. As the Youth and Family Ministry Director, it will be helpful for you to understand its basic organizational structure so that you can best use the resources available to you.

Unity®

Unity is a worldwide movement of prayer, publishing, and education that helps people of all faiths; providing a positive path for spiritual living.

- www.unity.org

Unity provides supportive services primarily to individuals. Those include publications like *Daily Word* and *Unity Magazine*, retreats, and a prayer ministry. Retreats and educational gatherings held regularly at Unity Village, MO, are legendary for their transformative power and level of excellence. Unity also offers Unity Institute, the training program for Unity ministers, future licensed teachers and spiritual seekers.

Silent Unity is the prayer ministry ready to pray with you around the clock. Someone is always in prayer and many operators are available day and night at 1-800-NOW-PRAY (1-800-669-7729). Feel free to share this information with everyone at your church and consider having your children call as a class when they have a special concern. Or have the children write an email to Silent Unity (www.unity.org/prayer) or a letter (Silent Unity, 1901 NW Blue Parkway, Unity Village, MO 64065-0001).

Unity Worldwide Ministries works in cooperation with Unity to offer educational opportunities for licensed teachers and individuals desiring personal spiritual development.

Unity Worldwide Ministries

Our mission: We create and support vibrant, diverse spiritual leaders and communities that foster transformation and inspire people to make a positive difference in our world.

- <http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/vision-mission-and-values>

Unity Worldwide Ministries was organized to improve, develop and strengthen the Unity movement. Membership is open to Unity churches, study groups,

ministers, spiritual leaders and licensed teachers worldwide. These ministries form a representative delegation to elect a governing board of trustees. The trustees, in turn, determine the policies, rules and regulations of Unity Worldwide Ministries and employ an association CEO and administrative staff to handle the administrative needs of Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Unity Worldwide Ministries' work is to support and empower Unity ministries. Some of the supportive services offered by Unity Worldwide Ministries include:

- Communications: *Contact*, *The Path*, Facebook, email and phone
- Church management and administration consulting and training
- Peacemaking training and consulting
- International educational and administrative services
- Ministry materials, resources and services
- Placement clearinghouse for ministers and ministries
- Interim ministry services
- Licensing and ordination of ministers, licensing of teachers, certification of youth ministry spiritual educators
- Creating and maintaining curriculum and resources needed for youth ministry
- International Youth of Unity Event
- Advisement on Youth and Family Ministry for all ages
- Marketing materials for print and radio media

From training opportunities and guidance to curriculum and supplies, Unity Worldwide Ministries is available to help you do your job.

Regional Support

Each Unity ministry or study group belongs to a local region. Each region employs field staff to support the work of Unity congregations on a local level. In the YFM area, regional consultants are available for training workshops, informational materials and resources, retreats, teen events, and connections with other Unity churches in your area. If you have not already done so, contact your Regional Consultant as soon as possible to begin an ongoing relationship of support and information exchange. To determine who that is in your region, go to www.unity.org/regions

12 POWERS CHART

Power	Defined	Disciple	Color	Physical Energy Center	Affirmations
Faith	Ability to say yes to letting good manifest in your life	Peter	Deep Blue	Pineal gland, center of brain	I am lifted up on the wings of faith. I have faith that God works for good in my life.
Love	Ability to know and feel your oneness with all creation	John	Pink	Behind the heart	I radiate God's Love. I am a radiating center of God's love.
Strength	Ability to remain spiritually stable and steadfast	Andrew	Light Green	Small of back	God in me is my strength. My strength comes from my inner light.
Wisdom (Judgment)	Ability to discern what decisions best reflect your true God-self	James, son of Zebedee	Yellow	Solar plexus, pit of stomach	Divine Wisdom guides me as I make good choices. I use my inner wisdom to guide all I think, feel, say, and do.
Power	Ability to act, do and accomplish good	Phillip	Purple	Throat, root of tongue	I use my power for good. I use my power to speak my truth.
Imagination	Ability to form pictures out of ideas	Bartholomew	Light Blue	Between the eyes	I imagine the best in myself and others. I use my imagination to create good in my life.
Understanding	Ability to know that good is beneath everything, regardless of appearances	Thomas	Gold	Front brain	Christ in me unlocks the Truth; I understand. I grow in understanding of God's plan for me when I listen.

12 POWERS CHART

Power	Defined	Disciple	Color	Physical Energy Center	Affirmations
Will	Ability to be motivated to listen to God's guidance and to direct your powers to manifest that good	Matthew	Silver (Gray)	Forehead, center front brain	God's will for me is always good. I am willing to do what my inner will directs me to do.
Order	Ability to act from a centered place	James, son of Alphaeus	Dark Green	Behind the navel	Divine Order unfolds in my life and harmony emerges. I know that Divine Order and harmony are operating in my life and in the world now.
Zeal (Enthusiasm)	Ability to be interested and enthusiastic about life	Simon	Orange	Back of head, medulla oblongata	I radiate God's Energy and sizzle with zeal. When I am full of joy and enthusiasm all my powers are activated.
Elimination (Renunciation)	Ability to release anything that does not serve you. A most powerful action when done with love	Thaddaeus	Russett	Lower spine, abdominal region	I let go and let God. I can let go of all that stands in the way of God's good for me.
Life	Ability to bring Truth and all its beauty into manifestation	Judas	Red	Generative center	Christ Life is born in me each day. My life is a wonderful gift from God.

5

Knowing Your Church Culture

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ The Church
 - ☞ The Minister/Ministry
 - ☞ The Staff and Board
 - ☞ The Congregation
 - ☞ Youth and Family Ministry
 - ☞ The Surrounding Community
-

As you begin your employment as a Youth and Family Ministry Director, you will find it quite beneficial to become familiar with the prevailing culture of your new church community. Understanding the history and traditions, the characteristics of the congregation, the style of church leadership, and the current structure of the Youth and Family Ministry will allow you to create a solid foundation from which to grow. In this section you will find suggestions for areas to explore as you become acclimated to your new position. Even if you have already been an active member of the church, you may start to view your environment with fresh eyes. In this important chapter you will find guidance in understanding your church, the minister, the staff and board, the congregation and the surrounding community.

THE CHURCH

Understanding the overall church environment and significant cultural influences will impact your decision-making as you carry out your work. Even if you have long been a member, take time to reflect upon the church's history.

- Review the reports from past annual church meetings or board meeting minutes.
- Examine the church's history. Some churches have compiled a record of major church events or transitions. These give you a feel for the collective experiences, values and decision-making processes of your congregation.
- Become clear on the church's mission and vision statements. Have conversations with your minister and board president to reflect upon the vision and values that support the church's mission. Once you are in full alignment with the intentions of the church body, you can move into creating a youth ministry that embodies these beliefs.

THE MINISTER/MINISTRY

Conversations with your senior minister are a key element to your success. Request time to discuss these concepts:

- What are your areas of focus now for the adult ministry?
Each Unity minister draws upon unique resources to create worship services and adult programs.
- What foundational teachings are especially important to you and this church?
For instance, some Unity churches focus more heavily upon Bible study and metaphysical interpretations. Others place great value upon areas such as the study of diverse faith traditions, contemporary tools for personal transformation and healing, prosperity consciousness, social activism, etc.
- What recurring elements of worship do you consider essential for every service?
This may impact your planning for holiday celebrations throughout the year.
- How do you suggest that you and I communicate so we can effectively work together in this ministry? Weekly or bi-weekly meetings? Email? How else?
Establish this early in your relationship as it will help you remain informed and connected. Each minister has a unique style of leadership that will shape the ways in which you connect and the manner in which important decisions are made. Assume the initiative for these connections if they are not offered to you.
- What are your expectations for communication when we have an emergency in the youth ministry?
Knowing this early will help you handle emergencies efficiently and appropriately.
- How can I learn more about the organization of paid and volunteer staff?
Knowing this can assist you in understanding who you should talk to about various aspects of your responsibilities, i.e. procedures for requesting money to purchase supplies, etc.
- Is there a policies and procedures manual for your church? If so, be sure to obtain and review it. If not, over time suggest creating one to include how articles are submitted for the website and newsletters, and procedures for purchasing supplies. (See Policies and Procedures in Chapter 16.)
- Is the YFM director included in staff meetings? If not, from whom do you get important dates and plans that affect your department?



THE STAFF AND BOARD

Having a clear understanding of current systems and roles allows you to conserve time and energy, respect the work and wisdom of others, avoid unnecessary confusion or upset, and move forward with grace and ease.

Staff Structure and Key Contacts

You may want to schedule an informational meeting with various staff members such as the administrator and accountant. It is critical to understand who reports to whom, areas of responsibility, lines of communication, and how your job fits into what is already in place. Key questions to consider:

- What aspects of your program are guided by your minister and what areas are managed by administrative staff?
- With whom do you work to order supplies or post important announcements, etc?
- Should unexpected challenges arise during Sunday services, to whom do you turn for assistance?
- Who works with you in determining a budget for your program?

Board Structure and Key Contacts

- Is there a board member assigned as a liaison to your area? How will you keep this person aware of the needs in Youth and Family Ministry?
- Is the board involved largely with long-term planning and governance or day-to-day operations?

Communication

Explore the ways in which staff and key church leaders connect with one another. The sooner you can become a contributing member of the team, the sooner you will receive the support and information you need to function effectively. Building connections between church leaders, paid and volunteer, can enrich not only your own experience but also that of the entire congregation. Look for answers to these questions:

- In what ways are the staff and key church leaders connected to one another for communication?
- What other communication methods are used regularly? Email announcements? Who is included in these?
- Are there regular staff meetings?
- How is training and updating offered to the staff?

THE CONGREGATION

Each Unity church is unique. In addition to the minister, those who attend the church regularly determine the prevailing church culture. Consider connecting with some of your congregation's wisdom keepers, those longtime attendees, to understand your church family more deeply. Shining light on broader patterns may reveal some of the deeper currents moving them. With this knowledge, you will be able to offer programs that best fulfill their current needs and inspire them into growing in meaningful ways.

- Learn basic facts: average attendance for youth and adults, number on church's mailing list, basic age ranges, number of families, and degree of diversity.
- How long has the average congregant been a member of your church?
- What is the typical level of familiarity with Unity teachings?
- What are the most popular adult classes and workshops?
- Are there similar lifestyles, educational experiences, or social interests that unite them?
- Are there common values or shared expectations for the spiritual education of their youth?
- Are the youth visible and highly valued within your church community or are you pioneering Youth and Family Ministry?

YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY

As you move fully into your position, you will begin to accumulate bits and pieces of historical information about your youth program. Strive to be informed by past experiences without becoming limited by them. Be mindful of honoring the traditions and the efforts of those who came before you, while wholeheartedly recognizing the co-creative possibilities of your current position. As you and your program grow, be sensitive to the rate of change you expect of your students, parents, and teachers. Understand how things have been done, hold fast to where you'd like to go, and proceed gently in traveling between the two.

Begin conversations with others knowledgeable about youth ministry. Invite them to share their wisdom and experiences with you, guiding their communication towards constructive ends. Allow them to witness your fresh energy and positive outlook.

Ask parents, and key volunteers questions like these:

- Does youth ministry already have its own vision and mission statement? Is it still meaningful? Does it need to be re-visited? (See Chapter 17, “Creating a Mission and Vision.”)
- What are three things you value about the present program? (and would not change?)
- What are three things you desire in the youth program that are not currently available?
- How have past Youth and Family Ministry programs been received? What traditions need to be honored and maintained?
- Are most of your students present each Sunday or is there a pattern of attending every other Sunday for a large number of students?

The answers can guide your decision-making process as your program continues to evolve. These discussions also serve to gauge your congregation’s openness to change. You may have been hired to enliven a stagnant area within the church; on the other hand, you may be taking over a thriving program with a track record of success. Balance the need to create your own ways of being with the perceived needs of your church families.

If you are starting a program from scratch, gather together all those who are committed to creating one. Together, create a vision for the future of youth ministry. Let members know that it truly does take a village to raise our children and that you look forward to seeing the collective wisdom and talent of the community.

Ask an experienced teacher or outgoing director:

- Are there guidelines/requirements for those wishing to become teachers or nursery caretakers?
- In what areas have the current volunteers in youth ministry been trained? In what areas would you like to see training?
- Is there a Youth and Family Ministry policy and procedures manual? Be sure to read it soon.

HOLD A LISTENING SESSION

You may wish to plan a gathering of families involved in your program—teachers and adults who currently support it. Actively listen and learn more about them. Listen for prevailing expectations and resources available. Keep notes on information and data shared and intuitive impressions about those you serve and how you might best meet their needs. Assess the most pressing concerns, such as safety or curriculum needs, and keep lists of the issues that will need to be addressed in due time, such as snack or video viewing policies. Remember to ask many open-ended questions and to suspend reflexive judgments during this period of introduction and adjustment in your new role.

- What policies are in place? Are there policies for when and where children are welcome to be present in the church? For dropping off and picking up children and teens? (See Chapter 16, “Risk Management.”)
- What procedures are established? How are attendance records maintained? Who needs to sign in?

Investigate the status of youth ministry programs within the larger church culture. A key area of inquiry will be the role of volunteers within your church’s culture. If your church has a Volunteer Coordinator, consider beginning your study with this person.

Ask:

- Is sacred service valued and promoted?
- Are members educated in the tithing of time and talent as well as treasure?
- What has been the history of involvement by adult volunteers in youth programs?
- What is the level of commitment and enthusiasm among current volunteers?
- Are volunteers richly recognized for their contributions?
- What does the training for volunteers include?

THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITY

Your church community does not exist in isolation. Take time to explore the surrounding area and the people who are your neighbors. Investigate ways in which your program can become more fully integrated into the surrounding community as well as ways in which your congregation can more warmly embrace its neighbors.

Consider these questions:

- Does your congregation tend to live in close proximity to the church? Or do most commute long distances?
- Are the children and teens lifelong friends from school or are they strangers to one another? Their physical proximity to the church and to one another will impact not only their group identity and sense of connection, but also the nature of the activities and events you plan.
- Do you need to plan far in advance and link activities to the once-a-week drive into church or are impromptu, mid-week events a possibility?
- What is the physical environment of the church community and what is its impact upon your students? Is the neighborhood one in which physical safety and well-being are real concerns?

- What explorations of the surrounding environment can be encouraged that might enrich your youth?
- Are near-by residents welcome in your church home? What can you do to increase their feeling of your hospitality?
- What are the prevailing cultural influences, ethnic traditions, and lifestyle patterns? You may uncover valuable learning or service opportunities for future programs.
- Is the neighborhood ripe with rich cultural offerings? Is this a community that would welcome greater community service by your youth?
- Create a list of possible service projects and social activities for youth (of all ages) and families within a certain proximity of the church. Example: Bowling—5 miles.

Your initial assessment of the prevailing culture within Youth and Family Ministry and the church will no doubt reveal both challenges and grand opportunities, tremendous gifts and areas where growth is needed. Accept the facts as they present themselves and yet hold to the Truth. Affirm that Divine Order is unfolding while you stand as a sacred witness.



6 Getting Started— The First Sunday!

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Questions for the Minister or Department Manager Before Your First Sunday
 - ☞ Questions for Someone Familiar With the Youth and Family Ministry Program
 - ☞ Sunday Morning Procedures
 - ☞ Overall Tips for a New Director
 - ☞ How Does a Director Get Training?
 - ☞ Considerations During the First Month
-

To make your first Sunday as pleasant and successful as possible, be sure to go through this handy checklist immediately. It provides you with key questions to ask before that first Sunday. As you proceed through the month read the chapters referenced below and learn more about all the steps involved in creating a joyful experience for the children, teens, volunteers and parents. Much more detail is available in Chapter 7 “Creating The Sunday Morning Experience” and in Chapter 16 “Risk Management” on many of the topics mentioned in the following. Make time to read these as soon as possible.

QUESTIONS FOR THE MINISTER OR DEPARTMENT MANAGER BEFORE YOUR FIRST SUNDAY

Opening and Closing the Area

- How do I open and close the area?
 - Do I need keys? Where do I obtain them?
 - Is there an alarm system? Location? Do I need to know a code number?
- What staff members will be present when I arrive 90 minutes prior to service time?
 - Do staff members gather for prayer or announcements before or after service?
 - What time?

- Am I responsible for closing down and locking up? What is the procedure? If not, who is responsible? Do I need to see them prior to departure?

Temperature Control

- Where are the thermostats located for the youth ministry rooms? Do I have authority to change them? Or do I need to contact a maintenance person to have them adjusted?

Telephone Message Retrieval

- How do I receive phone messages on Sunday morning? Does the office staff do this and notify me? Or can I check the message source myself? Do I need an access code to check the message system? Where are the written directions for the message system?

Emergencies

- Are their existing emergency guidelines and procedures? Is there a nurse or doctor in the congregation that we know of?

Hospitality

- Is there coffee/hot water available for my volunteer staff? Location of coffee and supplies? Who prepares it? What are the guidelines on beverages in specific rooms?
- Are the children served snacks? During the hour? Afterwards with everyone? What are the snacks? Where are they located? Who serves them? Water for the children? Who knows about the snack procedures for the children? How do I know who has food allergies or other eating restrictions?

Children's Participation

- Are children included either in the beginning or the ending of the adult service? If so, what is the current routine, time children are expected and the signaling system used?

New Director Support

- Is there a long-time volunteer that can assist me during my first week or two?
- What support might be available from other staff members or church volunteers should I need information or assistance during Sunday services?
- How and when will I be introduced to the congregation in this new role?

QUESTIONS FOR SOMEONE FAMILIAR WITH THE YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRY PROGRAM

Setup for classrooms and communications

- Who is responsible for setting up the classrooms for the volunteers and children? Do they need to be notified? How much cleanup do they do? How much cleanup is expected from the director and volunteers?

Emergencies

- Are their existing emergency guidelines and procedures?
Is there a nurse or doctor in the congregation that we know of?

Volunteers

- Who will be present? Are there enough volunteers scheduled?
Are there any substitutes or floating volunteers available?
Are there Guardian Angels to handle a child who needs individual attention?

Safety

- Where are the first-aid kits located? (See list of supplies, Chapter 12 “Equipping the Facilities.”)
- Are medical releases kept on children and volunteers? Where are they located?
- Where are the fire extinguishers located? The fire alarms and exits to be used?
Is there a posted evacuation/escape plan? Where?

Maintaining Cleanliness

- Where is the storage for a broom, dustpan and mop?
Where are the supplies to clean up a spill if a child has an accident?
Where are additional paper towels and toilet paper stored?
- Are there any extra clothes if a child gets soiled?

Nursery and/or Child Care (See Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care.”)

- Is child care offered? When is it available? If there are two services, is it available between them? Who are the approved adult caregivers?
- What are the sign-in and sign-out procedures for children? Other procedures?

- How are nursery parents contacted if needed during the service?
- Are there written safety guidelines for the nursery? Where?
- Am I, the director, responsible for that department? If not, who is?

Procedures for Sign-in, Attendance and Visitors

For more detail, see Chapter 7 “Creating the Sunday Morning Experience.”

- What are the volunteer sign-in/attendance procedures?
- What are the sign-in and sign-out procedures for children? For teens? At one location? In each classroom? Afterwards who receives that information and when? Where are the attendance sheets stored and for how long?
- What are the age groupings? What rooms are each in?
- How are newcomers guided into the program?
- What is done to identify the children?

Curriculum and Lessons

- What lessons or curricula are being used? Where is the curricula kept?
- Do teachers already have them? How far in advance do teachers receive the lessons?
- Where do teachers pick up the lessons?
- What about supplies used for the lesson? Do teachers provide them? Is the director responsible for getting them ready?

SUNDAY MORNING PROCEDURES **Before the Children Arrive**

For more detail, see Chapter 7 “Creating the Sunday Morning Experience.”

- Arrive spiritually prepared 90 minutes prior to service start time.
- Unlock and open the rooms as directed by your minister or office manager.
- “Pray-in” the rooms and bless the space.
- Complete room setups if needed.
- Confirm that all supplies and lesson materials are ready for volunteers.

- Check in with minister and staff.
- Check phone messages and handle unplanned volunteer staffing needs and events.
- Conduct prayer and announcements for volunteer staff. Have volunteers ready to receive children 15–30 minutes prior to the service.

As the Children Arrive

- Greet children, teens, parents and congregants.
- Guide all to the registration and sign-in area.
- Assist newcomers/visitors in feeling welcome.
- Assist volunteer staff with any questions or needs regarding the lesson.

When the Children Are Present

- Assist any latecomers in joining their class.
- Complete attendance procedures. (Compare sign-in sheet with actual count of persons in the room.)
- Report attendance numbers of children and adults.

When the Service Is Over

- Assist with sign-out procedures as needed.
- Again speak with children, teens, parents and congregants, and welcome their comments. (Request they email or phone you during the week if they have suggestions or provide them with a suggestion form.)
- Communicate again with newcomers and visitors, and provide handouts about the church and program, if available.
- Check in with volunteer staff about turning in any requests and forms.
- Assist volunteer staff with any questions.

Final Steps

- Check in with minister or make notes for a later check-in to share anything that needs sharing.

- Check for any additional phone messages.
- If rooms are used by others, be sure everything is safely stowed away.
- Check the environment. Change thermostat and turn off the lights.
- Give a blessing of gratitude for the morning, the people, God's presence.
- Lock up the youth area.

OVERALL TIPS FOR A NEW DIRECTOR

- Spend time reading this director's guide. Begin with Chapter 3 "Planning the YFM Program" and Chapter 7 "Creating the Sunday Morning Experience."
- Observe the flow of the overall program for a few months. Make notes of your observations. What works well? What areas need improvement?
- Avoid making any changes for 3-6 months unless there is a critical safety concern. Learn all current systems to enhance your decision making.
- Team up with key volunteers, and Spirit will assure success and enjoyment of your role. See Chapter 14 "Volunteer Training and Recognition" for ideas on gathering input from all volunteers as to what is working well and what changes they feel are important to the overall healthy functioning of the YFM program.

HOW DOES A DIRECTOR GET TRAINING?

- Visit another nearby Unity church and talk with their experienced YFM director.
- Contact the Regional Consultants for your area. They offer training regularly and email and phone support on an ongoing basis. They can also assist you in networking with directors in your region who can support you. If your church does not know who the consultants are, contact Unity Worldwide Ministries or visit www.unity.org/regions and click on the Regional Education Consultants link under the map.
- Unity Worldwide Ministries also offers a Children's & Family Coordinator and Teen Coordinator to assist you and support your efforts, as well as information on Unity curriculum and other resources. Phone 816-524-7414 or visit www.unity.org/yfm and select information from the areas listed on the right of the Youth & Family page.

CONSIDERATIONS DURING THE FIRST MONTH

- In your regular prayer time include the youth, the volunteers, yourself and the program.
- Determine how you can best serve during Sunday services (teaching in a classroom, floating, processing attendance records, observing).
- Get a reality check on your first impressions by diplomatically sharing with a trusted teacher, staff member, or your minister.
- Find out who is first aid-/CPR-certified among your volunteer staff. Consider this training for yourself if you do not already have it.
- Learn about risk management needs and procedures for your program. Read Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”
- Schedule an extended meeting time with the minister to begin discussing some of the questions suggested in Chapter 5 “Knowing Your Church Culture.”
- Locate a copy of these items and read them:
 - Church bylaws
 - Church calendar and YFM calendar and/or schedules
 - Copy of the current and previous year’s YFM budget
 - YFM mission/vision statement
- Meet with the person who handles the budget. (See Chapter 11 “Financial Foundations.”)
 - Ask if the YFM has a petty-cash system.
 - Ask how the Youth of Unity handles their funds.
- To save yourself time, create an opening and closing procedures checklist specifically for your youth facility.

SAMPLE—CLOSING CHECKLIST

Uniteen Room

Stereo off, windows closed, AC units off, lights off

Hallway to Uniteen room

Lights off, emergency exit secure

YOU Room

Stereo off, windows closed, AC units off, lights off

Bathroom

Window closed, sink shut off completely, toilet flushed and water not running, lights out

Landing lights stay on at all times.

Nursery

Black stereo off, windows closed, AC units off, lights off, patio door secure, sink shut off completely, trash (diaper bin) has been taken out

Kitchen

Coffee pot turned off, sink off completely, no food left out, florescent lights out, safety light may be left on and emergency exit secure

Director's Office

Computer locked, but not shut off; windows closed; electric space heater off; AC unit off; lights off

Foyer

Light off, AC unit off, alarm set



7 Creating the Sunday Morning Experience

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Before the Children Arrive
 - ☞ As the Children Arrive
 - ☞ When the Children Are Present
 - ☞ When the Service Is Over
 - ☞ Director's Final Steps
-

SUNDAY morning is the most important focus of the week. All preparations of curriculum, supplies and staffing occur before this morning so that when you, the director, arrive at the church, you are ready to welcome your children and families and to have fun! Being prepared and organized lets the families know that they are important to the ministry and allows you as the director to be present to their spiritual unfolding.

These are the components to consider in creating your Sunday morning.

BEFORE THE CHILDREN ARRIVE

Arrive at least 90 minutes prior to the service time to prepare the space for those that will follow. Tasks to be done:

- Unlock and open up the rooms.
- Check the environment. Turn on the lights. Set the temperature control.
- “Pray-in” the rooms and bless the space. Physically go to each space the children and teens will be in and bless that space. This blessing or prayer serves to bring our awareness to the present moment and to the divine Presence surrounding and enfolding that space. God as Divine Love and Wisdom is in charge and the morning will be what it will be—a blessing to each who enters.

- ❑ Complete room setups including furniture arrangement. Having the rooms ready before the children enter allows the volunteers to focus their attention on being present with the children and parents instead of rushing around trying to put things together.
- ❑ Confirm that all supplies and lesson materials are ready for the volunteers when they arrive. Have weekday volunteers gather the supplies and lesson resources so that on Sunday morning everything the teacher needs is ready. This also includes forms the teacher might need such as allergy information sheets, incident reports, prayer request sheets, etc. (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”)
- ❑ Check in with the minister and staff. See if there are any changes in the morning’s schedule, the church family, or announcements for the next week. Many ministers start the morning with the staff and volunteers praying in together. It is important to be a part of this communal energy as a way of tying your department to the rest of the church.
- ❑ Check messages and handle unplanned events. Be sure to have a way for volunteers to reach you on Sunday morning to let you know they unexpectedly will not be coming, will be late, or to ask for a different supply need. All the planning during the week won’t eliminate a bathroom fixture gone awry, a leak in the roof, an unexpected change in the service, or a flu outbreak in your teaching staff. Coming early helps you to deal with these changes and to have the time to center yourself before the children and teens arrive.
- ❑ Conduct youth ministry volunteer prayer and announcement time. Schedule a time (usually 30 minutes before service begins) for all the youth ministry volunteers to meet and share prayer requests and announcements. You may want to give a quick reminder of the lesson material, what the hour looks like, and what is coming up in the next week. Ask the volunteers to join you in saying the mission/vision statement of the department or church to remind everyone of why they are there. End with an affirmation to send them off to their prospective areas. Make a mental note of any volunteer prayer requests or concerns and follow up with spiritual support the next week.

In some churches volunteers prepare a plastic container with the lesson and supplies for each classroom. The teacher picks this up and returns it to a central location.

AS THE CHILDREN ARRIVE

The worship hour actually starts before the children enter the classroom. The way children, teens and families enter the program impacts how the rest of their morning will go. This includes how easy it is to find the room locations, to feel welcomed, to know what is expected of them, and to receive information that explains what is taught in youth ministry. Having a simple, consistent process that welcomes the children and supports the parents' need to keep their children safe is the beginning of their Sunday morning experience.

Provide clear signage directing families to rooms. Welcoming churches make sure that new people can find their way to the sanctuary, children and teen ministry rooms, bookstore, and other points of interest by posting signs that give directions and name the spaces where ministry is happening. A good way to check this is to go into the parking lot and face the church. Pretend this is your first time to this church and see if you can find out where to go by visual cues. Can a visitor...

- o Find the sanctuary?
- o Find where the children or teens meet?
- o Locate the office if there is no greeter?
- o Find your area without a problem?

- ❑ Have an enthusiastic greeter. Have a volunteer ready to welcome everyone as they come into the youth area and to guide visitors to the appropriate place to register their children. Greeters can also hand out welcome packets, event or activity flyers. Also arrange for the greeters in the adult church entry to know where the children/teen rooms are and to be able to direct or walk a visitor to your space. If your church is large, have a greeter from the youth program at the church entrance specifically to take or guide visitors to the youth area.
- ❑ Provide a table/place to register all children and teens.
First time visitors: It is important to have one place or table that all new children and families go to register for the first time. Here they can be welcomed and given information about how your Sunday morning program works: nursery procedures, attendance, parent pick-up procedures, special considerations for that day. Guest stickers or special nametags can be given to the children here so teachers will easily recognize a new child when the family arrives at the classroom. The registration table also provides a place for the adults to ask questions or to share any special needs their child might have. Have contact information for the YFM Director available, such as on a business card, so families may obtain more information outside of a busy Sunday morning.

- ❑ Maintain an on-going Registration Area. All young people under the age of consent and participating in a youth ministry class, event, program, etc. must have a registration card filled out and on file in the youth ministry department with all the information needed to care for the minor in a responsible and responsive manner. (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”) Be sure all volunteers are trained in the registration process and know where the supplies are.

Keep these forms in a safe and secure place because the information is confidential and shared only with those who have an immediate need to know such as the classroom teacher. Be sure to include on the card the names of those people who are authorized to bring and pick up the child and make sure that only those people do. For children in the nursery, create a Nursery Registration Form that includes space for a Polaroid picture of baby/toddler with authorized adults.

- ❑ Arrange for weekly sign-in on Attendance Sign-in Sheet. Attendance is required for all youth. In case of an emergency such as an evacuation or a child is missing, this sheet tells the teacher/director who is supposed to be in the classroom, what adult signed them in and where they can be found. *All children must be signed in by an adult* unless you make other arrangements with the parent. (Read Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”) Decide on whether you will have the parents/teens sign in at their rooms or have all the families use a main sign-in table.

Teens, ages 13–18, may sign themselves in and out of a program.

A head count is also used for managing the program such as determining the child/adult ratio, matching the size of the class to the size of the room, and asking for an increase of budget. An attendance sheet tells the teachers/director who was in class on what day, so if there is any question as to whether a child was present you have the paperwork to go back to.

RECORDKEEPING

Enter registration information into a database or spreadsheet. Then you can create lists for the teachers for attendance, for allergies, for first names of children, etc. If you have an active youth program, ask parents to fill out a Medical/Liability Release (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”) at that time to put on file for future events. These can be kept in 3-ring binders for up to one year and kept in a secure place.

An Attendance Sign-in Sheet has a place for the child’s name, the name of the person signing the child into the class, where that adult will be during the next hour and the signature of that person when they pick the child up at the end of the service. (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”) Consider including a space to list any allergies that the teacher may need to know such as food (peanuts, wheat, milk, etc.) or environmental (bees, chemical cleansers, grass, etc.).

- ❑ Have nametags available at sign-in area. Everyone likes to be called by their name so make sure everyone has a nametag to wear. This helps visitors and new volunteers to learn names quicker and to feel at ease. Use buttons, special nametags, lanyards—be creative! See Chapter 18, “Resources” (Badge-a-Mint). Be sure that staff and especially you, the director, are wearing a church staff nametag so parents know you are official and a source of information.

Not all kids/teens like wearing nametags. If you can help them know the reason for this they will participate more fully. Allowing teens to personalize their nametag helps their buy-in to wearing one.

WHEN THE CHILDREN ARE PRESENT

Be flexible with your plans. Very few Sunday mornings go off as planned. When you start the morning prepared, you can easily adapt to changes as they come up. Remember to breathe and don't take anything personally. You are modeling to the children, their parents and your volunteers how to trust God's order in all things.

- ❑ In some ministries, the children join the adult service at some time during the worship hour. They may start out in the adult service, come in for a children's lesson, or join the congregation at the end to sing the “peace song,” “Let There Be Peace on Earth.” Check with the minister or worship coordinator on how and when s/he sees that happening and what is expected of the children and yourself. Make sure there are always enough volunteers to keep the children “corralled” and safe. Talk with your minister in advance about the possibility of not coming in to the service on those days where there are not enough volunteers or the children are not having a good day.
- ❑ Use curriculum that is teacher-friendly, age-appropriate, and designed for different learning styles and intelligences. (See Chapter 8 “Curriculum—Lessons.”)
- ❑ Actively involve all the children. Good lessons include children's participation in many ways. Also children can be given responsibility for their ministry by having rotating jobs to do. Help the children learn the tasks and then have them teach others. They are empowered in leadership, responsibility, and feeling good about serving others.

Job cards have the title of a job on one side and a picture on the other (for the non-reader). As they enter, children pick a card and prepare for the task. Jobs can include greeter, opening prayer, candle lighter, helping hands, goodbye greeter, music helper, affirmation reader, name tag helper, new friend helper, craft table helper, room renewer (for cleanup).

- ❑ Be prepared in case the service runs over. Be sure to have “fillers” or extra activities for the teachers to use. These may include easy games for small or large groups, or songs with motions. You can even use pre-session activities. (See Chapter 18 “Resources.”)

WHEN THE SERVICE IS OVER

Ending the Sunday morning experience with the smooth transition of children returning to their parents helps everyone feel good about the time spent at church. This is another opportunity to make yourself available for parents/authorized adults to speak with you and for you to say farewell words to the children as they leave. Clear procedures for closing out the classes will free you up to be available.

- ❑ Have all children signed out. All children must be signed out by the adult that signed them in or another authorized person. Nursery staff can match the faces with the Polaroid pictures or check picture IDs for security. Signing out a child is very important to insure that all children are transferred from your responsibility to the responsibility of an authorized adult. Even for small churches, this step is necessary. *Never let a child leave your care or classroom without being in the custody of an **authorized** adult.*
- ❑ Be clear with parents about the window of time they have to pick up their children after service. Most churches require parents to sign out their child within 15 minutes of the service ending. This means the child must be picked up before coffee time, talking with friends, or visiting the bookstore. Being prompt respects the volunteers’ commitment of time, allows them some time to help close up the classrooms, and subtly reminds parents and others that children’s ministry is not child care.
- ❑ For special situations, indicate a designated place for late pickup. Have a designated place to take children who haven’t been picked up within the time frame. This safe place staffed by a volunteer is where children can be taken when their parents are: running behind, in prayer with a chaplain or minister, serving as volunteers in other areas in the ministry, or are talking with you, the director. You might even choose to be the safe place (if you aren’t busy) and take time to be with the child/ren and get to know them better. This is a great opportunity to build relationships.

- Offer flyers and other information. Have flyers and other parent information available at agreed-upon locations. The teachers can hand information out as the parents pick up the children, post information on a bulletin board outside the classroom, or perhaps have a central information center where children register (if not at their classrooms).
- Indicate/designate clean up and shut down procedures. Expect teachers to put their rooms back in order and to make sure everything is returned to its right place. Encourage teachers to invite the children to help pick up and return the room to order before leaving the classroom. If you are doing ministry out of a tub or storage boxes, have the teachers pack the tubs and bring them back to the designated storage place.
- Have teachers turn in reporting forms, supplies, lesson materials, or whatever needs to come back to the office or you. (See Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”)
- Have volunteers check in with you before they leave to get any information they may have for you and for you to “love them up” with appreciation and positive feedback.

DIRECTOR'S FINAL STEPS

- Check the reporting forms and see if anything needs your immediate attention.
- Check in or make notes for a later check-in with the minister to share anything that needs sharing and to see if there is anything they need to share with you.
- Check the phone messages for anything that needs to be handled.
- Leave out anything that a volunteer may need before you return.
- If your rooms are used for other groups, be sure everything is safely stowed away.
- Give a blessing of gratitude for the morning, the people, the presence of God.
- Check the environment. Change the thermostat. Turn off the lights.
- Make sure all candles are blown out.
- Lock up the rooms/building.
- Give thanks again as you leave.

Some centers use an electric candle for safety and insurance reasons.



8 Curriculum—Lessons

What do teachers and assistants need to know?

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ What is *A Living Curriculum*?
 - ☞ Selecting Curriculum
 - ☞ Understand the Lesson Structure
 - ☞ Lesson Preparation and Presentation
 - ☞ General Tips
 - ☞ Behavior Considerations
 - ☞ Creating a Lesson
-

FACILITATING a meaningful Sunday morning experience is what every teacher and assistant want to do. Keys to what makes it meaningful are many and varied. This chapter provides insight into many of these. Much of the information can be the base for teacher training on creating an effective Sunday morning experience for children and teens.

Additionally many Unity Youth and Family Ministry Directors and teachers create their own lessons. If you are interested in doing so, a section of this chapter guides you through this in a way that results in a spiritual, well-connected lesson grounded in Truth. This section also provides more in-depth explanation of the lesson structure.

WHAT IS A LIVING CURRICULUM?

Unity lessons published by Unity Worldwide Ministries are based on *A Living Curriculum* philosophy. This is an approach or philosophy which affirms that the curriculum—that which is to be learned or known—is not within any guide, but rather lives in the children and teens themselves. Myrtle Fillmore, co-founder of Unity, was the inspiration for this foundational belief as she shared her view about the “soul’s unfoldment.” She believed that our mission is not to “entertain the children, but to draw them out.” This approach honors the wisdom within each of us and uses storytelling and creative experiences to “draw out” the truth we already know.

Living Curriculum is also issue-centered. Life is all about issues that we are trying to make sense of. By focusing on issues in our lives through the common experience of sharing story, we become engaged and involved as we examine these issues. This approach leads to exploring spiritual principles and truths and to an awareness of how they are operating in our lives.

SELECTING CURRICULUM

When you prepare for Sunday morning, begin by selecting lessons that are age-appropriate, fully-interconnected and enjoyable for everyone. Unity's lessons are about process—having the child or teen process the story and the issues it contains. Our young people also are encouraged to process their relationship with others present, and their relationship with God, Jesus and Truth. By understanding Unity's process-oriented approach, you will consistently select lessons that help your youth to process their issues.

What every volunteer wants is to make a difference. Giving volunteers a thoroughly developed lesson helps them to be successful in their work with children. Knowing how to deliver the lesson and interact with children or teens is equally essential and can be learned through effective training.

General guidelines in lesson selection include:

- Easy for teachers to use
- Related to Unity practices and including Truth principles
- Appropriate for the abilities of the intended age range
- Fun for the teachers and the children or teens
- Appropriate to budget, i.e. consider amount of resources/supplies required
- Applies lesson concepts to child's life

When making curriculum decisions, determine the essential criteria for your church.

Here are some additional considerations:

- Covers Bible content appropriate for the age level.
- Is compatible with what our church teaches.
- Lesson plan is easy to follow and well-detailed.
- All lessons encourage students to participate in age-appropriate activities.
- Students can effectively participate in lessons in physical space available.
- New and experienced teachers are able to succeed using these lessons.
- Options are offered within lessons so teachers can customize them.
- Lessons suggest ways for parent/s to be involved during coming week.
- Materials are attractive, inviting and user-friendly.

In a larger program, often a team approach to lesson selection results in good participation in the program. When doing this:

- Bring together those who will be teaching from the curriculum.
- Pray together for divine guidance.
- Determine the essential criteria and the priorities of each criteria.
- Use a rating scale for the categories, 1 = least useful, 2 = useful, etc.
- Individually critique the lessons, adding notes and questions.
- As a group compare ratings.
- Prayerfully make a decision.

Sources for Curriculum Selection

Unity Worldwide Ministries is a great starting point. Unity's website curriculum section (www.unity.org/curriculum) includes descriptions of each of the curricula available, plus a list of the required and optional resources for each. This information helps you to budget. Curricula published by Unity Worldwide Ministries is created by teachers from Unity churches and is designed to be issue-centered, teacher-friendly, age-appropriate, interactive and based on Unity principles. Additionally, some curricula has been developed by Unity directors or teachers and may be available through the Regional Education Consultants. Some directors create lessons based on specific needs in their program.

Selecting a Bible

Frequently Unity Worldwide Ministries is asked about a Bible for children. Recommending one is not simple because of the abilities of the various ages of children. Instead let's look at some guidelines to use in making a selection. (For adults, Unity Institute is currently recommending the New Revised Standard Version.)

Considerations for a child or teen:

1. Consider the age of the young person. Generally the target ages are preschoolers, elementary ages, teens. Each age has different needs.
2. Look at the pictures. Do they appeal to the age? What size are the pictures? (If the Bible is for class use, larger pictures are beneficial.) Younger children especially need and want pictures to relate to. For preschoolers, select one that has simple pleasant pictures. Teens do not need pictures.
3. If you expect your young person to read from the Bible, consider the reading level. Try reading aloud from it. How easy is it to read from? How easily understood is it? A 2- to 3-page story is generally a good length for younger elementary children. Remember that eye muscles do not fully mature until 8 years of age. Print needs to be large for younger readers.

4. How does this Bible compare to Unity's beliefs? This is the hardest question to answer. For this read and compare a few parables. Read the story of the crucifixion and the resurrection. Does the children's Bible merely state the story or does it interpret it for the child or teen? The best version for Unity people is one that retells the story as in the Bible, only using children's words. Then the metaphysical interpretation can be added without having to "undo" any of the story.

Some Bibles to consider:

- Preschoolers: *The Beginner's Bible* by Karyn Henley, *The Preschoolers Bible* by V. Gilbert Beers, *Read-a-Loud Bible Stories* by Ella K. Lindvall - 5 stories per volume
- Elementary age: *The Children's Illustrated Bible* by Selina Hastings, DK Publishing, Inc. or *The Lion Storyteller Bible* by Bob Hartman and Susie Poole
- Teens: *The Youth Bible: New Century Version* by Word Publishing, a division of Thomas Nelson, Inc. or *The Holy Bible, New Century Version*

UNDERSTAND THE LESSON STRUCTURE

What is the purpose of each part of the curriculum?

Overview—Each lesson begins with an overview to assist the teachers in preparing for the lesson. It highlights the lesson's key points and lists all the supplies needed plus additional information for the teacher.

Pre-session—As children arrive, involve them immediately in some type of activity such as art, games, music or other active ideas that provide fun and variety. This may or may not relate to the lesson topic and is an easy place to substitute ideas as desired. Serving the children begins as soon as the first one arrives. Getting the children involved immediately helps the entire lesson flow smoothly and easily. In churches where children begin in the service, the pre-session activity probably will not be needed.

SUGGESTED FORMAT FOR SUNDAY SESSIONS

Pre-session Activity

Gathering – Opening Circle

Prayer &/or Meditation
 Check-in/Introductions
 Affirmation**
 Songs*
 Offering and Blessing*

Lesson Exploration

Story
 Discussion with questions
 Creative Experience

Closing Circle & Prayer

* Placement of these items can vary.

** Young children may not remember this as it is not yet connected with anything in the lesson.

Intention—The Intention identifies for the teacher the situation or issue that the lesson develops. Lessons focus more on process than on correct answers. Since the *Living Curriculum* draws forth wisdom from within the children themselves, the lesson parts guide them through various processes with their learning being of their own creation.

Much of this information is available in the introduction section of curriculum published by Unity Worldwide Ministries. Encourage teachers to look at it there during training.

The Gathering or Opening

The Gathering helps the children transition into a time of receptivity to God. There is an opening prayer and/or a meditation which reminds us that we are about sacred work. The song and affirmation may be included here or in the Closing. Typically announcements are made and the love offering taken here. If your group likes to sing, this works well here as a community builder and a release of energy. In many churches, children and young teens come together for this portion and then go to their own classes for the Exploration.

Affirmations express the main learning for the children in a positive, personal way. An affirmation is most effective when it is presented where it best connects with the lesson. This may be within the story discussion or in the closing. A good, relevant affirmation can be a great way to remember the lesson.

Meditation may occur during the Gathering or it may be used as a creative experience when appropriate. Keep language simple with short sentences. If the children become restless during meditation, try shortening it or encourage them to be in a different position. Gradually increase the length and the children will become more accustomed to this quiet, centering time. Learning to meditate is a very useful lifelong skill.

The Exploration

Each lesson includes a story that brings out the intention and issue. The “story” may also be presented as a short drama, a video clip, or a common experience everyone has that morning that becomes the “story.” Discussion questions guide and draw out the understanding and wisdom from within each person. A creative experience connects to the story to help everyone move from a head experience into a heartfelt one. Carefully consider how questions are worded and the placement of the creative experience as they are keys to the success of every lesson.

Story—The story is typically from a Bible or a contemporary story book. For elementary-age children the recommended Bible resource is *The Children’s Illustrated*

Bible by Selina Hastings. For teens, the *New Century Version* or the *New Revised Standard Version* of the Bible is used at the time of this writing.

Discussion Questions—Questions after the story help everyone to think about what they have just heard and to make connections with how the story may be happening in their lives. They are created in *A Living Curriculum* format to draw out the wisdom within. Although the questions may seem to have obvious answers, try using them as suggested to discover how effective they can be. Generally 10-15 questions are offered as they help teachers ask effective questions. Not all need to be asked if they were answered in retelling the story.

The first group of questions ask, “What happened in the story?” These invite everyone to explore the actual story and to stay within the facts of the story before making it personal. As teachers, we assume everyone heard the same information when the story was read. This type of question clarifies what the story actually said

compared to what the listeners perceived and read into the story. If they answer from their perception, encourage them to stay factual by asking “What does the story tell us about that?”

4 BASIC QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- What is happening in the story? (facts)
- How is this happening in the world around you? In your neighborhood? At school?
- How is this happening in your life?
- How would you like this to be different?

The questions related to asking, “How is this story happening in the world around you? In your school?” are bridging questions that shift the focus from the story to the present time. In this stage, the child or teen begins to see how the story connects to life. The question is also an impersonal one—it is about someone else. For many people, it is easier to talk about someone or something “out there” than it is to share what is happening to them. However, younger children have a harder time replying to this because their world is all about themselves. Thus in lessons for younger children, this question type may occur after the next question type.

The next questions encourage individuals to continue to consider how the story is an ongoing event in their life: “How is this happening in your life?” Here is where the tension of the issue comes out for each individual as they look within at their own choices. This process is actually a metaphysical application of the story to them personally.

A final question, “How else could this be?” moves the discussion into exploring options for dealing with the issue coming from a Christ consciousness or from one’s

heart. Regular use of this concept helps children and teens explore how to solve their situations rather than being told how they “should have” handled something.

Thus, using the questioning strategies of *A Living Curriculum* means not being concerned about getting the “right” answer. Yes, for the question, “What happened in the story?” some answers may be incorrect. But for the rest of the questioning process, the answers will vary depending on one’s experience. We, as teachers, need to recognize that life is process. Our role is to acknowledge a child’s answers as they are learning and growing in life’s process. We want to continue to ask the questions as long as possible to allow each child time to grapple with their own questions and to seek their own answers. For God is within and we want to learn to go within for answers that are for our highest and best good.

DISCUSSION GUIDELINES

All answers are acceptable. There are no right or wrong answers.

Refuting comments is not appropriate.

Silence is part of the process (allows thinking/feeling time).

Use “I” statements to answer personal questions.

You can change your mind as often as you like.

You may think that using just the same four questions every week becomes very boring. Each can be worded in different ways. Other wording suggestions are in the final section of this chapter, “Creating a Lesson.”

Creative Experience—Part of each story and discussion includes a creative experience. This experience helps to move the story from a head experience into a heart experience. As we create, we engage the intuitive and creative brain, rather than the logical brain. This experience may be placed before or after the discussion depending on what it intends to draw out. In many lessons, two Creative Experience options are offered. Select the one that works best for your group or come up with one of your own.

Closing

The Closing is a great time to bring the session “full circle,” offering a final group experience that affirms the spiritual focus. Try coming together in a circle, possibly holding hands or touching shoulders. Summarize the lesson through sharing an affirmation and/or a closing prayer. Repeating the “Prayer for Protection” also works well with all ages.

Take-Home Cards are offered as half-page reproducible “greeting cards” with lessons for 3s, 4s and 5s as well as for elementary children. They include a lesson summary, the Bible or other story used, affirmations, and the song for the month. These cards give parents insight into what their child talked about as well as provide ideas for the family to use together to continue exploring the lesson theme.

LESSON PREPARATION AND PRESENTATION

How one prepares for the Sunday morning experience is another key to a positive facilitation experience. Our teachers are wonderful, willing volunteers who love young people and love sharing the Christ within. As they become effective in lesson preparation and delivery, they acquire confidence in effective teaching.

Prepare Ahead

During the week before the lesson:

- Prepare well in advance.
- Begin by reading the lesson early in the week before sharing it.
- Sit with it, allowing Spirit to help you understand it.
- Pray for guidance and for your children.
- Reread it 1-2 days prior to class.
- Gather all the supplies you will need.
- Test any activities you are unclear about.
- Do any necessary preparation well before the day of the lesson.

Considerations for Sunday Morning

Before the children arrive on Sunday:

- Arrive early to prepare the classroom environment and to center yourself.
- Arrange the room in a way that is child-friendly and works for the lesson.
- Get all supplies and materials out and ready for use.
- Set up pre-session activities so they are ready to be used.
- Have music playing, when appropriate.
- Prepare for arrival procedures—signing in, registering if new, etc.
- Join with volunteers for prayer and meditation at _____. This time includes announcements.
- Become centered. Become aware of God's presence filling the room.
- Be ready to warmly welcome all.

POSSIBLE SUNDAY MORNING TIME SCHEDULE

10:20 to 10:45 a.m.

Teacher meditation and preparation

10:45 to 11 a.m.

Children arrive and participate in pre-session activity.

11 to 11:15 a.m.

Circle time/love offering

11:15 to 11:50 a.m.

The lesson, discussion and creative experience

11:50 a.m. to Noon

Closing

Strategies for Facilitating the Lesson

- Make plenty of eye contact with the children or teens.
- Acknowledge all responses with a verbal comment—thank you, that’s interesting/insightful/ thoughtful, okay—any non-judgmental response works. Then the person knows they were heard.
- Call on as many of those present as possible even if they don’t raise their hand. (Jenny, what do you think?) Participation makes them feel part of the group.
- Allow time for response after asking a question. Sometimes a few seconds of silence are needed to think through a question and compose an answer.
- Ask lots of questions rather than giving answers. It is okay to answer a question with another question.
- Be open to the teachable moment—that time when something clicks and insight is gained. Even if it is not part of the lesson, this may be the moment which is most meaningful to most of the class. For example, if there has been a tragic accident that impacted some of the teens during the week, this may be an opportune time to see how they are dealing with it and to share Unity’s perspective on “why God lets these things happen.” Use care in selecting what to respond to so you are not spending time on one individual’s special need that would be better handled after class.
- Whenever possible, avoid asking questions that are answered with yes or no or a single word. Instead ask questions that encourage the young people to explain or to share what they are thinking or feeling.
- Know that all sharing about what is happening in their lives is neither right nor wrong. When something is stated that seems to need correction, use a comment back to the child or teen to gain more understanding. Use words like “Tell me more,” “Help me to understand what you are saying.”
- It is okay to say “I don’t know the answer to that” when you don’t. Check on the answers with your director or minister and report back during another lesson.
- Ask the assisting person in the room to quietly handle children who are distracted. Before class, coach them to go ahead and act when they see a need. (See “Behavior Considerations” in this chapter.)
- If you invite a young person to read the discussion story, ask beforehand so they can refuse if this is uncomfortable for them. Have them practice the story before the lesson. Consider their reading ability when selecting someone. One who reads with feeling will get the story across to the group better. A well-delivered story sets up the group for the discussion questions that follow.

After Class Time

- Communicate with children and parents as they depart.
- Return the room to its designated order returning supplies to the appropriate area and chairs and tables to the general position.
- Turn in to director any requested papers, i.e. attendance, supply request, incident report when needed.
- Give thanks for the morning experience with all its blessings including the children and other volunteers.

GENERAL TIPS

Music/Singing

- When introducing a new song, give the children an opportunity to listen to it several times as well as sing it.
- For readers, write the words on a poster so everyone can read them as they sing.
- Sing it through several times together. Pitch the melody high enough for little voices to sing. Their small vocal cords can only match high notes. If children are not singing, the melody may be too low and they would rather not sing than sing “out of tune.” (Children sing best in the keys of D or F.)
- Sing the same song for several weeks so all can learn it. Add variety by singing it soft, loud, in high voices, in low voices.
- Encourage children to create hand motions or body movement to use as they sing a song.
- With the children or teens, create a song list of favorites they like to sing.
- Singing is a great tool for changing the energy and opening the heart space.

Other Ways to Use Music

- Use background music to create a warm feeling in the room or during meditation.
- Use music to celebrate. Movement with scarves can be colorful and fun.
- Use music to shift the energy.
- Use music as a signal for young children to move from one activity to another.
- Create and use musical instruments as part of a ceremony or celebration.
- Use music to help the body express feelings.

To Shift the Energy

- Stand up and sing a peppy song to stimulate, or sit down and sing a quiet song to calm.
- Stand up and do something physical like stretch and bend, or do a quiet “follow the leader” walk.
- Ring a bell or tone instrument.
- Whisper loudly.
- Use participation. Example: If you can hear me, clap once. (Speak in normal voice.) If you can hear me, clap twice (or put your hands on your head, etc.).
- Create a class sign that indicates becoming quiet. Example: hold up hand while making a peace symbol.
- With young children, do a favorite rhyme or song with hand and finger motions.

Environment

- Involve the children and/or teens in deciding what they want in this space.
- Create this sacred space with their help. This provides familiarity and a sense of ownership and security.
- Consider using a small table covered with a cloth, a Christ candle or other light, plus other meaningful objects.
- Add posters such as 5 Basic Unity Principles, Prayer for Protection, 12 Powers and the creations of the children.
- Include items related to the various senses: posters and smiles to see; taste and smell stimulators like popcorn; items to touch like rocks and finger paints; and sounds including music, laughter, clapping.

Time Considerations

- Most published lessons are designed to fit within a 45-60 minute slot. Times are only suggested. With a new group, you will want to spend more time in building community. Do this by using trust-building activities or games and then process what happened.
- The lesson material may be too short or too long, depending upon your scheduled class time and how talkative the young people are that day. Be prepared with a backup idea or two. Know what you can omit without losing the meaning of the lesson. Also consider if the lesson content should be continued another week.

Other Success Tips

- Be accountable to your team members, communicating with them regularly and clearly.
- Pray for your team members and your children or teens.
- Build relationships with students and families when appropriate.
- Recognize visitors and help them feel welcome.
- Use lessons and materials suggested by your director.
- Be prepared for your responsibilities each time.
- Communicate special needs to the director.
- Participate in scheduled trainings and teacher meetings.
- Check the schedule to be clear when you will teach. If you are unable to present on your scheduled week, notify the director or arrange for a substitute as soon as possible.
- Commit to going to class prepared with thoughtful and interesting lessons.
- Respond to the children and co-teachers from a point of love, appreciation and support.
- Continue your own spiritual growth and understanding. Consider taking classes offered at your center. Also, you might ask your director to cover specific concepts in training meetings.

BEHAVIOR CONSIDERATIONS

Every youth ministry program works best when organization and management are critical parts of the program. Behavior also can be directed to a large extent by some understanding and guidelines for the teacher, the children and the classroom. Let's consider strategies that help direct behavior and support the children in managing their own behavior.

The best behavior approach is to understand that everything is about relationship. For children and teens to be self-disciplined they must want to be in relationship with you. In return, you need to know about the wants and needs of children and

teens and what the misbehavior or lack of self-discipline may mean. Every broken agreement or inappropriate behavior is an opportunity to help a child learn more about appropriate ways of being in relationship and getting his/her needs met.

- Children need attention. Misbehavior results when they feel ignored.
- Children want power. Offer choices when possible and keep them involved.
- Children want to feel loved. Acknowledge children by using eye contact and their name.
- Children want to be adequate. Believe in each child's ability and provide opportunities for success.

Many times **inappropriate behavior can be eliminated** by considering a few important points.

- Is the lesson stimulating and interesting to the children?
Notice how most of the children are participating—highly involved? restless? inattentive? Before concluding you have a behavior problem, be sure the lesson is appropriate for their age and provides a variety of activities that meets the different ways children learn.
- How much free time is available for the children?
Children should become involved in something as soon as they arrive. When there is nothing to do, they will find something to fill that time. It may not be what the teacher wants them to do, however! Thorough planning with an extra idea ready can help eliminate free time.
- How is the lesson going?
Sometimes a lesson or part of the lesson just simply doesn't go anywhere. Feel free to recognize that and to change to something that engages the children. Have a back-up idea handy or change the energy. (See ideas earlier in this chapter.)
- How connected to the children are the teacher and assistant?
Children want and need to feel an emotional, personal connection with their teacher. Do more than just be there. Build relationships with the children. Children follow rules to stay in relationship with another person.

At times discipline is necessary. Typically people think of discipline as a control factor. It really is a learning process that helps children develop self-control, character, orderliness and efficiency. As adults who work with children and teens, we need to understand effective ways to help young people learn these skills.

To achieve the behavior you want, use a positive approach.

- Tell the child what you want to see, not what you don't want because the brain focuses on only one thing at a time.
 - Example: We use soft touch when we want to get someone's attention...
 - OR... We keep our hands to ourselves in this classroom.
 - NOT: We don't hit each other in this class. (This is what we don't want.)
- Tell the child/ren what to do in a voice that is clear and decisive. Give the child usable information.
 - Example: Sit in the chair with your bottom on the seat and your feet on the floor.
 - NOT: Is that any way to sit in a chair? Now sit down. (Child does not know exactly what is expected of them.)
- Be lovingly assertive.
 - Example: Line up at the door quietly and quickly.
 - NOT: When we are quiet we will line up at the door.
 - NOT: Please line up at the door. (Please offers them a choice.)
- Avoid giving away your power.
 - Example: We are ready for story. Sit with your bottom on the floor and your hands in your lap.
 - NOT: When you are ready to listen to the story, I will begin. (Gives the child the power to decide when the story begins.)

Create Agreements

One of the most effective ways to assist children and teens is by helping them to determine what behavior is appropriate in these circumstances—in the classroom, at an event, at a rally. In Unity we strongly encourage that each group develop agreements together with the teacher (leader or sponsor). These provide the parameters for appropriate behavior relating to how the children/teens want to be treated and what sort of environment they want.

Begin by leading an age-appropriate discussion on agreements, laws and rules. Each year it's important to create a new set of group agreements or covenants. This is so that our classrooms are a safe place; a place where we know we are unconditionally loved by God. For younger grades you can talk about the importance of taking turns at the water fountain. What would happen if everyone went running to the water fountain at once? How would we feel if someone told others something that we shared only for our group? Older grades can talk about the importance of traffic signals and laws and how they make us safe. (You may wish to relate to bicycling laws.)

After having a discussion about agreements, laws and rules, share one of the sample agreements below and invite the group to come up with their own set of agreements. Just remember that each child is a Divine Being, full of potential. Our role is to unconditionally love them and to teach them about their indwelling Christ nature and how they can work with the God energy in the universe.

Agreement Guidelines

- The fewer agreements, the better.
- Brainstorm and then put into broader categories.
- State in the present tense.
- Focus on stating the desired behaviors, rather than what NOT to do, and avoid using “NO.”
- *All* agreements can be revisited and/or clarified in the future.

TIPS FOR AGREEMENTS

Group agreements are usually written on pink or red poster board with a heart drawn to fill the page or cut out in the shape of a heart.

Agreements are usually written with bold permanent markers and signed in ink by every class member, including adults.

Invite new friends who join the class in the coming year to sign the agreements, as well.

Label the time of your class, if youth ministry meets during more than one service.

Decide whether to call them agreements, trust agreements, heart agreements or group agreements.

Check with your Regional Uniteen and/or YOU consultants for Regional Agreements for those groups as well as the *Uniteen Program Guide*, Part 1, “Group Building.”

Sample Agreements for Younger Children

Kind words

Kind actions

Respect our room

Sample Agreements for Older Children and Teens

Use kind words and actions to:

Treat myself with respect

Treat others with respect

Treat my environment with respect

The youth then brainstorm what each line means in behavior and attitude.

Handling Inappropriate Behavior

There are times when a child needs help in monitoring their physical body energy and/or emotional reactions. When a child “acts out” they are telling us that something is wrong for them. They need us to step in and to help change their environment so that they can change their response. Most of the time, these can be lovingly resolved by giving the child a “space” where there is less environmental stimulation, something different on which to place their focus, and the right to enter the “space” and to come back to the group when they are ready.

Some Unity churches use a “Peace chair” when a child needs time alone. It is placed among quiet activity options giving the child time alone until they are ready to return to the group. Other centers designate a person who goes aside with a child having a difficult time. That person listens and talks with them awhile and stays with them until they are ready to return.

For those rare instances when a child becomes so out of control that s/he presents a physical danger to self and to those around them, an adult must step in and direct or restrain the child. There are ways to do this safely that protect the child and the adult. It is recommended that you speak to a professional in a youth-related field to learn the correct procedure. Remove the child from the classroom if you can do so safely so that the child can maintain their dignity while trying to regain self-control. Keep your heart energy open and your voice calm but firm. See in that child their Christ-light and silently call it out to help them overcome their human distress. Contact the parents immediately and file an incident report.

These strategies especially target children through the elementary years. You can learn more about strategies for teens in the *Uniteen Program Guide*, Part I, “Group Building” section and “Behavior” section.

Teacher Intentions and Attitudes Make a Difference

I've come to the frightening conclusion that I am the decisive element in the classroom. It is my personal approach that creates the climate. It is my daily mood that makes the weather. As a teacher, I possess a tremendous power to make a child's life miserable or joyous.

—Hiam Ginott

- Set an intention for Sunday morning to see the best in each person—to see God in everyone you meet.
- Create a warm, open heart space that welcomes children and others to enter. Love attracts good behavior because children want to be close to love.

- Give everyone a meaningful job to help them know that they are needed and important to the community. Job possibilities: offering collector or blesser, affirmation reader, greeter, music helper, new friend helper, etc.
- Keep yourself in control and keep everyone safe. Stay connected with Spirit and breathe deeply when feeling stress.
- Accept the moment for what it is. Deal with what is happening and celebrate the gift it brings.
- Become the person you want the children to become.

More job cards are named in Chapter 7 under “When the Children Are Present.”

Love one another as I have loved you.
—John 15:12

CREATING A LESSON

Unity Worldwide Ministries recommends that you create lessons using *A Living Curriculum* philosophy. This approach is issue-centered, process-oriented and engages children and teens in active learning. (See beginning of chapter.) Unity’s *A Living Curriculum* approach and philosophy affirms that the curriculum—that which is to be learned or known—is not within any guide, but rather *lives* in the children themselves.

When creating a lesson, begin by centering yourself with prayer and opening to divine guidance. Then follow these steps. Notice that the order of creating a lesson is quite different from the order followed in presenting a lesson.

1. Identify the issue or theme.

A successful lesson springs from an issue or theme of interest to the children or teens. An issue has tension that engages participation. Teaching based on what the teacher thinks children or teens need to learn is rarely as successful as starting where their interest is. Lessons focused on issues engage the young people mentally and emotionally, both their head and their heart. An issue always has a connection with what they need to learn relating to spiritual truth.

2. Select the story or story experience.

After identifying the issue, look for a story or two that illustrate(s) the issue. For issues relating to judgment, you might select *The Ugly Duckling* for your contemporary story

and John 8:1-11 where Jesus tells about the woman caught in adultery. Consider which story best presents the issue on an age-appropriate level when making a final selection. Occasionally you may want to consider a different type of story experience, such as a 3-7 minute video clip that illustrates the issue, or an experiential activity that dramatizes the issue. The story, video clip, experiential activity or object lesson gives everyone a common experience and a base for discussion.

Some stories have several points so you will want to be clear on the direction you wish to go. For example, the teen issue might be, “Why should we do service projects for people we don’t even know?” while the children’s issue might be “How do we cooperate with God?” The story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) can be used for either issue. In a small program, a story that can be discussed on several levels works well because everyone can hear the story together and then break into small groups for an age-appropriate discussion and creative experience. You will probably need to word questions differently for each age.

After the story is selected, write your intention briefly. Keep it open-ended so that the outcome can be different for each individual. Start with words like: to explore, to discover, to understand, to experience, to feel, to share, etc. Sample intention: To examine how I benefit when I participate in a service project. Writing an intention helps you to be sure that all parts of the lesson lead toward insight relating to the issue.

3. Write the discussion questions.

Begin by reading the story or experiencing the movie clip. Then write three or four questions relating to each of the four basic questions. (See “Discussion Questions” in “The Exploration” earlier in this chapter.) The questions progress from the impersonal (the story) to the child’s world and then to their own life.

- **Write questions relating to “What is happening in the story?”**

- What do we know about a character? A place?
- Who else is in the story? Tell me about that person.
- Describe what was going on between...
- What else happened?

This step is “staying in the story bubble.” These questions help retell the story and clarify that everyone understood the facts of the story. Reviewing the story helps learn the difference between the facts and one’s perception, an important ability for everyone.

As we ask this question, a teacher has a chance to hear what facts the listeners did pick up and which ones they missed. Frequently when this question is asked, you will discover that people immediately take a fact and interpret it. If they answer the question giving their perception rather than what the story said happened, you can ask another question. Ex. Child's answer: "He was hungry." Teacher's response: "Did it say that in the story?" Or "Where did the story say that?" Or "Did it say, 'He had not eaten for a long time?'")

- **Write "bridging questions" to move the person out of the bubble.**

- How is this happening in the world around us?
- How do you see this happening in your friend's life?
- In your school? In your community?

These questions help everyone begin to connect the story to the present time and to the world they live in. The question is also an impersonal one—it is about someone else and for many, it is easier to talk about others rather than reveal their own feelings. However, younger children have a harder time replying to this because their world is all about themselves. If the topic is a rather touchy one, looking for examples in others lives is more impersonal and easier to do.

- **Write questions to draw out, "How is this story happening in your life?"**

- How is this story something in your life?
- How are you like Joseph?
- Who do you identify with in the story? Why?
- For a young child: Have you ever not wanted to share a toy? What happened? (Yes/no questions may be needed to get them started.)

This step aims to guide each person to see themselves as a part of the story. Younger children will answer this question much more quickly than will older people. The order of this area of questions and questions relating to the world (See "bridging questions" above.) can be reversed.

With this question, a person goes beyond the story and considers applying a concept to what is happening to them. This step guides each person to see themselves as part of the story of life. With this question, it is important to give every child or teen an opportunity to answer this question, because how something shows up in one person's life may be quite different from how it shows up in another person's life.

- **Write questions that ask, “How else could this be?”**

- How would you like it to be?
- How can you do this differently?
- How else might this story end?

This final group of questions encourages children and teens to consider alternative ways they can respond to life. It asks them to consider ways in which something could be different. It helps them to explore alternatives and possibilities. Then, hopefully, they can see that they have an option—to continue allowing something to be the way it is or to do something different—to make a different choice. As children listen to each other’s ideas about how else something could be, they are also learning that there are many alternatives that may be as good or better than how they responded. This is their opportunity to “know the Truth” about the experience, to see it with the eyes of the Christ within, and to practice doing so.

4. Consider what creative experience enriches the story.

Think through what experience will help the child or teen relate to the story or experience. Look for something that engages the child in active learning. This might be role-playing, re-enacting the story, creating a song, playing a game. It could be a visualization or a meditative experience followed by art, journaling or other writing. The purpose here is to move into a heart experience rather than just analyzing or discussing the story logically. Plan on a question or two afterward for sharing what the experience was like for them. Carefully word your instructions so the children are free to create whatever they feel. For example, “Use the art materials to create something that helps you to connect to this story.”

Placement of the creative experience is another consideration. It may be placed immediately after hearing the story to give everyone an experience of the feeling of the story. For example, being a sheep in the story of the lost sheep could benefit young children in learning that they will be found. This experience can also be effective after discussion of the story as it may express new ideas that unfold as a result of the discussion.

ACTIVE LEARNING BENEFITS

- Learning becomes an adventure with surprises.
- Learning becomes fun and captivating.
- Everyone gets involved in the action.
- Learning depends on students making discoveries.
- Process of learning is as important as end result.
- A discussion debriefing the experience helps students apply the learning.
- Learners interact with each other learning relational skills.

CREATIVE EXPERIENCE IDEAS

- Art and creativity projects
- Music listening, singing, movement
- Journaling, poem creation
- Role-play, skits and drama
- Puzzles, games and “hunts”
- Food experiences
- Dimensional creations
- Group projects
- Nature explorations

5. Decide and write the other parts of the lesson.

After writing the questions, you are ready to fill in the remainder of your lesson. Ask yourself questions like:

- What Unity principle applies to this lesson? Have I brought that out in the discussion?
- What will I use for an opening prayer?
- What is an appropriate affirmation? Where will I use it?
- What song/s might fit well with this lesson?
- What will be the order of the lesson?
- How will I close the experience? Affirmation? Prayer?

Then consider:

- How will I transition from one part of the lesson to another?
- Does the intention and issue still fit with the content of the lesson?

6. Allow Spirit to work the lesson within you.

Open yourself again to the guidance from Spirit that has been there all along. Allow the lesson to “perk” awhile, and revisit it after a day or two.

Creating lessons can be exciting and effective especially when following a particular theme or emphasis. Doing this in a team of two or three can take lessons to new heights because of the synergy of co-creation. You will be amazed!

Do refer to existing resources when creating a new lesson. For example, the story charts in the front of *Celebrating My God-self*, the Uniteen Life Issues series, and the newer YOU lessons, all name the specific stories used. Consider printing a copy of each of these charts and filing these with your curriculum creation resources. When creating lessons, it becomes easy to see if the story has already been developed, along with the questions. If so, modify the questions to take the focus you want, add a new creative experience plus an appropriate opening and closing, and you have taken a shortcut in lesson creation.

Also, have on hand the indexes for *Children on the Quest* (#6788) and *Teens on the Quest* (#6789) as these also list stories plus identify where you can find most of the activities that have been previously written. (Available from Unity Worldwide Ministries)

May your creations be Spirit-inspired and a joy for all!



9 Understanding Children and Teens

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Types of Development
 - ☞ Learning Styles
 - ☞ Other Learning Considerations
 - ☞ Developmental Charts
-

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

ONE of the joys of being with children and teens is watching them develop over a period of time. Another is the opportunity to observe the differences in two individuals of the same age. Their developmental process is a gradual unfolding of who they are through the process of growth and life experiences. You have an opportunity to influence some of this unfolding as you share yourself and your wisdom with them. Your experiences with them can be enriched by your increased understanding of the various patterns of growth and development.

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. Much more information about each of these areas can be obtained easily through a Web search on the topic. Also you will find included here a brief overview of the impact of change and loss on children and teens.

TYPES OF 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 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. (See chart at end of chapter.)

Mental or cognitive development refers to the increasing ability of the mind to process and use information and language. Young children lack the logical skills of an adult. Thus, a teacher's familiarity with how they process when thinking is very insightful in planning lessons. For example, children between two and seven begin by being unable to see another person's point of view. No amount of explaining, regardless of how well done, will help the child get it. Somewhere between six and eight they acquire this ability. When working with a range of ages, these differences in mental ability are more apparent. Sometimes in a mixed-age group, the older children may be more effective in explaining some things to a younger child. (See chart at end of chapter.)

Knowing more about how the brain works can help us to create an environment where children can experience optimal learning. For more information visit www.unity.org/yfm.

Moral development is an increase in understanding of what people believe is right and wrong. Some theorists feel that children begin showing this type of development around age four or five. It is easy with a four-year-old to suspect the child is lying. Yet, their lie may be an idea from their very active imagination and they think that what they imagine is real, not a lie. Knowing what each age is capable of is essential in having appropriate expectations for them morally. (See chart at end of chapter.)

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 teachers and assistants, know 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 than your words. (See chart at end of chapter.)

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. This is the primary purpose of a youth ministry program. Parents actually have the greatest opportunity to influence this aspect of development, but many are unclear on how to do this and look to the church for this.

Spiritual awareness has to be activated in each of us or it may remain dormant for long periods of time, possibly for much of a lifetime! Children use their minds to sort and categorize information from their environment, but can only sort from what they are exposed to. Thus they need adults to provide spiritual categories and concepts of faith traditions in order to encourage the child's developing spiritual understanding. One's expression of faith is affected by all aspects of development.

Children need to be a part of a spiritual world that contains religious stories, specific language and prayer to help them to think spiritually. Adults need to affirm that children are capable of understanding religious concepts and practices on their own level and that these understandings, while different from adults, are valuable. Stories are a great way for children to link with the sacred. They benefit from hearing the stories of God's love and care, from celebrating them through the holidays, from telling them to each other, and from becoming the stories as they learn compassion and serve their church and communities.

For each of us, expressing spirituality is a multi-sensory experience. Children learn through participating in signs of reverence such as bowing one's head, swaying, clapping to songs of joy, kneeling, crossing one's self, removing shoes, etc. They learn in their bodies what is important also. Likewise, teens and adults continue to rely on intuitive and bodily forms of knowing about God. Everything we do and say is received somewhere by someone. Thus as volunteers with children and teens, we must remain ever mindful to live the Truth we know through thoughts, words and actions.

Spiritually, what can we expect?*

Infants, Toddlers

These little ones arrive accustomed to having their needs met by everyone in their life. They seek to be in relationship with those who respond to them. The presence or absence of spiritually significant stories, rituals and objects affects how the child includes these into his or her view of the world. These little ones understand God as a real person who lives in a real place and cares for them like a parent. They can learn songs and prayers and love doing motions with these.

Preschool Children

This age constructs a concept of God from their parents and other significant adults. Their God concept acts like a security blanket providing constancy and predictability. They tend to describe God as an old man with a beard (or like Santa), regardless of what they have been told, because they are in the concrete thinking stage. Preschoolers need the freedom to discover and create spiritual images of God and death. They also benefit from creating or participating in practices and rituals that acknowledge God in their life.

Ages 6-9

This age becomes very responsive to narratives and stories that explain their lives and their world. They continue to give God magical qualities and are filled with awe and wonder about the simple things of life. They see God as all powerful and expect fair use of God's power. They have a strong desire to believe and to confide in a powerful, magical God.

Ages 10-12

This age begins to take a more "scientific" approach to spirituality and God and they notice inconsistency between religious explanations and scientific ones. They are moving from a simple concept of fairness to a more complicated focus about what is right and just. They are spiritually inquisitive and benefit from encouragement to question. They see God as a friend who takes a personal interest in one's activities.

Middle School

Mature upper elementary and middle school children readily notice inconsistencies between religious explanations and scientific ones and question how they can both be true. They have an increasing spiritual awareness. This becomes a great age to explore metaphoric truth and metaphysical interpretation. At this age they can better explore multiple perspectives and reason through what fits for them. Their ongoing exploration of various answers needs encouragement and support rather than just one possibility.

Adolescents

Teens are even more aware of the many perspectives to consider. God may be a confidant, a guide, a counselor. They are also quite 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.

*Source: *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives*, Karen Marie Yust, Jossey-Bass, 2004.

LEARNING STYLES

Much is now known about how people learn. Research has revealed that individuals learn through a variety of approaches. These are generally referred to as “Learning Styles.” Whether the information is new or familiar, difficult to understand or easy to digest, people absorb and retain it differently.

Yet many teachers either teach in the same manner that they were taught or they teach using their own preferred learning 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 person has the chance to learn from his or her most developed intelligence. (Refer to “Multiple Intelligences” below.) It is not essential, though, to include every learning style in each lesson.

A few of the many theories about learning are included in this chapter. One of the simplest relates to the main modality a person primarily learns from: auditory, visual or tactile/kinesthetic sources. The auditory learner learns best by hearing or reading aloud and is sensitive to sound, rhythm, tempo, pitch, and complexity of sound. The visual learner responds most effectively by seeing a picture form such as a visual, a video, a demonstration. They are impacted by color and shapes as well as by the body language and facial expression of the person talking. The tactile/kinesthetic learner learns through touching, moving and doing, and prefers a hands-on approach to learning. Multi-modal learners are people who have more than one strong learning style.

Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner, developer of the theory of multiple intelligences, identified eight major ways that people gather and retain information, and more are being investigated. Even though everyone possesses all eight intelligences, Gardner asserts that we tend to predominantly identify with and use one or two styles. Thus, use a

variety of these strategies in teaching to increase effectiveness in reaching everyone. The chart, “Accommodating Multiple Intelligences,” provides technique possibilities that help various types of learners to connect with the lesson. 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 puppet show or the class may have an experience that creates its own story and serves as a basis for discussion.

Emotional Intelligence

We are being judged by a new yardstick: not just by 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*

In recent years, through the efforts of Daniel Goleman, emotional intelligence has emerged as another important measure of effectiveness in life. 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 child’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 set backs and may have exaggerated or inappropriate responses to life’s situations. Emotional intelligence is now being recognized more and more as essential for high effectiveness 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, strengths and limits; possessing 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 one’s 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 customer’s needs
- Relationship management—the ability to help others via encouragement to improve their performance; the ability to be persuasive and to effectively work toward resolving disagreements; the ability to successfully initiate and manage change; and the ability to work as a team member and to put collective goals in front of personal goals.

ACCOMMODATING MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

Verbal/Linguistic Learner

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

Small group discussion Chalk board
 Picture with caption Research
 Ask questions Writing activities
 Agree/disagree Brainstorming
 Neighbor nudge Newspapers

Bodily/Kinesthetic Learner

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

Active games Drama/role-playing Field trips
 Cutting and gluing Creative movement Puppets
 Crafts Learning centers Choices
 Group hugs

Logical/Mathematical Learner

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

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

Interpersonal Learner

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

Small groups Partners Sharing
 Cooperative learning Interviewing Games

Visual/Spatial Learner

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

Creative activities Flannel board Map study
 Chalkboard Pictures with story Drawing
 Modeling clay Magazine pictures Debate
 Visualization Building blocks Collage

Intrapersonal Learner

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
 Journaling

Musical/Rhythmic Learner

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

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

Naturalist

How can I involve students in nature and understanding it?

Outside activities—garden walks
 Collect, sort and classify nature items
 Include animals and plants in discussion
 Stories about nature and animals
 Nature items and pictures in classroom
 Nature experiments

As adults working with youth, we have wonderful opportunities to model emotional abilities to the children and teens that we interact with in Youth and Family Ministry. Many of the lessons we facilitate invite children and teens to increase their self-awareness and 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.

OTHER LEARNING CONSIDERATIONS

Other factors also impact a child's learning. Environmentally, the sounds in the room, the temperature, the lighting and whether the furniture fits them can help or distract the child in learning. Emotional factors influence this: whether the child takes responsibility for what is expected, whether they have the freedom to do things their way, and what their level of persistence and motivation is. Some individuals prefer to learn alone while others prefer to learn in groups. The time of day, whether and when they have eaten, and whether they can do so while learning influences them as well. Thus taking time to create a favorable environment and to know your children can influence their openness to what happens on a Sunday morning.

Cultural Considerations

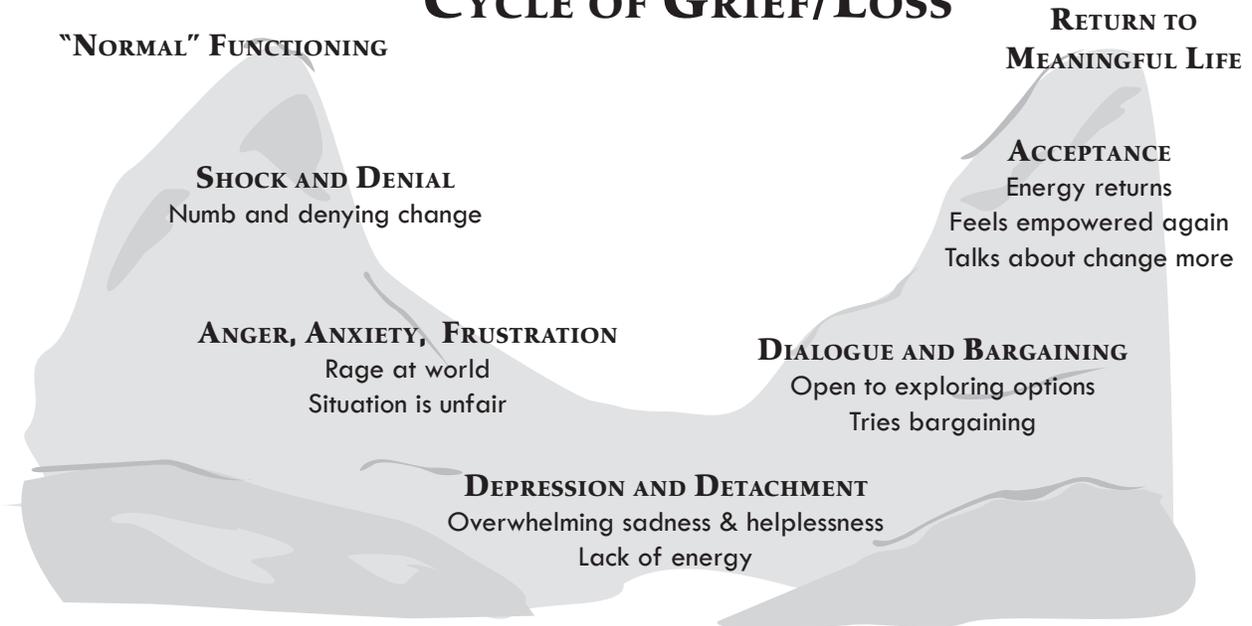
Cultural factors also affect one's receptivity to learning. These may include age, gender, racial classification, ethnicity, religion, socioeconomic class, physical disabilities, political orientation, physical size and appearance. The culture that people live in influences how they view the world and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

How teachers approach learning is also impacted by culture. For example, a teacher who grew up in an era when the teacher was the final authority on everything may need to "grow" into a larger understanding about young people who ask what appears to be impertinent questions. We, in Unity, honor and value each individual, yet we may unintentionally overlook our cultural bias as we relate to others. As teachers, we want to continue to be open to learning more about others in every way.

Impact of Change

Change is a constant in everyone's life. Yet each of us prefers a certain amount of sameness in our life's routine. Thus change can and is stressful for all ages including children. Transition is the psychological process we go through in adapting to change.

CYCLE OF GRIEF/LOSS



When we choose a change, the transition is generally easier than when it is forced upon us. Thus, change within a child's family will impact the child emotionally and often behaviorally. So many situations involve change for a young person: a new school, loss of a best friend, an absent parent or sibling, a new child in the family, a divorce, a death of someone close, a crisis event.

When the change is viewed as a loss, a person actually goes through a grief process that is recognizable. Understanding the stages of the grief (loss) cycle can be very beneficial in providing the patience and understanding needed in being with children and teens.

The typical first stage is **shock and denial**. People feel numb and may deny or lie to themselves that a change is happening. They tend to blame others and do not realize what they need to do.

Then **anger, frustration and anxiety** set in. Most of one's energy is placed in negative responses at this stage so there is no energy for making critical decisions. Children may express a general rage at the world.

Depression is the next stage where individuals experience an overwhelming sense of "the blues" and a lack of energy. Children are apt to feel helpless and sad and may cry frequently because of their sadness.

Next comes **dialogue and bargaining**. In this stage people, including children, tend to look for ways to “make things better,” to get things to be the way they want them to be by making a deal (with a parent, with God, etc.). In this stage they are beginning to listen to alternative options.

The final stage is **acceptance**. This does not mean they like the change, but rather that they accept it and are willing to work it into their lives. Children have more energy and begin to talk more openly about the change.

Rarely do these five stages occur in a step-by-step fashion. Instead people move back and forth among the stages at different paces, and the stages may even overlap. As workers with children and teens, it is important to realize that loss events in a child’s life can be as impacting to the child as loss and change is to an adult. We want to see through the child’s eyes, and to love, honor and support them for who they are.

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, MORAL AND SOCIAL

Physical Development	Cognitive Development Piaget	Moral Development Kohlberg	Social Development Erikson
Infancy, Birth to 2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rapid physical growth and basic acquisition of physical abilities • Very active, love to climb 	Sensorimotor, 0-2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Beginnings of language • Hands-on, trial-and-error thinking, limited to present • Developing object permanence 	Level 1, Preconventional Stage 1: Punishment Obedience, 1-5 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow rules to avoid punishment • Obedience and concern for physical consequences 	Trust vs. Mistrust, 0-1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops trust or mistrust based on whether their needs for care, love and affection are met
Early Childhood, 2-6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refinement of skill in physical abilities • Are very energetic • Do not want to sit still very long 	Pre-operational, 2-7 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use organized language and symbolic play • Intuitive thinking • Own perception is how others think— cannot see another’s viewpoint • Environment influences thinking 	Stage 2: Market Exchange, Individualism, 5-10 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obeys rules and exchanges favors based on, “What’s in it for me?” • Rules and protocol are important • Right action is what is “fair” 	Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt, 1-3 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exercises their will or doubts their abilities and feels ashamed • Child trying to gain self control • Plays with peers, shares and takes turns
Middle Childhood, 6-9 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes are in body proportions, permanent teeth emerge • Are developing fine motor skills • Like making things 	Concrete Operational, 7-11 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can perform some actions mentally, logically • Can consider other viewpoints • Understand concrete concepts, time, space, numbers • Cannot solve abstract problems 	Level II Conventional Stage 3: Mutual Interpersonal Expectations, Conformity, 8-16 <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 	Initiative vs. Guilt, 3-6 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conscience begins to develop • Learning about adult roles • Self-assertion may lead to conflicts with parent • Quality of purpose emerges from this
Later Childhood, 9-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceleration of physical growth • Glands begin secretion of sex hormones • Girls generally more mature than boys 	Formal Operations, 11-Adult <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 	Stage 4: Social Science and Conscience Orientation, 16+ <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 	Industry vs. Inferiority, 6-12 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learns s/he is competent and productive, or inferior • Wants to know how world works • Looking for order to the world, a system of rules • 6-8, prefers same-sex friends

DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES

PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, MORAL AND SOCIAL

(continued)

Physical Development	Cognitive Development Piaget	Moral Development Kohlberg	Social Development Erikson
<p>Adolescence, 12-20</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach sexual maturity • Stage of maximum vitality 		<p>Level III, Postconventional</p> <p>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>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>Intimacy vs. Isolation, Early Adulthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develops meaningful relationships with others • Otherwise loneliness and isolation results
			<p>Generativity vs. Stagnation, Middle Adulthood</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commits to productive work and raising/teaching next generation • Or becomes stagnant and self-centered
			<p>Integrity vs. Despair, Mature Adult</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Makes sense out of life and sees choices they made were reasonable • Or despairs at wrong turns and goals never reached

FAITH DEVELOPMENT

Stages of Faith – Fowler	Faith Development– Yob
<p>Primal Faith, infancy Undifferentiated faith when seeds of trust, courage, hope and love lay foundation for faith development; or threats of abandonment, inconsistencies and deprivations (based on treatment by infant’s primary caregivers) result in lack of faith.</p>	<p>The Preschooler, 0-5 The first images of God influenced by experiences of parents Learn best through their imagination Think best in concrete images Their image of good/evil can reflect faith First steps in faith will be imitation.</p>
<p>Intuitive-Projective Faith, early childhood Imagination combines with perception and feelings to create long-lasting faith images. The child’s representations of God take conscious form based on the child’s experiences with those they are emotionally attached to. Concepts are stimulated by stories, gestures and symbols.</p>	<p>The Child, 6-12 Develop straightforward beliefs Learn through stories, and observations of their faith group Better able to explore perspectives of others Understand God in human terms—is real and personal. Their belief is literal.</p>
<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 many 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 with 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, and make 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: www.sonlifeafrica.com/model/faith2.htm

James Fowler, *Weaving the New Creation*, Harper Collins, New York, 1991, pp. 102-15.

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



10 Communication

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Identifying My Target Audience
 - ☞ Types of Communication
 - ☞ Modes of Communication
 - ☞ Confidentiality
 - ☞ Other Communication Considerations
 - ☞ Communication Charts
-

COMMUNICATION is critical and integral to who we are. It impacts how we perceive ourselves and how others perceive us. Effective communication is the full transfer between two or more persons of thoughts, ideas, and feelings, and is a two-way process. Communication includes the words we say, the intonation we use, and our non-verbal clues—the motions/emotions from our face and body that may or may not match our words. Communication also includes listening carefully when another is speaking, and making sure that you understand what the other person said.

Effective communication is essential in creating a successful Youth and Family Ministry program since it is the efforts of a team of volunteers with the director that make a program happen. This communication happens in numerous ways—in person, by email or telephone, in a brochure or flyer, and during training. Lack of communication contributes to problems, while frequent, effective communication prevents or minimizes problems. In Unity we strive to communicate openly, honestly, without fear of outcome. As we communicate from our Christ consciousness, we can work together to grow a meaningful Youth and Family Ministry program and can lovingly resolve misunderstandings when necessary. We also serve as a communication model for the children and teens.

The number of communications a director participates in daily varies. Becoming aware of and preparing for all the possibilities can increase the director's effectiveness in running a program. Consider the tables at the end of the chapter as a guide to many of the

communication needs and ways to accomplish them. Also check Chapter 19 “Forms” for communication items such as Event Permission Slip, Medical/Liability Release, Incident/Accident Report Form, and Supplies Request.

IDENTIFYING MY TARGET AUDIENCE

Identifying whom we are communicating with determines the tone of the communication. On the same day we may write a thank-you note to a child for helping with a special project and we may write a proposal to the minister or church board. Knowing whom we are communicating with will impact how and what we say.

Whom do I communicate with on a regular basis?

- Minister or supervisor
- Other staff members
- Board of directors
- Congregation
- Volunteers
- Parents
- Children and Teens

TYPES OF COMMUNICATION

Non-Verbal Communication

Non-verbal cues include body language and facial expression. Each time we communicate verbally, a whole host of non-verbal clues are relayed to the listener. Generally speaking, body language can be said to be opened or closed, or somewhere in-between. Closed body language feels closed. Usually arms and/or legs are crossed and there is a sense of at least one party leaning away and not feeling connected to the other. Often times, facial expressions are also closed: a grimace, frown, or pout of the lips; raised eye brows or eyebrows furrowed together.

Open body language is simply the opposite of closed body language. Arms and legs are uncrossed and there tends to be a leaning in of the body that shows concentration. Facial expression in open body language usually includes a relaxed, happy or jubilant face, often with the head tilted forward.

Eye contact is perhaps the most important of facial expressions, though cultural awareness must be taken into account before assessing the eye contact or lack

of it in an individual. (Some cultures show respect by avoiding eye contact and others by staring directly into the eye of the speaker.) When you make an effort to feel connected to the innate divinity of the other party with whom you are communicating, one generally uses more open body language, as well.

Open body language says the communicator is important, that they have your full attention, and what they are communicating is important. Paying attention to your body language when you communicate can really help a speaker feel heard and respected. Listeners feel more open, as well. Paying attention to the other person's body language can give you a lot of information about them.

Verbal Communication

Voice Quality: While the non-verbal clues we are sending are important to consider, our verbal communication is more than the words and message we are conveying. We also need to keep in mind *how* we say the words. Have you ever seen a dog owner discipline a pet in a loving manner? The pet simply responds to the tone of voice, not so much the words. That's why it is important to have our vocal quality be consistent with our message, especially when communicating with our children. When speaking, it is best to remember our audience and the situation and to use the appropriate voice qualities, including tone, volume, clarity in diction, and the cadence or rhythmic pattern. Beholding the Christ in another as we communicate helps with voice quality.

Verbiage: As we select the words to use to communicate what we want to say, we also need to keep in mind our audience and the situation. It is important that the words we use are appropriate for our audience, be it the board of directors or the Uniteens class. But most importantly, the words we use need to express our message as clearly and as concisely as possible. To be sure to cover all important points, jot down notes, or create an outline.

Sometimes, in delicate situations, you may be unsure of what to say. Try a silent affirmative prayer such as, "Let my thoughts be still and God's words speak through me." This will help to reconnect you to Spirit so that the perfect words will flow through you, with God as the source. Trust that God always knows what to say. Sometimes a simple, "I am here for you," is all that is needed.

Written Communication

It is wise in all important communications (especially those including policy or procedure changes or directives) whether begun verbally, or not, to also put the communication in writing. In choosing what we want to say, again keep in mind the audience and the situation as well as the vocabulary that is appropriate for the audience. Take time to recheck your spelling, grammar and content since written communication is a permanent record.

MODES OF COMMUNICATION

There are many different types of communications that impact most youth and family ministry programs. While some of these modes may vary, the majority should hold true for most churches or centers.

- Verbal
 - Phone calls
 - Conversations in passing
 - Meetings and/or training sessions
- Written
 - Memos
 - Email
 - Letters
 - Notes
 - Bulletin
 - Newsletter
 - ♦ Quarterly (future event info)
 - ♦ YFM calendar
 - ♦ Volunteer spotlight
 - Website
 - ♦ Quarterly (future event info)
 - ♦ YFM calendar
 - ♦ Volunteer spotlight
 - ♦ Flyers and forms for event participation
 - Promotional flyers
 - Annual report
 - Proposals

Selecting the appropriate mode and timing of communication vehicles is important for effective communication. Check with the minister, supervisor or other staff member to determine the proper procedures for submitting communications that target the entire church family. The charts at the end of the chapter suggest what types of communication styles should be considered for various needs.

CONFIDENTIALITY

When working in ministry, many situations arise around which confidentiality must be kept. Any personal information regarding students, families, volunteers or individuals in the congregation is to be held in confidence. For example, if a volunteer calls in at the last minute needing a substitute because of a family death, you need to communicate to other volunteers the need for someone to cover, as well as ask for prayer support, if appropriate, within the Youth and Family Ministry program. However, the specific circumstances surrounding the volunteer's absence, should not be disclosed. Basically, communication of a sensitive nature should only be shared on a need-to-know basis. For instance, if you have a youth who has a parent that made their transition, this should be shared with any volunteers who may directly work with that child, so they can be alert and aware when working with the student. However, other volunteers do NOT generally need to be notified of such occurrences. It is also important to determine what kinds of confidential information should be shared with your minister, supervisor or other staff members and when. Clarify this whenever you are in doubt.

OTHER COMMUNICATION CONSIDERATIONS

Some churches or centers may require additional communications with the following groups.

Minister or other minister-appointed supervisor regarding:

- Approval for proposed Youth and Family Ministry activities
- Incidents that have occurred within the Youth and Family Ministry program
- Recaps of Youth and Family Ministry activities
- The need for support or advice about a given situation
- Any church-wide activities which may impact the Youth and Family Ministry programs

Church staff regarding:

- Announcements of Youth and Family Ministry-related activities to be entered on the church calendar
- Youth and Family Ministry-related activities that impact or need support (e.g. room set-ups, reserved seats in the sanctuary, etc.)

Parents regarding:

In addition to a welcome brochure or packet, it may be helpful to have a parent handbook which includes more detailed information on the following:

- Statement of purpose/mission statement
- Partnering with parents
- Procedures—the drop off and pick up (arriving on time and where)
- Risk management (2-adult rule)
- Sunday classes/age groupings
- Information on take-home pages
- What we teach and what we believe
- Who we teach
- How we teach
- Volunteer information
- Agreements
- Contact information for Youth and Family Ministry Director/Minister(s), Web address, office phone, church address

Volunteers regarding:

- Announcements/reminders of upcoming teacher's meeting
- Information about new curriculum and resources
- Re-cap of teacher's meetings
- Changes in policy or procedures

You may find it useful to create a Youth Volunteer Manual to give to each of your volunteers as a summary of information they will need. Suggested content for this might include:

- Mission Statement for the Youth and Family Ministry program
- Youth department staff, volunteers and minister information
 - Contact information for program coordinator and team leaders, i.e. addresses, phone numbers and email addresses
 - Contact information for all teachers and assistants
 - List of other volunteers

- Section describing their responsibilities—exactly what is expected from them. Example: If they are a teacher, include a lesson plan, and where to check the schedule, get lessons, find forms, etc.
- Section describing policies and procedures (See “Developing a Policy and Procedure Handbook” in Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”)
- Section containing Unity’s Basic Principles, 12 Powers, What Unity Teaches (See Chapter 4 “Understanding Our Unity Roots.”)
- Section on Centering, Prayer and Meditation. An excellent resource for this is the CD, *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training Program*, designed for computer viewing. See Chapter 18 “Resources.”
- Section on music resources and actual songs for children to learn

Thoroughly examine the “Communication Charts” that follow to remind yourself of all the possible needs and ways for communication. Refer back to it often. For example, when writing a “Welcome Brochure,” check for items that need to be included. When planning an event, check to see what sources should be considered. Also refer to Event/Activity Planning in Chapter 3 “Planning the YFM Program.”

COMMUNICATION CHARTS

With Whom	What	How	Other Considerations
Director with Board	Report growth and progress of department as well as events, budget needs, facility needs, joys and accomplishments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written report (quarterly or monthly) • In person • Through liaison person 	How this is handled varies in each church.
Director with Ministers or Supervisor	<p>Established procedures such as locking the youth department, how to schedule events, etc. (See Chapter 6 “Getting Started.”)</p> <p>Crises, emergencies or incidents</p> <p>What is happening in youth ministry, how it impacts rest of church, problem solving and praying together</p> <p>Proposals for new activities, events or facility needs</p> <p>Annual Report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person (monthly, bi-monthly, weekly) • In person • Email • Phone call • In person • Email • In person • Email • Memo • Written 	<p>Meet during first week to begin this discussion. Continue as position responsibilities become clearer.</p> <p>Determine with minister the preferred method of handling these.</p> <p>Set up appointments for regular weekly meetings to keep minister informed.</p> <p>Events impacting any other part of the congregation generally need approval. May need to be submitted to board also.</p> <p>Check for length and detail desired.</p>
Director with Staff	<p>What is happening in youth ministry, how it impacts rest of church, problem solving and praying together</p> <p>Announcements</p> <p>Requests for support</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person • Email • Memo • Sunday prayer before program • In training • In person • Email • Memo • In person • Email • Memo • In person • Email • Memo • Phone call 	Request this well in advance of the date needed.

COMMUNICATION CHARTS

With Whom	What	How	Other Considerations	
Director With/ to Parents	General program information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome brochure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of purpose/mission statement • Letter of welcome from minister/YFMD • Partnering with parents information • Sunday class locations and times • Drop-off and pick-up procedures • Registration card or process • What we teach • Sunday morning experience outline • Program overview • What we believe • Contact information for director, minister(s)— email, phone, address 	
	Information about Sunday morning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take-home pages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was discussed that day • Ideas to continue the lesson during the week 	
	Travel events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event purpose, dates, times, location • Agreements with parents, with youth • Permission forms needing signatures • Departure, arrival and pick-up details • Contact information 	
	Special on-site events or needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Church bulletin and newsletter • Personal announcements • Bulletin boards 	<p>Use for intergenerational events, fun activities and other events involving children and parents, as well as for requesting gently used magazines or paint shirts.</p>	
	Special situations regarding a specific family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally • Letter 	<p>If done verbally, follow-up in writing.</p>	
	Information gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys/questionnaires 	<p>Assessing the population's needs</p>	
	Individual appreciation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thank-you notes 	<p>For special services given to program</p>	

COMMUNICATION CHARTS

With Whom	What	How	Other Considerations
Director With Volunteers	Date and time of responsibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written schedule, posted or handed out • Email 	Give adequate notice.
	Procedures for their job	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training • Observation opportunities • In person discussion • Handouts 	
	Appreciation/recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large group recognition • In person comments • Thank-you note • Email 	Essential and done frequently in different ways
	Weekly lesson content Changes in assignments, procedures, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • File folder or other designated area • Phone call • Email • Sunday morning sign-in • Handout 	
	Personal needs/crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • In person • In prayer 	Honor confidentiality. Recognize what needs to be communicated to minister.
	Events needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign-up forms • Email • In person • Announcements 	Having a procedure for this saves time.

COMMUNICATION CHARTS

With Whom	What	How	Other Considerations
Director With Children and Teens	Announcements of events, changes in procedures, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbally • Handouts to take home • Email • Letters mailed home 	
	Acknowledge them individually	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal greeting and conversation • Group recognition • Special emails • Birthday and thank-you notes 	Directors can significantly impact children by knowing the child's name and serving as a model for them.
Director with Congregation	Vision and purpose of youth ministry Enrollment of volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief promotional talks • Direct personal contact • Promotional area/booth • Newsletter and website articles 	Director is primary on-going advocate for youth ministry.
	Accomplishments of volunteers and youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present certificates/gifts in adult service • Open house in youth department 	Youth can perform in plays, service projects, etc.
	Church-wide family ministry activities (i.e. Nativity Play, YOU Talent Show)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcements • Bulletin • Newsletter and website articles 	
	Special on-site events or needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handouts • Church bulletin for 2 consecutive weeks, church newsletter • Personal announcements • Bulletin boards 	Use for intergenerational events, fun activities and other events involving children and parents, as well as for requesting gently used magazines or paint shirts.

COMMUNICATION CHARTS

With Whom	What	How	Other Considerations
Volunteers With Director	Classroom incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person • Incident/Accident Report Form 	
	Absences—planned and emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • Email or note 	
	Availability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • Email • In person 	Needed regarding participation in training as well as ability to be present on designated Sundays
	Questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • Email or note • In person 	Related to lesson content, handling of specific situations in the classroom, other concerns
	Prayer requests, personal needs/crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • Email • In person 	
	Classroom needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supplies Request • Email or note 	
	Personal needs/crises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone call • Email • In person 	
	Ideas and feedback	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In person • Email or note • Phone call • Questionnaire • Suggestion box 	



11

Financial Foundations

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Practical Matters
 - ☞ The Budgeting Process
 - ☞ Creating a Budget
 - ☞ Budget Line Items
-

IN Unity we support a prosperity consciousness. That means spiritual well-being; sufficiency in all ways. When applied to youth ministry, this includes seeing the highest and best in programs, volunteers, supplies and facilities. When faced with less than this, you, as director, have the opportunity to become the carrier and communicator of this expanded vision.

God is my instant, constant, and abundant source of supply.

—Eric Butterworth, *Spiritual Economics*

Remember to always be thankful for everything—what you have, what you give, and what you receive...what your program has, what it gives, and what it receives! This cycle of giving flows through the universe, creating abundance in your program and in your life.

PRACTICAL MATTERS

Each church must decide for themselves who, where and how their tithes, talents and treasures are disbursed.

All Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) expenses and incomes must fall within the general fund of the church to maintain the tax-exempt status of 501(c)(3). All accounts must have accurate accounting and must undergo church auditing. When setting this up, include a line item in the general fund for each of the special groups within Youth and Family Ministry.

General Guidelines

- Youth of Unity (YOU) and Uniteens do not get a separate account outside of the general fund of the church. They must be part of the church's accounting system to retain tax-deductible status. By maintaining a line item in the general fund for special groups, you reduce the risk of misuse of funds. The group learns that planning is essential and that accurate paperwork is extremely important. Youth fundraisers need to be planned, meaningful events. A balance register or ledger can be used to review a monthly statement from the church, so the youth can learn how to balance a checkbook.
- The Youth and Family Ministry will not pay for itself through Sunday morning collections and fund raisers. An important part of your position is to manage and record accurately how money delegated to youth ministry is spent.
- An equally important responsibility is to communicate regularly and clearly with your minister, treasurer and board about the needs of the department and help them to understand that the program will not pay for itself. You are the manager and cheerleader for this vital ministry.

THE BUDGETING PROCESS

What is a budget?

A budget is a financial guide to help us plan for short- and long-term objectives.

Why do we budget?

Each Unity church prepares an annual financial plan. These plans are created by an ad hoc committee consisting of members of a Finance Committee and the Board of Trustees. The recommended plan is submitted to the Board of Trustees for review and approval. The approved financial plan is submitted to the congregation for ratification at the Annual Meeting. The YFM Director, as a member of the staff team, is responsible for insuring that the ad hoc committee is given an accurate account of expenses which will be incurred to operate the Youth and Family Ministry. Keeping accurate records in a timely fashion will be an important part of your responsibilities.

How can we budget?

Before you begin, look at both your prosperity consciousness and the congregation's. Look at tithing practices. Be realistic and creative. Set your intention with prayer. Know that everything needed to create a safe, loving and fun church experience for the youth is available, and that all is accomplished in Divine Order. In order to plan

for the year, here are some questions that may help guide you. Review the questions and your answers with your minister to ensure that the program is in line with the vision of the church.

- Have you seen the current budget and expenditures?
- Do you know the paperwork procedures for purchasing items?
- Can you meet with the person most familiar with the youth ministry budget?
- Can you schedule a meeting with the treasurer and the minister about the church's philosophy on spending and the systems for bill paying and reimbursements?
- When is the next budget due?

CREATING A BUDGET

Locate past information and look at the financial statements, general ledger, cash receipts or disbursement journals for items that were related to the Youth and Family Ministry.

Before creating a budget, consider the categories below and answer the questions placing a dollar value on those items in which you will incur a cost. Compare the past years' disbursements and purchase orders to your answers and determine a realistic figure for the proposed budget for the coming year.

Current Status

- What is the current Youth and Family Ministry budget?
- How is it allocated—monthly, quarterly or annually?
- Is there a petty-cash fund? How does it work?
- How are expense records kept and reimbursed?
- What have we done in the past?

A budget allocation that is monthly keeps the cost in the month that it will occur instead of spreading over the year. This gives you a truer picture of your finances.

Director Needs

- Are office facilities and equipment sufficient to support the director's responsibilities?
- Is the use of office equipment paid through the administration/office costs or does the Youth and Family Ministry department need to pay a percentage?
- What types of office equipment or supplies are needed for youth staff?
- What regional or national training is available for the director and other staff?

Volunteer Needs

- How many volunteers do you have? Do you need more?
- Who performs background checks on your volunteers? What does that cost?
- What expenses are incurred for volunteer training?
- How do we recognize and thank the volunteers? What expenditures are needed for that?

Children's Considerations

- How many children are you serving?
- Do you offer snacks to the children?
- Do you have promotional or graduation ceremonies?
- Do you gift the children at any time during the year?

Equipment and Future Plans

- What are you doing that is new in your program? What are its needs?
- Are you growing or setting intentions to grow?
- How many classrooms do you have and how many do you need?
- Do you need furniture or other items to create a loving environment?
- Do you have first-aid supplies in the classrooms?

Curriculum and Resources

- What curriculum are you planning to use this year? Remember to consider all age groups.
- Do you need to purchase the curriculum?

- What resources (books, music, etc.) do you need for your curriculum?
- What supplies (art, craft, recycled items, cooking supplies, costumes, etc.) do you need?

Teen Considerations

- How are the Youth of Unity and Uniteens funds handled?
- What are the youth fundraisers?
- How often do they have fundraisers?
- What events do the teens have? When and where are they? How much do they cost?
- How are the teens transported to events? (Local, regional, international) How much does that cost?
- What part of the teen expenses does the church subsidize?
- How is insurance coverage for teens handled?

Event Planning

- What events are being planned for each age group? (Holidays, workshops, etc.)
- How are the young people transported to events? (Local, regional, international)
- Do you have paid child care or other paid youth staff?
- Do you have or are you planning a summer camp or special summer program?
- Do you have a children's choir?
- Do you offer parenting or prenatal classes or other support groups for families?

Income Sources

- What events provide a gratuity/love offering? Is it allotted to youth ministry?
- What events have registration fees?
- What is the budgeted church support for youth ministry?
- What is an estimate of the amount of youth ministry-designated gifts?
- How might we ask/advertise for the needs of the youth ministry's supplies and resources? (Consider placing a wish list of these items in the bulletin occasionally.)

Although this section focuses on financial planning, the youth ministry director is the primary communicator with the volunteers, the children and the teens about prosperity and giving. As Charles Fillmore stated:

God is the source of a mighty stream of substance, and you are a tributary of that stream, a channel of expression. Blessing the substance increases its flow.... The more conscious you become of the presence of the living substance the more it will manifest itself for you and the richer will be the common good of all.

—Charles Fillmore, *Prosperity*

BUDGET LINE ITEMS

The following is a template for creating a Youth and Family Ministry budget. Each church will want to decide to whom, where and how their tithes, talents and treasures are disbursed. For a sample spreadsheet, see Budget Line Item Spreadsheet (Excel) on the accompanying CD.

Expenses

- **Curriculum**—includes books and CDs
 - Nursery
 - Preschool
 - Elementary Children
 - Uniteen
 - YOU
- **Supplies**
 - Consumables—Paper, glue, markers, paints, etc.
 - Non-consumables—Furniture, games, audio/visual, bulletin boards, tubs, etc.
- **Food/Snacks**—Sunday morning, Wed. evening, special meetings
- **Training**—Background checks, CPR, recruiting, parenting classes, etc.
 - Nursery
 - Children—Regional, monthly meetings, workshops
 - Uniteen—Regional, monthly meetings, workshops
 - YOU—Regional, monthly meetings, workshops
 - Director—Regional ministers conference, week intensive at Unity Village

- **Child/Family Events**
 - Holiday/Special, additional insurance, supplies, speakers, marketing, etc.
 - Family—Halloween, Easter egg hunt, Christmas crafts, parenting classes
 - Children—Christmas, communion
- **Kid’s Camp**
- **Teen Events**—Rallies, retreats, conference
 - Uniteen—Sponsors’ cost (travel, food, registration), Rites of Passage
 - YOU—Sponsors’ cost (travel, food, registration), lock-ins, church co-pay for International YOU delegates
- **Recognition**—Bibles, t-shirts, volunteer gifts, holidays, etc.
- **Tithing**

Income

- **Church Support**—This is the line item amount from the church budget for the Youth and Family Ministry. You need this figure for the departmental budget to balance. This figure is created by adding up expenses, then subtracting specified income, such as fundraising, registration fees. You may need to adjust expenses or create other income to accommodate church support.
- **YOU Fundraising**
- **Uniteen Fundraising**
- **Specified Donations**
- **Other Income**



12 Equipping the Facilities

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Ministry Size Considerations
 - ☞ Assembly Area or Multi-Use Space
 - ☞ Individual Classrooms
 - ☞ Teachers' Resource Area
 - ☞ Youth Ministry Office
 - ☞ Additional Storage Areas
 - ☞ Other Considerations
 - ☞ Other Facility Possibilities
 - ☞ Tables: Supplies & Equipment
-

WHETHER you use the minister's office, have all the children in fellowship hall, are in a portable ministry, or have a classroom for every grade, the physical environment of your Youth and Family Ministry is very important. In Unity we teach that our inner consciousness is reflected back in our outer surroundings, and similarly, that our surroundings can impact our inner life. Therefore, the environment we create for our children and teens needs to reflect and support the joy and freedom we find in this way of life we call Unity.

Less becomes more in a room filled with active children. Imagine spaces that provide plenty of "elbow" room for the body to move and yet have defined or dedicated "walls" that create intimacy and a sense of ownership. Lighted, clean and organized areas project the sense of openness and growth. Furniture that is age-appropriate, easy to clean, and has the ability to stack or fold supports the changing needs of the space and the ongoing growth of the department and church. Easy access to well-maintained supplies and resources allows the volunteers greater ownership and creativity.

By thoughtfully planning and organizing available space, you can create a welcoming environment that invites your families into the wonder of Unity youth ministry. No matter what size your church is, youth ministry classrooms can be clean, colorful, uncluttered spaces. Following are some considerations.

MINISTRY SIZE CONSIDERATIONS

One-Room Ministry

Many smaller churches begin their youth education programs as a one-room ministry. This may mean that you actually have one room for the children, or that you have a space carved out of a larger meeting area, or that you are meeting in the minister's office.

To appropriately plan for the needs of a combined group, examine the classroom facility and supply lists in this chapter and combine the elements to best suit the multiple ages you are teaching. Use furniture that works for all the ages. You might consider carpet squares or bean bags instead of chairs, or purchase stackable chairs in different heights. Have adjustable tables for different heights or use lap boards for writing/coloring. Make sure the room is safe from hazards in relation to the youngest age present. (See Chapter 16 "Risk Management.")

Enlist the congregation and team leaders who share the space during the week to keep the area cleared of adult leftovers. You may want to have a locked cabinet to store supplies and resources. The idea is that the youth ministry must have a place of "worship" just like the adults—a place that is ready and inviting for God's children to explore their spiritual relationship with the Infinite. Volunteers need to know that whatever they used last week will be there when they return the next week. Children also need to know that the classroom will be the same from week to week for the sake of consistency, welcoming, belonging and ownership. And parents need to know that their children are important to the whole church community.

There are many possibilities for putting a space together. Curriculum for multi-age classes is available through Unity Worldwide Ministries. Add to that resources that are more age-specific like storybooks, games, puzzles, etc. plus craft supplies, and you have the recipe for wonder and creativity. Staffing with two or more adults helps create more possibilities. Both adults can work with the whole group; adults can split up during discussion and craft with different ages; or each adult can work with one age the whole time.

Enroll the older students in the class to act as your helpers. They are usually very willing to assist with supplies and read a portion of a story or the entire story. When asking them to help, be sure to provide clear direction for them and they will amaze you at their willingness to be of service.

Portable Ministry

Churches that are unable to provide a permanent location for the children function by having a portable ministry or “ministry in a box.” Use large tote bins to organize supplies for each group of children. Supplies needed are similar to those that would be kept in a classroom. (See Table 1 at end of chapter.) A large storage area is important for the bins while not in use, and supplies need to be changed as required for weekly curriculum and activities. A dolly or cart may be helpful in moving bins into the classroom areas each week.

Consider “framing” the space you use with a center focus board (like the cardboard tri-fold displays used for science projects) and placing carpet squares in a circle for the children to sit upon to give them a sense of where they bring their energy. Purchase several tri-fold displays to create “corners” to your space, thus further defining a more intimate area. More information is available in Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations,” under Program Sizes/Groupings.

Small Multi-Room Ministry

If you have three classrooms or more, allow the ages of your youth population to guide the groupings. Understand that as the ministry grows, so will the population of the youth classrooms. Adjust according to the age groups currently attending. Be flexible and allow for change. Suggested groupings to start with are Infants and Toddlers, Kindergarten and Elementary, and Preteens and Teens together. Adapt the information about facilities and supplies to suit your program. (See Tables 1 and 2 in this chapter.)

Large Multi-Room Ministry

If you have a classroom for every age, you may want to consider how you determine which age gets which room. Classrooms for young children such as nursery up to grade 2 need to be on ground level for safety reasons (easier to evacuate). Consider which ages you want closest to the sanctuary, your office, or the assembly space. Where do you want the Uniteens in relation to the YOUers? If the classrooms are not all the same size, be flexible in letting the size of the group (numbers and body size) determine the classrooms used for any given year. Consider the number of young people and the size of the bodies, especially when allotting space for teens. See Chapter 2 “Director and Program Considerations,” Program Sizes/Groupings for effective grouping possibilities.

Consider these questions:

- If the classrooms are used by adult classes during the week, are all the folding chairs out of the room by Sunday? Stored in a corner of the room? Are supplies safe from “walking off”?

- If the classrooms are used by a day school (either your own or an organization that rents the space) during the week, what is the agreement about sharing that space? Use of supplies? Furniture? Cleaning schedule? Storage? Will you be able to put up posters, children's art, signage? This agreement needs to be very clear and written down so there are no misunderstandings in the future should the original participants or leadership change.
- How will you connect with volunteers and distribute materials? Be sure to have enough supplies and resources so each classroom can have their own. Consider having tubs in the youth ministry office for each class that contain supplies, lesson support, and information that your teachers pick up so you do not have to go to each room to disperse the items. This way the volunteers can sign in, find out if anything has changed for the morning, pick up a "goodie," and get a hug before going to class. Then at the end of the hour, they return the tub along with attendance sheets, offering, filled-out forms, etc. and pick up their CD of the service.
- Are mops and vacuums close by for cleaning up after one hour of ministry and before the next hour participants begin arriving? It is important that the second hour children get the same clean carpets that the first hour walked into. Consider using plastic table coverings when doing crafts. Then after the first hour, just roll up the cloth, put it in the laundry bag and put a clean covering on. (Plastic table covering bought on a roll can be used over and over by washing it in the washing machine and hanging it to dry.)
- Does the church have a washer and dryer? Consider installing these appliances somewhere on campus or put them in the plans when you build. Then all church laundry (hospitality tablecloths, napkins, nursery blankets, towels, craft cloths, paint shirts, etc.) can be done at the church and not have to be taken home.
- What area can the teen groups, Uniteens and YOUers, have to make their own? Think through what you or the church is willing to let them have or create. If rooms are shared with adult groups during the week, will the teens be able to decorate the room the way they want? Is there space for bean bags or couches? What are the guidelines for sharing spaces? If possible, keep the teen rooms in the same location every year. Teens, like toddlers, need consistency and something they can depend upon during this time of transition. At the same time, be willing to stretch their comfort zone by meeting in a different place once in a while. Expect them to keep their area clean and to continue being good stewards of church facilities.

- Are there phones in each classroom or another way to communicate with the YFM office or front desk? Is there a receptionist on duty during Sunday morning to relay messages from teachers running late or calling in sick? If the classes are in separate buildings or on different floors, are there volunteers that check in with the classes in case the teachers need help?
- If your classrooms are spread out on a campus, is there any place where adult space and youth space intersect? Do you have clear boundaries where adults cannot be present during the Sunday class time? Is there loving but clear signage that expresses that?

ASSEMBLY AREA OR MULTI-USE SPACE

What this looks like depends upon the space designated in your church facility for youth education. A large gathering area to accommodate the entire youth population is best for the Sunday class time.

In some churches, this space serves for a community sign-in area and pre-session activities that get children involved as soon as they arrive. Then the gathering/opening occurs with everyone together. Afterwards, teachers and children go to their classrooms for the continuation of the lesson.

Other churches may divide this space into classrooms and return it to its normal set-up at the end of the youth ministry class time. If this is your situation, consider creating room dividers that give the illusion of dedicated space. They will also provide “walls” to hang posters and children’s art.

EQUIPPING THE ASSEMBLY AREA

Tables and chairs
 Bulletin board
 CD player, mp3 player and music
 Games that foster teamwork and communication
 Individual activities—coloring sheets, toys & books
 Prayer box and youth-friendly prayer request forms
 Possible information to post (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”)
 Class-time agenda
 Guidelines for fire escape/evacuation plan
 Cleanup instructions
 Code of Conduct
 Sign-in & -out system/transfer to classrooms
 Nametags for both youth and adults
 System to communicate supply requests
 Optional: TV or DVD for age- and value-appropriate videos

INDIVIDUAL CLASSROOMS

All environments need to be neat, clean and inviting. Ease of clean up and care is important in selecting toys and furnishings. General supplies for each classroom tend to be the same for various ages and are listed in Table 1: Supplies for the Classroom at the end of this chapter. The facilities needed for each of the specific ages are shown in Table 2: Recommended Room Equipment, also at the end.

Each room should comfortably accommodate 20 students and the two or three adult volunteers needed to maintain a comfortable child to adult ratio. In the toddler and preschool area, 10-15 children per room is best. Ideally, each room should be set up in such a way to make the Sunday morning experience as enjoyable and stress-free as possible. At the beginning of each academic year invite the YFM teaching teams to plan their classroom set-ups to give them a sense of ownership.

Color affects our energy: some colors soothe and invite; others do not. Soft blues and greens create a relaxing environment while reds or oranges wind us up and we react accordingly!

Although these classrooms are for youth education, many churches utilize the classrooms for adult education and meeting space during the week. If this is the case at your church, encourage the youth and volunteers to be sure their room is clean and tidy prior to Sunday departure. You might consider having storage cabinets where the youth ministry supplies can be kept out of sight and locked if necessary.

TEACHERS' RESOURCE AREA

This area is for resources and supplies that are used on a regular basis and that support the youth staff and volunteers in creating quality ministry. Be clear on what can be checked out and what cannot. Access to a copier and computer is very helpful.

Post a sign-out system for borrowing the following items:

- Curriculum, story books, teacher resource books/tapes/CDs
- Teacher training manuals, CDs (See Chapter 14 "Volunteer Training and Recognition.")
- Unity philosophy reference materials
- Audio/visual equipment

The Basic Teacher's Resource Bookshelf

It is very beneficial to have key resources available for teachers. Listed here are minimum essentials. Chapter 18 "Resources" lists numerous optional book resources that a director will find beneficial in addition to this list. Other valuable sources are your minister's bookshelf and sources located on the Internet. Use your search engine frequently and you'll be amazed at what is available. A number of good websites are also sited in Chapter 18 "Resources."

Note: Products with an item number after them (0001) are available through Unity Worldwide Ministries.

- *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training Program*, CD for use in computer (6000)
- *Youth and Family Ministry Guide* (6010)
- *Uniteen Program Guide*, Parts I & II (1390) (1392)
- *Y.O.U. Handbook* (1330)
- *The Children's Illustrated Bible* by Selina Hastings, DK Publishing (Feb 2004 version)
- *The Simple Truth* by Mary-Alice and Richard Jafolla (www.amazon.com)
- *The Quest* by Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla (shop.unityonline.org/products/B0148)
- Bible (New Revised Standard Version and New Century Version)
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* by Charles Fillmore, Unity Books
- *The Revealing Word* by Charles Fillmore, Unity Books
- *Wings of Song* (*available in some Unity Churches*)
- Concordance (www.crosswalk.com, www.biblegateway.com)
- Dictionary

Curricula

Making curricula decisions can be daunting to a teacher or director. Chapter 8 “Curriculum—Lessons” contains a section on “Selecting Curriculum” that can guide you through the process. Many excellent curricula are available from Unity Worldwide Ministries with lessons for all ages of children and teens. The best way to see the most current list is to go to Unity Worldwide Ministries’ website (www.unity.org/yfm). Click on Tools & Tips and select Curriculum in the right hand menu to see the options available for each age. Another click on the name of a curriculum takes you to the description and price, a sample lesson, a Scope and Sequence chart that details the lessons, a list of essential resources and one of optional resources. Curriculum not currently in use can become an excellent resource for creating lessons.

YOUTH MINISTRY OFFICE

Vital to any Youth and Family Ministry Director is a designated space for administrative use, as well as an area to meet with other staff members, team leaders and volunteers during the week. For “ministry in a box,” this may be a tote bin with a cover that holds paperwork, necessary director supplies, and the week’s essentials. Position it in the same place every week so it creates an invisible office space that people will connect with you. If your ministry has its own building, put a desk or

other work space in a corner of a classroom, fellowship hall or enlarged dedicated closet and be clear to everyone that this is your work space and it is off limits to everyone. The larger the ministry, the more space that can be allotted to serve the needs of you, any support staff or volunteers. If you serve in the capacity of a Youth and Family Minister/Director, a separate office just for you is needed so that you may have privacy when talking with parents and families or adult staff and volunteers.

Whatever the space, personalize it and bless it frequently and it will bless you in return. Some essentials for this area are:

- Appropriate computer desk and chair
- Computer with Internet connection (If using home computer, ask church to subsidize monthly Internet cost.)
- Phone with voice mail system or answering machine
- Year-at-a-Glance calendar for easy planning
- Copier (easy access is sufficient)
- Filing cabinets (prefer locking, but not essential. Personal identifying information on children or adults including attendance forms, applications, references, medical releases, etc. must be kept in a locked/secured location.)
- Bookshelves for personal reference materials
- Table and chairs for meetings (or use a classroom)
- Container for Medical Release Forms, readily accessible to designated staff
- First-aid kit: See Chapter 16 “Risk Management” for contents of kit, how to treat an injury, and how to follow up or report that injury.

ADDITIONAL STORAGE AREAS

Large Storage

If possible request an area that contains shelving for storage of classroom supplies that may not fit in the regular supply area or for items that are used less frequently. Label contents in clear plastic shoeboxes or larger plastic bins. Consider placing here:

- Surplus craft supplies (such as paint, glitter, glue and poster board)
- Seasonal/holiday decorations

If possible, as a good steward of your supply budget, purchase craft supplies in bulk from a school supply distributor. Many distributors offer great back-to-school discounts and free shipping on orders placed in June and July.

- Costumes for pageants, skits and role-play
- Table for assembling unique supplies needed for a specific lesson

Classroom Storage

Provide each area/classroom with storage space for items that are needed routinely in each classroom. For a detailed listing see Table 1: Supplies for the Classroom.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Bathrooms and Sinks

Provide safe access to bathrooms with a route visible from the classroom area. Ideally, every classroom has a sink to wash hands from messy craft activities, food-related activities and spills. An alternative might be a basin and pitcher of water or antibacterial hand sanitizer and wipes, if children cannot be seen going to the sinks.

Water Fountains

In addition to water clarity, taste and temperature, consider the cleanliness of all the water fountains. Are they accessible to smaller children? Is a stool needed to boost them to a better height in order to use the fountain safely? Does the stool have non-skid feet? (Check your local hardware store for solutions.)

WATER FOUNTAIN ALTERNATIVE

Consider placing ice-water pitchers in the classroom to prevent spending time on water fountain visits.

Lighting

A combination of natural light from windows and uplifting lighting in the classrooms is best to soften the environment.

Air Quality and Temperature Control

Determine how to change the thermostats or who can do this for you.

Handicapped Access/Special Needs

Know the city requirements for your facility and be a spokesperson for having your facility meet those requirements. Be mindful that old buildings usually do not have to meet current codes or regulations until you start remodeling. *It is important to have your ministry's permission to speak to city officials before researching these codes and requirements.*

Signage

Imagine yourself as a first time visitor to your church or youth ministry. Consider: Are the signs in the youth section and the church visible, clearly marked, providing clear directions and information? Discuss with your minister any issues that you feel may detract from creating a welcoming environment for a newcomer.

Youth and Family Ministry Bulletin Board

Place this in an adult-visible area such as Friendship Hall or where other church-wide bulletin boards and information is posted. Decide what will be put on it (just youth ministry flyers? ads for babysitters? family opportunities in the greater community?) and who will oversee this space.

Facility Safety

Determine who will be the person responsible for overseeing the safety of the facility in regards to the children and teens. Usually this is the director but it can be a volunteer parent or teacher. Constantly watch for potential hazards and bring them to the attention of the appropriate person. Have a system to report repairs needed and safety concerns. Check Chapter 16 “Risk Management” for specific guidelines regarding safety, hazards to watch for, first-aid kits and other risk concerns.

OTHER FACILITY POSSIBILITIES

Comfort/Cry Room

Some churches offer a room with a viewing window and speakers from the sanctuary (without volunteer supervision) for parents to be with their fussy infants. Some churches provide toys, others don't. Suggested equipment includes: toy box with storybooks, coloring books, crayons, plastic cars, trucks, train, etc. Avoid toys with small pieces that can cause a choking hazard for very young children. If you supply toys, be sure to follow up with the sterilizing of the toys during the week. Include bleach wipes in the room for parents to use. A small covered trash can is helpful.

Prayer Room or Peace Chapel

If you have the space, consider creating a beautiful quiet room or space dedicated for prayer and meditation by the youth and Youth and Family Ministry volunteers on Sundays. Allow Spirit to direct you in creating this sacred space. Consider more subdued lighting in this room and check your church policy regarding candles or the use of incense. Concerns about safety or allergies may prohibit the use of one or both.

Child-Care Facilities

Provide a designated space away from the classrooms in order to restrict access, contain toys, increase safety of supervision, and provide an alternative play space for older children rather than having them in the nursery/toddler areas. This area would be used for before- and after-service child care or when child care is offered during classes and workshops. If possible, create well-defined interest areas. Be sure interest areas are arranged to promote visibility for the adults supervising. Provide a well-defined center space for group activities, eating, napping and reading a story.

Store toys and books in a manner that promotes child-directed choices of activities and encourages a find-use-return cycle of behavior. Shelf labels with both the picture of the item and the name promote items being returned to the same place as well as word recognition skills. Have a cozy place where quieter children can go to read a book and feel safe in a noisy environment.

Table 3: Child Care Facilities at end of this chapter lists specific facilities and supply needs for the child-care area. General Guidelines and Behavior Guidelines are included at the end of Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care.”

Outdoor Playground

Considerations relating to an outdoor playground are described in Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”

CHAPEL FURNISHING SUGGESTIONS

Altar space: lava lamp and sacred objects

Fountain

CD or mp3 player & guided meditations or meditation music

Daily Word and other similar prayer supports for all ages

Prayer box and youth-friendly prayer request and answered-prayer forms

Floor pillows

Back jacks

Inspirational pictures

Prayer for Protection poster

Stained-glass windows

Table 1
SUPPLIES FOR THE CLASSROOM

Supplies for Storage Cabinets in Each Classroom	Wall Displays	Sanitary Helps
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic liquid glue <input type="checkbox"/> Yarn & string <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic glue sticks <input type="checkbox"/> Cotton balls/pom-poms <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic markers <input type="checkbox"/> Craft sticks <input type="checkbox"/> Non-toxic crayons* <input type="checkbox"/> Paper plates <input type="checkbox"/> Pencils <input type="checkbox"/> Paper bags <input type="checkbox"/> Colored pencils* <input type="checkbox"/> Stapler & staples <input type="checkbox"/> Stickers—assorted <input type="checkbox"/> Brads <input type="checkbox"/> White paper <input type="checkbox"/> Transparent & masking tape <input type="checkbox"/> Construction paper* <input type="checkbox"/> Paper clips <input type="checkbox"/> Old magazines for cutting <input type="checkbox"/> Scissors <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Game bag, filled with items required with game book** 	Unity posters*** <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> 5 Principles*** <input type="checkbox"/> 12 Powers*** <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer for Protection*** <input type="checkbox"/> Prayer of Faith <input type="checkbox"/> Lord's Prayer <input type="checkbox"/> Your church's blessing statement for tithes & offerings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Facial tissues <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach wipes <input type="checkbox"/> Paper towels <input type="checkbox"/> Spray cleaner for tables, chairs, spills, etc.

Labeled, clear plastic shoeboxes filled with enough of these supplies for each classroom is the ideal.

* Select colored paper, pencils, crayons and markers that reflect the variety of skin tones of your community.

** Susan L. Lingo, *Instant Games for Children's Ministry: Play 101 New Children's Games—Using Just 14 Everyday Items!*, Group Publishing, Loveland, CO 1995.

*** Available though Unity Worldwide Ministries. Check religious supply stores for other posters with positive messages that enhance your environment and curriculum.

Table 2
RECOMMENDED ROOM EQUIPMENT

	Nursery	Toddler	3s, 4s, 5s—Preschool
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Crib, playpen, rocking chair, individual seat w/toys attached <input type="checkbox"/> Changing table with supplies, diaper disposal system (Diaper Genie®) <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate toys & books <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music <input type="checkbox"/> System to label infants diaper bag, bottle, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> System to store diaper bags safely <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in & -out system <input type="checkbox"/> Fire escape guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary cleanup guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms <input type="checkbox"/> Container for dirty linens, system to clean and replace <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit (see Ch. 16) <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach wipes <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Table, 18" -20" height (adjustable leg tables preferred) <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs at 12" height* <input type="checkbox"/> Rocking chair <input type="checkbox"/> Changing table with supplies, diaper disposal system (Diaper Genie®) <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate plastic or wooden toys & books <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music <input type="checkbox"/> System to label toddlers diaper bag, bottle, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> System to store diaper bags safely <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in & -out system <input type="checkbox"/> Fire escape guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary cleanup guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms <input type="checkbox"/> Hand sanitizer <input type="checkbox"/> Bleach wipes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Table at 18" -20" height (adjustable leg tables preferred) <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs at 12" height* <input type="checkbox"/> Bookshelves <input type="checkbox"/> Storage cabinets <input type="checkbox"/> Felt board, bulletin board, dry erase board & supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate toys** <input type="checkbox"/> Storybooks & Bible <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music (action songs & meditation) <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in & -out system with nametags <input type="checkbox"/> Posted class time agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Posted guidelines for fire escape, sanitary purposes & cleanup <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms <input type="checkbox"/> Kinesthetic activities <input type="checkbox"/> Puzzles, stamp pad & rubber stamps, scissor practice area, sewing cards, memory games, puppets
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent pager system (JTECH) <input type="checkbox"/> Instant photos—parents & children with names printed clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian driver's license collection location 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Parent pager system (JTECH) <input type="checkbox"/> Instant photos—parents & children with names printed clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian driver's license collection location 	

* Studies have shown that if the child's feet are able to touch the floor squarely while seated, there is naturally a sense of being grounded and thus less fidgeting and discipline concerns arise.

** Include multiracial girl and boy dolls with appropriate skin colors, hair textures and styles, and facial features that reflect the culture of your community. Avoid sex-role stereotyping as much as possible in toy selections.

Table 2

RECOMMENDED ROOM EQUIPMENT

	Elementary	Uniteens, Ages 11–13	Youth of Unity, Ages 14–18
Essential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Table: 20" height for younger elementary, 30" standard height for older elementary <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs at 14" for younger* 18" height for older* <input type="checkbox"/> Bookshelves <input type="checkbox"/> Storage cabinets <input type="checkbox"/> Felt board, bulletin board/dry erase board & supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate toys** <input type="checkbox"/> Storybooks, resource books, dictionary & Bible <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music (action songs & meditation) <input type="checkbox"/> Posted class time agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Heart agreements created by class <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in & -out system/nametags <input type="checkbox"/> Fire escape guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary cleanup guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Altar space: lava lamp and sacred objects <input type="checkbox"/> Table at 30" height, if needed <input type="checkbox"/> Chairs at 18" height (arranged in a circle) <input type="checkbox"/> Floor pillows or beanbag chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Bookshelves <input type="checkbox"/> Storage cabinets <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin board/dry erase board & supplies <input type="checkbox"/> Large calendar to track events & outings <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate games <input type="checkbox"/> Resource books, dictionary & Bible (Example: <i>Daily Word for Teens, The Simple Truth</i>, etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music (joysongs & meditation) <input type="checkbox"/> Posted class time agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Heart agreements created by class <input type="checkbox"/> Self-responsible sign-in & -out system/nametags <input type="checkbox"/> Fire escape guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Sanitary cleanup guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms <input type="checkbox"/> One wall the teens can paint a mural on or permission to paint entire room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TV; DVD <input type="checkbox"/> TV; DVD
Optional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> TV; DVD; Veggie Tale and Bible story videos 		

* See note at the bottom of previous page

** See note at the bottom of previous page

Table 3
CHILD CARE FACILITIES

Equipment	Supplies	Posted Information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Table & chairs <input type="checkbox"/> Bulletin board <input type="checkbox"/> Bookshelves <input type="checkbox"/> Storage cabinets <input type="checkbox"/> CD or mp3 player & music <input type="checkbox"/> Puppet theater <input type="checkbox"/> Age-appropriate toys* <input type="checkbox"/> Kitchen play set with dishes and cookware <input type="checkbox"/> Fill-and-empty play area, i.e. water table, sand play area <input type="checkbox"/> Music & movement area: drums, shakers, tambourines, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: TV, DVD, Bible story videos 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Games that foster teamwork and communication <input type="checkbox"/> Individual activities—coloring sheets, toys & books <input type="checkbox"/> Tool kit <input type="checkbox"/> Dress-up clothes <input type="checkbox"/> Sorting games and items <input type="checkbox"/> Take-apart and put-together toys that easily snap together <input type="checkbox"/> Rubber-stamping, stapling, stickers, fasteners and scissor practice areas <input type="checkbox"/> Same general supplies listed for every classroom <input type="checkbox"/> Optional: Supplies for snacks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Class time agenda <input type="checkbox"/> Guidelines for fire escape/evacuation plan <input type="checkbox"/> Playground guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Cleanup instructions <input type="checkbox"/> First-aid kit (see Chapter 16) <input type="checkbox"/> Code of Conduct <input type="checkbox"/> Sign-in & -out system/transfer to classrooms <input type="checkbox"/> Nametags for both youth and adults <input type="checkbox"/> Supplies Request forms

* Include multiracial girl and boy dolls with appropriate skin colors, hair textures and styles, and facial features that reflect the culture of your community. Avoid sex-role stereotyping as much as possible in toy selections.



13 Volunteer Team Building

Defining the Needs, Recruiting and Interviewing

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ What Motivates Volunteers?
 - ☞ Building a Volunteer Team
 - ☞ Step 1: Defining the Needs
 - ☞ Step 2: Recruiting
 - ☞ Step 3: Screening and Interviewing
-

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 children 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.
- Learn, to develop and to 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 to 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 they assist or teach.
- Meet and know many fascinating children, teens and adults who are like-minded.
- Be emotionally rewarded knowing they 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 its volunteers:

- Training
- Prayer and emotional support
- Curriculum/lesson plans and supplies as needed
- A safe environment
- A complementary CD 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.

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

BUILDING A VOLUNTEER TEAM

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

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

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

The first three are the steps taken before volunteers commit and are described in this chapter. The next three steps discuss the guidance and support to provide after volunteers commit. These are described in Chapter 14 “Volunteer Training and Recognition.”

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 ministry. Prayer also allows us to appreciate the existing gifts in the ministry.

STEP 1: DEFINING 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 youth program? List the actual tasks for which volunteers are needed. Remember the tasks that need to occur prior to Sunday as well. A chart of possible volunteer roles at the end of the chapter can assist you in defining these roles to fit your program’s needs.

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. This 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 the abilities of volunteers with program needs. Consider the age groups of the children in determining the total number of teachers and classroom assistants needed. The table at the end of this chapter, Possible Volunteer Roles, may give you ideas for growing your program.

What are the recommended qualifications for volunteers?

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

- Six months or more regular attendance at your church (Recommend requiring this as a safety measure.)
- Church membership or willingness to consider joining within six months to a year (for insurance reasons). See Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”
- An understanding of Unity principles demonstrated in some way such as having completed a *Lessons in Truth* class
- Love and acceptance for children/teens

- Willingness and desire to be of service to children/teens/families
- Willingness to work in a team
- Background check for all who work directly with children or teens
- Willingness to commit (2 Sundays per month) for 6 months or a year
- Completed application

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

STEP 2: RECRUITING

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.

1. Gather names of potential volunteers.
 - Ask for recommendations from your minister, other staff members, board members and other volunteers in the program.
 - Notice what adults seem to have a rapport with the children or teens.
 - Listen for people who value and care about teens and children.
 - Consider adults that have lots of energy and enthusiasm.

Use a one-on-one approach to personally invite these people to volunteer. This is usually the most effective approach.

2. Announce the needs during a service and offer a short informational meeting afterwards or meet them near the exit. Offer an Interest Inquiry form (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”) 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 ministry vision and mission before announcing needs.

3. Have a mature youngster or another teacher 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 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 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 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 ministry facility. Display or have children share about what they do there. Give children the opportunity to make and serve refreshments. Share the variety of opportunities for more volunteers and invite them to complete an Interest Inquiry form. (See Chapter 19.)
7. Wear a button that says “Ask me about Youth and Family Ministry!” Then be ready to promote your program to anyone who asks.
8. Feature youth ministry for 8-10 minutes during a service. This could include honoring current volunteers in front of the congregation. Consider showing pictures of children and volunteers doing interesting things in youth ministry. Include in the bulletin an Interest Inquiry form.

SPECIAL TIPS FOR RECRUITING MEN!

1. Help men view children’s programs as significant ministry. Promote using photos of men and women involved in the excitement of working with your children and teens.
2. Ask men to recruit men. Highlight male workers through testimonies and newsletter articles as well as women.
3. Help men understand their unique role in the classroom. Pair a male and a female volunteer when possible. Often discipline needs are reduced when a man is present.
4. Encourage and affirm male volunteers often. Both men and women want to be accepted and valued.
5. Provide strong leadership to the program. Strong leadership attracts strong volunteers—male and female.
6. Give men and women ownership of their portion of the program. Invite them into the goal-setting process and ministry evaluation.

STEP 3: SCREENING AND INTERVIEWING

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 Application Youth Ministry Volunteer form in Chapter 19.)
2. Review the application carefully. You may want to schedule a date and time for an interview. Or you may want to call the references—both personal ones and other churches where the applicant volunteered—before scheduling. Check with your minister and other staff as well. This is essential especially when volunteers work with vulnerable populations like children or with sensitive information.

CONTACT REFERENCES SAMPLE SCRIPT

Hello, my name is (name) and I'm the (title) at (name of church). I'm calling for a personal reference on one of your friends, (name). He/She is offering to volunteer in our youth ministry department as (name of position). As with all our volunteers working with children, 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, even if you have not personally seen him/her do so?
- 5) Would you have any reservations whatsoever with (name) working with children?

3. The interview lends importance to the position and to the Youth and Family 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 those items 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 into the discussion.
- Ask specific open-ended questions and listen carefully to what the person has to say. During the interview or immediately after, jot down their responses.
- Offer the opportunity to ask questions about the youth program.
- Explain any policies that apply to this volunteer position such as a background check.
- 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

- Effective: What have you enjoyed most about your past volunteer experiences? What made it that way? NOT! Have you had any previous volunteer experience?
- Effective: Please describe a situation where you worked in a team. What did you like and dislike about the experience? NOT! Are you a team player?
- Effective: In what ways do you think you could help the Youth and Family Ministry fulfill its mission? NOT! Given our limited budget, are you okay working with us for free?
- Effective: Tell me about a time when you prepared an event or lesson that didn't work out the way you thought it would. (Behavior-based question) NOT! 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. (See Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”)
7. Offer the position. Once the volunteer accepts, both parties sign a Commitment Agreement that summarizes the responsibilities and indicates agreement to the volunteer position. This is not a legal binding contract, but insures understanding between volunteer and church. (See Commitment Agreement in Chapter 19 “Forms.”)
8. Schedule the observation and orientation with them so that they are clear when they begin. (See Chapter 14 “Volunteer Team Training and Recognition.”)

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 NRSV

POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteer Title	What Does Volunteer Do?	When Is It Done?
Greeting Angel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Greet/register children • Direct to appropriate places 	Sunday morning as scheduled
Supply Room Angel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and purchase supplies • Set up and put away supplies 	Can be handled during week or when designated
Youth and Family Ministry Volunteer Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep records of all volunteers in program • Contact volunteers as needed • Contact new families 	Mid-week responsibilities as well as some Sunday responsibilities
Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare lesson well in advance • ‘Sit’ with lesson allowing Spirit to help you understand it • Pray for guidance and for your children • Test any activities you are unclear about • Gather all supplies needed, if not done for you • Arrive early and be prayed up • Facilitate lessons (See Chapter 8.) • Clean up classroom before leaving 	May schedule on rotational system, i.e. 2 Sundays on/2 off or, on 1 Sunday/off 2 or 3 depending on the rotation
Teacher/Classroom Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist teacher and children, especially with individual needs/problems • Arrive early to prepare the space and to become centered • Place supplies and materials ready for use • Play music when appropriate • Prepare for arrival procedures • Warmly welcome youth and parents • Handle special requests 	May schedule on rotational system, i.e. 2 Sundays on/2 off or, on 1 Sunday/off 2 or 3 depending on the rotation
Uniteen Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare and facilitate effective lessons • Pray for guidance and for teens • Arrive early and prayed up • Be a Spiritual Leader and role model • Coordinate events, service projects • Coach young teens in responsibilities • Administer paperwork for group events • Sponsor events • Serve as liaison between teens and youth director 	Sunday morning as scheduled Occasional weekends When events are scheduled
YOU Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a Spiritual Leader and role model • Facilitate spiritual lessons as needed • Coach teens in facilitating lessons • Coach/guide/support teens in events, service projects & other teen leadership functions • Supervise all functions as scheduled • Mentor teens from spiritual perspective in challenges • Serve as liaison between teens and minister/youth director • Pray for guidance and for teens • Uphold church policies, procedures and state laws 	Sunday as scheduled When events and YOU functions are held

POSSIBLE VOLUNTEER ROLES

Volunteer Title	What Does Volunteer Do?	When Is It Done?
Substitute Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fill in when regular teacher is not available • See teacher responsibilities 	Some programs use the rotational system for scheduling so no sub is needed.
Musician	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach songs and lead singing • May create music tapes for classroom use 	As scheduled by the director
New Family Greeting Angel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send welcome letter and packet of information, and contact new families that visit youth ministry 	Usually handled during the week
Youth Ministry Prayer Team or Chaplain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is specially trained to pray with the children • Hold the sacred space for children and families 	Primarily on Sundays
Drama Angel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead/assist with special dramatic productions 	Usually a concentrated short time
Photographer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Photograph Sunday classes and special events • Collect signed permissions from parents for photos 	Periodically as special events occur
Memory Maker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange photos in albums and scrapbooks 	During week as needed
Bulletin Board Designer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and change bulletin board displays in youth ministry 	As needed
Newsletter/Publishing Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist in gathering and writing articles for newsletter • Prepare forms and flyers 	As needed
Office/Clerical Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare mailings • Collate forms and file • Follow up on medical release forms • Organize and maintain a database • Send group emails 	During each week
Bakers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide treats for youth ministry 	As needed
Nursery Care Attendant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle all responsibilities for nursery children • Sign all little ones in and out • Keep record of where parents will be • Keep medical records readily available in room • Keep children safe by watchfulness at all times • Supervise their play and encourage participation in simple activities and songs • See Chapter 15 for more specifics. 	May be paid position, every Sunday and occasional mid-week
Advisory Board Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serve as leadership team member for youth ministry • May recruit, train, etc. 	Meet quarterly with director
Transportation Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide transportation to and from events, usually parents 	As needed
Special Events Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist with organizing and carrying out special activities and events 	As needed



14 Volunteer Training and Recognition

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Step 4: Volunteer Orientation and Training
 - ☞ Step 5: Coach and Supervise Volunteers
 - ☞ Step 6: Volunteer Appreciation and Recognition
 - ☞ Releasing Volunteers
 - ☞ Training
 - ☞ A Sample Training
-

YOUTH and Family Ministry is about ministry to all involved—the children, the teens and the volunteers. Ministry includes equipping the volunteers for success and joy as they serve. It is also about stimulating their growth spiritually and in recognizing the many and varied contributions of the volunteers. This chapter continues the steps involved in building a strong volunteer team.

Step 4 recommends providing orientation and training. Frequent volunteer training is essential for a successful, dynamic program. Training and orientation for new volunteers raises their comfort level as they begin assisting in their new role. Training helps continuing volunteers stay abreast of what is happening in the youth ministry program. It equips them to demonstrate excellence as they serve. Training also builds team relationships, encourages growth spiritually, and provides specific skills. Aspects of ongoing training are presented in this chapter as are recommended steps for orientation. For specific content possibilities, use other chapters in this guide to create specialized training.

Step 5 is to coach and supervise volunteers, an essential step for an effective ongoing program.

Step 6 is to give frequent recognition! Continuous recognition of volunteers is essential. We hope that the strategies we have included will stimulate your creativity in honoring the people who serve in Youth and Family Ministry.

What are the training needs for Youth and Family Ministry?

- New volunteers need observation opportunities, orientation and training.
- Ongoing volunteers benefit from training that answers their questions and provides them with new skills, classroom lesson strategies and insights about children and teens. Everyone values meetings that include procedures, curriculum, spiritual growth, relationship-building and fun!

What are some ways to offer training?

- Regular meetings, 1-2 hours, well-planned and announced well in advance.
- Extended trainings of 3-5 hours, especially for new teachers. Use excellent volunteers and/or grade-level team leaders as facilitators for some parts of the training.
- Teachers' retreat—Use the time for fun, relationship building, renewal and some concentrated training for youth ministry.
- Individualized training—can be accomplished using tools like *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training CD*. (Available through www.unitychurches.org/shop)
- Task-focused individualized training—is specific to a need such as registration, office help, etc.
- Regional events offered by your Regional Educational Consultants. Visit www.unity.org/rec

National training opportunities

- Child/Teen Ministry Week offered yearly by Unity Worldwide Ministries in July or August. Visit www.unity.org/yfm for details.

STEP 4: VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

For new volunteers, training may actually begin informally with the interview described in detail in the previous chapter. In the interview the director learns what opportunity the potential volunteer is looking for and what gifts they wish to share.

S/he can also learn what previous training the person may have had, what they would like to learn more about, and when they are available. The needs in the youth program can be described, and the mission, values and overall philosophy of the ministry may be reviewed with the prospective volunteer.

Orientation for new volunteers is essential to raise their comfort level as they begin assisting. Additionally, children benefit as they are assured of ongoing consistency in their program even when a new volunteer face is present. Orientation ensures that information passed on to visitors is accurate and helpful. Expecting a volunteer to catch on over a few weeks of participation without an orientation is an unrealistic expectation and one that often results in short terms of service.

1. In the initial orientation for new volunteers, include:

- The vision, mission and purpose of the Youth and Family Ministry.
- A brief description of overall program.
- An explanation of the approach used with children and teens.
- General knowledge on policies and handouts. Create a Policy/Procedure Handbook and provide a copy at this training. At the end of Chapter 16 “Risk Management” is a discussion on how to create this and recommended content for the handbook. (More specific ideas for new volunteer training are later in this chapter.)
- A walking orientation of the facilities. Include:
 - Youth and Family Ministry class locations
 - Area where volunteer communication folders and schedules are kept
 - Location where report forms are kept and returned (Incident report, supply requests, attendance sign-in, etc.)
 - Location and procedures regarding classroom supplies
 - All locations where first-aid/emergency supplies are kept
 - Resources available for check-out
 - Where and how volunteers obtain a CD of the church service

2. Schedule 3 one-hour observations in a class of the age the volunteer will be with. Only one observation before serving may result in potential volunteers not signing up to continue. Through several observations the prospective volunteer gets to see

the flow of the program and this also helps to reverse the affects of observing an ineffective Sunday. (See New Volunteer Checklist in Chapter 19 “Forms.”) These observations may be with different age groups to see where the adult resonates. Or they may be with the same age group to gain more insight. You may choose to schedule these before the new volunteer orientation training.

3. Some new volunteers may benefit from specialized on-the-job training rather than all the parts of the new volunteer training just described. Roles that may be best for this include registration table person, office assistance, craft angel who comes during the week, etc.

STEP 5: COACH AND SUPERVISE VOLUNTEERS

Once orientation, a tour, and class observations have been completed, the director will want to continue to observe, coach and encourage new volunteers. Other classroom volunteers may not be comfortable in this role, so provide frequent opportunities for new volunteers to ask questions and to grow in their skills. This can be through conversation after class, a phone call or email during the week or a brief meeting of new volunteers a few weeks after they begin. Give feedback in a loving, constructive way. Offer specific ideas to improve their skills, and compliment them on what they do well.

STEP 6: VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION AND RECOGNITION

Volunteers are the hands and feet of ministry for the youth congregation! It is essential to express appreciation to volunteers and to give them formal recognition as it contributes to the enthusiasm and willingness of volunteers. It also increases their length of service. Appreciation and recognition is best when given often, from the heart, and to the person—not for the work they contributed. This is an on-going responsibility of the director and other paid staff. Many creative approaches can be used. Here are a few ideas.

- Give verbal thank-yous to individuals often, mentioning something special you observed.
- Send special notes expressing thanks for being an angel to our children and teens! Send notes on the odd holidays like Valentines Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Halloween, etc.

- Use emails, texts, or notes to acknowledge random acts of kindness and going the extra mile.
- Create a Volunteer Wall of Fame or Volunteer Tree with pictures and names, both group and individual. Include action shots and “Thank You!”
- Have all volunteers wear a yellow star, “Youth Ministry Star Volunteer,” on a designated Sunday. Invite everyone to express their appreciation to the Youth Ministry stars.
- Provide food at trainings and other small gifts... i.e. Unity bookmark, Basic Unity Principles wallet card, or a special candy treat with a saying—“You are worth a mint to us!”
- Acknowledge birthdays through cards, song, etc.
- Plan a fun event to celebrate volunteers! Play together.
- Yearly present all with certificates of appreciation during a church service. Possibly include recognition of longevity as well.
- Maintain communication with volunteers—offer prayer support and inquire after it has been requested.
- In church newsletters, acknowledge volunteers by name and their contributions.
- Use intangible acknowledgements such as verbal thank-yous, giving respect and status to volunteers, and maintaining a personal interest in them.

Giving splendid care to volunteers is rewarding to both you and them. You make their day as they help to co-create with you a ministry of excellence for the youth and their families.

RELEASING VOLUNTEERS

Nearly all volunteers will desire to be released from their service eventually. Some may have finished what they needed to experience with that age group. They may be renewed by working with a new age group. Others may have life circumstances that make volunteering in YFM no longer workable for them. We joyously celebrate their contributions, bless them, and release them to their highest good.

Occasionally a volunteer is not a good fit. In this circumstance, it becomes the director’s responsibility to lovingly release and re-direct them to other areas of service in the church or community. Avoiding handling such a situation often makes this

a more complicated process than it would have been with earlier action. Observing the volunteer in action helps with the decision-making process as does written documentation. The volunteer may even be relieved to make a change.

When faced with one of these situations, consult with your minister or supervisor. They probably have effective strategies for this process and may be willing to be present with you as you talk with the volunteer. Pray with the individual. Be clear and honest about their contributions as well as the reason for release. Suggest other opportunities or persons to contact if they are interested in another area of service. Maintain confidentiality afterward.

No matter why they are leaving, invite all retiring volunteers to complete a volunteer questionnaire that includes an evaluation and an opportunity for feedback about the program. (See Retiring Volunteer Exit Questionnaire, Chapter 19 “Forms.”)

TRAINING

Well-trained, happy teachers are essential to an effective youth ministry program. A primary responsibility of the director is to train and empower teachers and other volunteers. Whether they are new or continuing teachers, this means providing them with as much support as they need, down to a word-for-word script if they feel they need it. It also means helping them gain skills and confidence to gradually take ownership of their class and to feel free to deviate from the lessons plans, as guided by Spirit, as long as they stay somewhat on the topic. With experience, teachers and assistants come to know their classes, and with regular and adequate preparation, God gives them incredible activities that serve their children better than any published curriculum can provide!

What is involved in providing training?

The best training provides relevant information, presented so that it can be used immediately, and modeled through a variety of strategies. Adult learners already have much wisdom, so call on them to share some of that.

Director Decisions Before Training

- Define the training's purpose/topic—Identify its value.
- Decide how long. Be realistic—Where? When? How often? For whom?
- Use training for more than just passing out information—If information can be distributed in written form, do so.
- Plan content and sequence. (More on this later.)

- Organize handouts/packets and room considerations.
- Include support, sharing, connecting, learning and fun.
- Start in prayer, end in prayer or with a spiritual closing activity/ritual.
- Consider including food, recognitions, maybe even door prizes!

How do I decide what content to offer?

Begin by identifying the areas of training that can be offered. Consider them in relation to the year's calendar and the experience and needs of your volunteers. New volunteers benefit from training immediately, focused specifically on their needs.

Continuing volunteers respond to monthly or bi-monthly training if it includes spiritual nurturing, relationship building, and skill building offered at a convenient time in a well-structured format. Be aware that it is nearly impossible to provide training that will satisfy everyone. Focus, rather, on meeting the needs of the majority and hope that word of the value of the training will spread to those who are unable to attend. Announce training dates well in advance so volunteers can plan to attend.

Some churches schedule a quick lunch followed by volunteer training right after the Sunday service and provide child care for the volunteer's children.

As you plan, check to see what training will be offered in your area by your Regional Consultants so that you are not duplicating efforts. Your volunteers benefit by joining with other youth ministry volunteers at regional training events, and by networking with people from other churches.

What are areas for ongoing training?

Refer to the recommended chapters for more details.

How children learn (Chapter 9 “Understanding Children and Teens”)

- Developmental characteristics of each age
- Multiple Intelligences (the many ways of learning)
- Interactive learning appropriate for various ages and stages
- Faith development

About teaching (Chapter 8 “Curriculum Lessons”)

- *A Living Curriculum* philosophy
- Why the Sunday program and lesson are structured as they are
(Resource: *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training CD*)

- What we teach
- How to prepare a lesson
- How to deliver a lesson effectively
- How to lead a prayer or meditation (Resource: *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training CD*)

Setting the stage (Chapter 8 “Curriculum Lessons”)

- Preparing the environment
- Obtaining supplies—whose responsibility?
- Using music in various ways for differing ages

Classroom management (Chapter 8 “Curriculum Lessons”)

- Helping children manage their behavior
- Creating Heart Agreements with youth
- Strategies for redirecting behavior—Peace Chair

Building relationships with youth, with your teaching team

- For new volunteers ask yourself: What does a new Unity youth ministry teacher or assistant need to know before stepping into a classroom for the first time?
- What information makes a difference between feeling confident and successful or feeling overwhelmed and inadequate?

Risk reduction policies and procedures (Training section in Chapter 16 “Risk Management”)

- Program procedures including attendance, bathroom, teacher absence, equipment and supplies
- Safety/First-Aid/Emergencies procedures
- Reporting procedures

What do volunteers need to know as they begin?

Unity background (Chapter 4 “Understanding Our Unity Roots” and *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training CD*)

- The history of the Unity movement
- Unity foundations

Commitments and expectations for their position

- How communication is handled—folder, email, phone, text, Facebook or dedicated page on church website
- Youth and Family Ministry team schedule (who's where and when)
- Calendar of special events—routines, how to find announcements

Procedures for Sunday morning (Chapters 6, 7, 16, 19)

- Signing in, attendance
- Who and when to call if you will be absent
- How to handle emergencies, lock-downs (Chapter 16 “Risk Management”)

What is team teaching?

Team teaching is having two adults in a classroom working together with the children. One may do all the teaching and the other the assisting, or they may choose to alternate responsibilities. Two adults in the classroom are also recommended for liability purposes. (See Chapter 16 “Risk Management.”)

Team teaching also means having all the adults serving a certain age level meet together, bond together, and act as a team that makes decisions together regarding their children. This level of teaming results in consistency and continuity in the classrooms for families and for the children. The children benefit because they always are with adults they know and can develop supportive friendships with.

Team teaching also provides several benefits for the volunteers.

- More consistency from week to week because team members know what the other part of their team is doing.
- New volunteers can gradually acquire additional skills at their own pace.
- Each team member is supported by others in prayer and problem solving.
- Team efforts result in a greater source for ideas and expanded creativity in lessons.
- Team members can set their own rotation schedule.
- Team members can substitute for each other.
- More fun for everyone as relationships develop through shared experience.

A SAMPLE TRAINING

Preparation

- Begin by centering yourself with prayer.
- Create a detailed plan of what you intend to include in the training. Include prayer and fun.
- Create a handout of the agenda following the sample training guide (next page). Post the agenda. Use catchy titles and bullet-points as attention grabbers.
- Prepare the room and materials for the participants, modeling an ideal classroom.
- Set up a pre-session activity and encourage participation as soon as people arrive.
- Review agenda checking for:
 - Adequate time for what you have planned
 - Pleasant flow
 - Physical movement
 - Inclusion of both large group and small group (pair, triad, quad) activities, where suitable
 - Active participation using activities, music, visuals, demonstrations
 - Appealing (Does this sound enticing and fun?)

Sample Training Guide

Opening

- Open with prayer.
- Welcome everyone and briefly state plan for the training.
- Initiate introductions in a creative way. (Ex. Give your name, how you are assisting, and one sentence about something fun you did last week.)
- Facilitate a relationship-building activity.* (Life is all about relationships.)
- Make announcements.

Heart of the Training

- Introduce topic and why it is important.
- Present/facilitate material using visuals, handouts, actual experiences, discussion.
- Invite questions relating to presentation.
- Review key points.
- Plan time for problem-solving other volunteer concerns when appropriate.

Closing

- Express appreciation for volunteers' presence.
- Ask for prayer requests, modeling how you want them. (Ex. Please give us the first name of the person we are praying with and a word expressing the request such as healing or courage.)
- Close with prayer including the requests.

***RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING IDEAS**

Find someone you don't know and share something with them.

- Your favorite hobby
- One of your concerns about this volunteer position

Create something as a small group.

(Use creative experiences from Unity lessons.)

- Peace collage
- Group body sculpture
- Poster of characteristics of certain-age child

Pair a new volunteer with an experienced one for Q&A.

Director Tips for Conducting Meetings/Trainings

- Be completely prepared 30 minutes ahead.
- Invite others to help and to present parts of the training.
- Start on time, end on time.
- Be enthusiastic, dynamic, and include humor!
- Begin by letting people know what will happen.
- Model in every way what you are teaching.
Ex.: Include welcoming, name tags, sacred space or altar, job cards, being prepared.
- Plan for active participation by those being trained. Give them jobs, group activities and hand-on experiences.
- Move them—their bodies, around the room, in song, by trading seats, or by pairing them.
- Use a variety of tools—flip chart, computer projection—to make it visual as well as auditory and kinesthetic.
- Have handouts—decide when to give them out, amount to use, how to use, and why. Handouts briefly summarize what was just demonstrated or experienced.
Caution: Do not give a handout to read instead of explaining what you want them to learn.
- Include your minister in a small portion, i.e. opening prayer, explaining a principle, etc., when possible.
- Determine if a pause/break is needed and when.
- Determine if and how a resource table may benefit volunteers or yourself.
- Express appreciation for the volunteers' time in attending the training as well as for their service to the youth ministry.

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you,
O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.* —Psalm 19:14 NRSV



15 Nursery & Child Care

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Staffing/Volunteers
 - ☞ Sign-In Procedures
 - ☞ Nursery Policies for Families
 - ☞ Nursery Program Flow
 - ☞ Nursery Facilities
 - ☞ General Housekeeping Procedures
 - ☞ Safety, First Aid and Emergencies
 - ☞ Child Care
 - ☞ Sample Nursery Job Description
-

*As Jesus welcomed and blessed the little children, so do we, too,
bless and welcome even the smallest of them.*

THE nursery is one of the most important parts of any ministry's program. Our littlest ones who spend many hours there can experience and learn about God's love through the loving and attentive care of carefully selected nursery caregivers. They can play, learn simple songs with motions, and hear and respond to short stories. In most churches, the nursery provides care for children from birth through ages 2 or 3. In larger youth ministry programs, the twos and threes may become a class of their own where they can participate in age-appropriate activities. Churches are encouraged to hire staff for the nursery to insure a consistent, dependable and trustworthy program.

As loving adults, we manifest a peaceful, loving and safe environment in which our children begin to learn the Truths that will guide them on their spiritual journey. Time in the nursery creates lasting, cherished memories for children as they learn to relate their joyful God-experiences to Jesus and to loving people in a church community.

*Affirmation: I feel loving and joyful as I welcome everyone
and assist them in meeting their needs.*

STAFFING/VOLUNTEERS

The loving, joyful souls who care for our little ones help to create a sense of family and home so that the children feel comfortable while their parents attend the service. Our nursery staff/volunteers show their love through a soft voice, loving touch and facial expressions that model patience, understanding and a calming presence. These persons may be the only representatives from the church that these parents of infants and toddlers meet, so it is important for staff and/or volunteers to be friendly and loving at all times.

Suggested Policies

- A minimum of two adults are to be on duty in the nursery. Minimum age of 18 is recommended and the best practice in ministry for serving these precious little ones is using workers who are at least 21 years of age.
- Arrive in the room 20-30 minutes before the hour, ready to receive children to ensure that they are given the care and respect they deserve. (Check with youth director for exact time.) Adults sign in upon arrival.
- Remain in the nursery even when no children are present.
- Dependable, capable people are essential in this position. Consider requiring infant/children CPR certification or willingness to become certified.
- Background checks are essential for all who care for the infants and toddlers. (See Chapter 16 “Risk Management” for information on background checks.)
- If unable to honor their commitment, staff and/or volunteers should contact the director as soon as possible. (See individual church policy on volunteer call-in procedures.)
- Once children are in the nursery, they remain there until parents return to pick them up. Children are to be picked up immediately after the service.
- Children are never left unattended, even for a second.
- For the safety of the children, hot drinks and food for adults are not allowed in the nursery.
- Registration and medical forms must be completed on each child in the nursery. One copy of the Medical/Liability Release remains in the nursery in a secure place and another goes to the director. Review and update this information regularly. (See Registration Card and Medical/Liability Release in Chapter 19 “Forms.”)

- For the safety of all involved, children who are obviously ill when they arrive—runny nose (exception: allergies), coughing, fever, rashes, etc.—cannot be accepted for care.
- Determine whether or not diapers will be changed and inform parents of your policy on this. (State standards on this may direct your decision.)
- It is helpful if some type of uniform clothing is worn by nursery staff. This allows parents to easily see who is a staff person and how many there are on duty. (Uniforms could be polo shirts, t-shirts, vests or smocks of the same color.)

SIGN-IN PROCEDURES

- Greet each child and parent in a warm and loving manner. Inquire if they are visiting. Call the children by their names as soon as they are known.
- Place nametags on all children. A stick-on name tag on each child’s back works well.
- Provide each parent with a copy of your “Nursery Policies.”
- Expect parents/guardians to sign the children in and out. The parent that signs the child in needs to sign the child out. If that is not possible then, for safety reasons, the parent needs to specify in writing who is picking up the child.
- Your church may want to create additional safety guidelines for check-in such as requiring the adult to leave a photo ID or some other policy. Keeping instant photographs on file also helps to locate parents and assists at departure time.
- Make the transition from parent to nursery staff as smooth and comfortable as possible. With an upset child, you may want to suggest the parents stay until the child becomes comfortable. Be respectful and supportive of the shy child who wants to stand apart awhile. With a crying child, acknowledge their upset, “It is okay to be upset.” Offer the child a toy or something to do, like bubbles. “Wean” children from your lap as soon as possible so you are available to comfort another child when needed.
- Provide simple, age-appropriate activities for the children if that is part of your program.

PHOTO ID SYSTEM

- Provide a small file box, tray, etc. for staff to alphabetically file the ID’s and return them to the parents when they pick up their child.
- Place the photo in a sealable baggie and hang with the diaper bag or in a visible place out of the children’s reach.

- Keep your attention focused on the children rather than on lengthy conversations with parents and other nursery caregivers. Never leave a child unattended, even for a second.

- Once children are checked into the nursery, they remain there until parents return to pick them up.

- With the minister, develop a clear procedure for contacting parents of nursery children while the parents are in the sanctuary. This can be accomplished by having parents sit in a designated area or by having parents wear nametags.

- If the child appears to be ill at arrival, inform the parents that the child cannot be cared for.

- Ask parents to have diaper bags, sippy cups, etc. labeled, and designate a place for them apart from infants. A bottle or labeled cup with a lid containing water is a good thing for parents to have ready for the children.

- Snacks may or may not be supplied. (Discuss this with your minister or director.) If supplied, be sure that snacks are appropriate for everyone. Before serving, check for allergies on the medical forms. If snacks are supplied, parents may bring snacks for children with allergies.

- Be sure to inform the Youth and Family Ministry Director of anything unusual, i.e., an incident or injury which occurred in the classroom. Complete an incident report and turn it in to the director that day. Keep forms in each classroom and in the office.

- Remember to follow the housekeeping procedures described at the end of this chapter.

Another way to inform parents that they are needed is to give parents their number from the registration form. Tell the parents that if their child cries inconsolably for ten minutes, becomes ill or is very disruptive, someone will come to the sanctuary for them. A sign will be raised with their number so the parent(s) knows that they are needed in the nursery. Parents can ask to be notified sooner if they wish.

You may want to consider investing in a silent pager system. Parents can be given a pager and be paged if they are needed in the nursery. Additionally, for security purposes, the only person who can sign out the child is the person with the pager. Unity Church of Christianity in Houston, TX, and Unity Church of Dallas, TX, have both found the JTECH silent paging system to be easy to use and reliable. (www.jtech.com)

Some centers keep diaper bags where the toddlers can see them and get to them. The children can hang them up and often will get a diaper on their own and take it to a caretaker indicating their need for a diaper change, even before they talk much.

NURSERY POLICIES FOR FAMILIES

- Parents/guardians are to sign the children in and out. The parent that signs the child in needs to sign the child out. If that is not possible then, for safety reasons, the parent needs to specify in writing who is picking up the child.
- Parents must complete a Registration Card and Medical/Liability Release the first week on each child in the nursery. One copy of the medical release will be kept in a secure place in the nursery.
- Parents are to be certain that their child/ren are well—no fever, rashes, runny nose, coughing, etc. in the last 24 hours, for the wellbeing of all children and volunteers.
- Parents/guardians are to be certain that children leave any personal toys, books and other belongings at home or in the car. If a special item is needed, please label it, make the staff aware you brought it, and remember to take it home with you. Caregivers cannot be responsible for knowing what belongs to the room. This includes diaper bags, sippy cups, etc.
- Parents are to advise the volunteers/staff of any special needs or concerns they may have for their child when they arrive, for example, if the child is potty training.

You may want to request that all parents/guardians participate in the Youth and Family Ministry at some level of involvement. If they are not comfortable working in the classroom, offer other responsibilities that are needed to keep your youth program viable. Encourage parents to attend Youth and Family Ministry meetings as this is a church community and family organization, and all input and suggestions are of great value to our program. (Consider discussing this with your minister.)

NURSERY PROGRAM FLOW

Welcome and Free Play, Pre-session Activity (15 minutes)

During this time, connect with parents, collect family information forms, distribute newsletters and any handouts, guide sign-in, explain number system, place name tags on children's back and belongings, welcome children, help them become involved in something, use creative transitions and plenty of calm, assuring language and hugs, if welcomed! Strive to respect the infants and toddlers, refraining from touching and tickling them without telling them first what you are doing, even when changing an infant's diaper.

Circle Time and Free Play (30 minutes)

During this time period, take care of the little ones and play, redirect and sing with them. Respect the children's need for in-breaths and out-breaths as you

decide when to move from one activity to another by using language or songs to ease the transitions. Remember that the most important thing is how you share with them, not what you share with them. Love and joy are what they need! Provide gentle, gentle, gentle and loving redirection.

Reading aloud to the children is a wonderful way for the children to hear words that connect them to Bible stories about Jesus. Also the sound of a soft, soothing voice reassures them that they are safe and loved. Using puppets is a wonderful way to tell the story and holds their attention.

At this age, children are able to focus very briefly on meditation. They love to listen to songs; they soon are imitating and learning the songs. They love to move, dance and play instruments.

NURSERY FACILITIES (Also see Chapter 12, “Equipping the Facilities.”)

A clean, cheerful and attractive room helps children and parents feel good about using the nursery. Here are some important considerations.

The Room

- Locate close to the sanctuary.

- Soft pastel colors are good color choices.

- Create a separate area for walking toddlers, if the group is large.

- Use toy or short bookcases as natural dividers, allowing the staff/volunteers to see all children easily.

- Cover all electrical outlets.

- Access to running water is very helpful.

- Arrange to handle toileting within this area or have extra helpers to escort children who are potty trained or training to the restrooms.

- Ensure the floors are cleaned regularly. (Carpeted areas are often best for young children who sit on the floor.)

Furniture

- Crib that meets industry standards, in excellent condition

- Changing table

- Sturdy shelf unit for toy storage, one that won't tip (L-brackets can be used to secure units, if needed.)

- Chair for adults who are unable to sit on the floor

Equipment

- Blankets
- Crib sheets
- Mats or large pillows (encased in plastic, covered in cloth)
- Age-appropriate toys
- Container with a lid for trash
- Container for toys that have been mouthed to be washed later
- Emergency first-aid kit
- Cassette or CD player w/recordings of soft music

Supplies

- Disposable gloves
- Extra disposable diapers
- Diaper wipes
- Germicidal cleaner for cleaning the changing table between uses
- Non-toxic cleaner for general clean-up
- Plastic bags for diapers
- Incident/Accident Report forms
- Supplies Request forms
- Parent handouts
- Welcome brochures

GENERAL HOUSEKEEPING PROCEDURES

When working with children these precautions and general housekeeping procedures need to be performed.

- Room is to be clean before and after the hour.
- Wash hands before and after all activities involving body fluids. (Urine, feces, blood, vomit, saliva and nasal discharges)
- Wear disposable gloves whenever coming in contact with body fluids. (i.e. changing a diaper, wiping a nose, etc.) Dispose of immediately after each use and put in covered container.
- After changing a diaper, clean the area with a germicidal cleaner wiped down with wet paper toweling. Dispose of all in a covered container.
- Crib sheets, changing table covers, etc. are to be changed each time they are used.
- Soiled diapers should be sealed in a plastic bag and securely tied closed, then discarded in a covered container.
- Place all dirtied items, tissues, bandages, etc, in a covered container immediately after use.
- Place in a designated out-of-reach container all toys that children have mouthed so they can be washed with soap and water after use.
- Dispose of toys that are dangerous or broken or not age-appropriate.
- Mats or other items need to be cleaned and put away.
- Dispose of trash in church dumpster or appoint someone to be responsible for nursery trash removal at the end of the day.

SAFETY, 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 Youth and Family Ministry Director 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. Stop any bleeding. (Basic first-aid items should be stored in every classroom and a larger kit located somewhere in the youth area.) Any outlying classrooms should have their own first-aid kit.
4. Do not move the victim unnecessarily.
5. Send a third person to call for help.
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/Accident Report Form as soon as possible and turn in to the director.

General Guidelines for Minor Injuries

1. Clean minor cuts, bruises or injuries with soap and water.
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 give a child medication.
6. Complete and turn in to director an Incident/Accident Report Form.

CHILD CARE

Your church may ask for child care during church events other than Sunday mornings. This means that the children are safely supervised and engaged in activities. Two types of child care are possible.

- Non-programmed (any time you have children together without a structured program) For this create a loving, safe environment for children while parents are attending classes, workshops, counseling, etc.
- Programmed (child care with program structure)

Fees are set by the church. Each church decides whether to have a set fee for child care, or if it is on a love-offering basis. Display a sign stating the church's policy for child-care fees. Child-care workers are paid by the hour or by some other agreement the church and caregivers decide upon.

General Guidelines

Policies and procedures for child care should be similar to those for the nursery. Develop them in writing and have them available for parents each time child care is provided.

Staff members or volunteers should arrive one-half hour before the session is scheduled to begin. If no children come, stay one-half hour after the session is scheduled in case someone is running late. Please make sure all volunteers or staff sign in and that the parents sign the children in and out.

All children should have the opportunity to engage in some activity. If you see a child alone, go talk with the child and find out if they are interested in joining an activity with the other children or in working on an individual project.

Avoid situations where anyone is alone with one child.

Behavior Guidelines for Child Care

There are some occasions when a young person will behave disruptively. It is our policy to redirect their energies in a more positive framework by:

- Using each other's names only in a positive way, in a pleasant voice.
- Realizing that we are all good, all the time. That we are not what we do, therefore we guide them gently through transitions—guiding them rather than giving numerous instructions. (See Chapter 8, section on “Behavior Considerations.”)

- Focusing on the action, if redirection is needed, rather than directing negative energy toward one another. We walk to each other and gently guide the appropriate action, rather than calling from across the room. (Example: “You may sit here,” rather than “Johnny, sit down!”) Tell the children what behavior is acceptable, rather than focus on what is not, i.e., “Use your walking feet,” rather than “Stop running!”
- If after repeated disruptions and unsuccessful redirections (5 minutes), the assistant will walk with the child out of the classroom to de-stimulate, be in the silence, ascertain other needs, and pray. The second adult or assistant may be asked to assist in prayer and in holding a sacred space for the child.

*Affirmation: God’s love flows through me as I care for the children,
creating a safe and loving environment.*

SAMPLE NURSERY JOB DESCRIPTION

Name of Unity Church

Position Title: Nursery Staff
Reports To: Youth and Family Ministry Director
Status: Part-time Hourly (Sunday mornings)

General Description: The Nursery Staff is to help love and care for infants and toddlers who are not yet ready for preschool during Sunday services. It is important to apply Myrtle Fillmore's guide to call forth the wisdom from within the children, to allow them to follow the harmonious law of their own soul's unfoldment.

Duties and Responsibilities

1. Arrive on Sunday 45 minutes prior to service to prepare the room.
2. Greet infants, toddlers and their caregivers as they arrive. Place a nametag on the child's back and label all their personal belongings. Answer parents' questions regarding nursery care and activities provided.
3. Invite caregivers to complete a YFM Registration Card.
4. Be sure sign-in information is complete. (See Sign-In Procedures in Chapter 15 "Nursery & Child Care.")
5. Pay attention to any special needs mentioned and write them down on the sign-in sheet.
6. Assure parents that we will contact them if their child is exceptionally fussy.
7. Supervise and attend to the needs of the infants and toddlers.
8. Prepare and present nursery lesson based on curriculum supplied by YFM Director.
9. Help to make sure infants and toddlers are signed out by the same adult that signed them in, unless the parent has notified you of other arrangements.
10. Place any toys that are mouthed or played with in the specified container for cleaning.
11. Sanitize toys and equipment as you clean up room.
12. Launder cloth blankets and toys monthly, or more often if a child has a runny nose, etc.
13. Dispose of any dirty diapers in the dumpster outside.

14. Discard all equipment deemed unsafe for infant's use, informing the Director.
15. Inform Director of any supplies that are running low.
16. Have fun and fellowship with other Teachers and Angels and Youth Ministry support staff.

Working Conditions and Physical Expectations

1. Able to bend down and get up from the floor with ease.
2. Able to sit on the floor or on small chairs. Work is performed in an interior and outdoor childcare environment.
3. Ability to pick up and hold small babies/toddlers up to 40 pounds without injury.

Minimum Requirements

1. Must be at least 25 years old. (Check church requirements.)
2. Able to work Sunday mornings.
3. Loves children, especially infant and toddlers.
4. Comes spiritually prepared and sets a spiritual tone through a positive demeanor and words.
5. Knowledge of Unity principles, church activities and programs a plus.
6. Displays flexibility, spontaneity and enthusiasm.
7. Willing to learn and use nursery philosophy in working with children.
8. Exhibits effective customer service and communication skills—professional but warm.
9. Flexible and adaptable to children with varying needs.
10. Able to prepare and present nursery lessons from curriculum supplied by YFM Director.
11. Able to work well as member of a team with minimal supervision.

Employee Benefits

1. Salary: \$8-12 per hour (recommended at time of publication)
2. Hours: 3-10 per week, flexible
3. Vacation: one week per year (eligible after 6 months), two weeks after two years in service
4. Paid-for holidays falling on scheduled work days
5. Personal time off (in lieu of health days): 4 days



16 Risk Management

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Facility
 - ☞ Emergency/Evacuation Plans
 - ☞ Programming
 - ☞ Safety, First Aid and Emergencies
 - ☞ Staffing
 - ☞ Training
 - ☞ Reporting
 - ☞ Responding to Allegations
 - ☞ Developing a Policy and Procedure Handbook
 - ☞ Spiritual Educator's Code of Ethics
-

YOUTH and Family 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 Youth and Family Ministry are choices for the director and minister. There are some things, though, that are not negotiable. One of those areas is risk management. Risk management deals with avoiding problems and possibly losses by having plans in place and by carefully preparing for youth ministry. Insurance may cover a loss, but risk management can do a great deal in preventing loss situations.

Risk management is about keeping our children and adults safe through policies, procedures and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situations. This in turn reduces the church's liability risk. Continually educating the families, volunteers, staff and congregation on your plan is an important part of this process.

Realize that you, as director, must stay educated to the latest in risk management 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 risk management are facility, programming and staffing. Decision-making about risk management 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.

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 children/teens?
- Does the size and layout of the room fit the size and needs of your youth?
- Are classrooms close to each other or separated by distance?
- 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?
- Are the rooms for children, infant through second grade, located on the ground floor for easier evacuation?
- Is there adequate ventilation? Cooling and heating?
- Have lead and asbestos assessments been performed and corrective measures taken, if necessary?
- Do the appropriate people know where the circuit breakers and water cut-off are?
- Are bathrooms easily accessible? Are they fitted for children's use? (lower toilets, sinks, soap and paper dispensers, door handles, step stool to reach sink, etc.) If not, do you have a plan for children to go to the bathroom during the hour?

- 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 to move quickly with little or no adult assistance if there is 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 out of the youth bathroom area. If the bathroom area is not exclusive to youth and is used by other adults:

- have the children wait until all adults are out of it and then the children can go in, or
- the teacher or volunteer should prop the outside bathroom door open (as with their foot) to prevent any adult from the general congregation from being alone with a child in the bathroom, or
- make arrangements for parents to take their child to the bathroom before class.

If a teacher or youth volunteer needs to assist a child, the stall door should be left open while assisting the child. Create the safety procedure that works best with your 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 child 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? For younger children 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. Also check with your local fire marshal.
- Is all equipment in good working order with no rough or sharp edges, no fraying cords, etc?
- Are toys safe, clean and in good condition?

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 Plans in this chapter.) This is true for all age groups.

Furniture is safer when it is age-appropriate. Tables and bookcases need to be sturdy to handle a child's weight and have rounded edges for smaller children. (See Chapter 12 "Equipping the Facilities" and Chapter 15 "Nursery & Child Care.") Bookcases need to be attached to the wall if height presents the possibility of tipping over. Stackable chairs are easier to handle. With plastic, check chairs regularly for cracks that can pinch the skin. It is best if adult folding chairs are not stored in the area with younger children or in high-occupancy areas since they may present a hazard.

Keep walls and floors clean and attractive. Make sure the paint and flooring is child-safe and appropriate. Clean carpets quarterly where children are on the floor frequently.

Determine how to store medications, cleaning supplies, etc. outside of the classrooms. Place first-aid kits beyond the reach of smaller children. Choose cleaning supplies that are earth- and people-friendly. This keeps allergic reactions down to a minimum.

Playground Considerations

- When is it in use? By whom?
- Are the rules for use clearly posted? Can it be easily viewed?
- Does your insurance adequately cover this?
- Who oversees the upkeep of this area? How often is it inspected?
- How often is it cleaned? Washed down? How are bottles handled?
- Where are the tools? Rakes, hoses, antiseptic?
- Is the area fenced?

Playground Tips

An excellent 47-page free resource is *Handbook for Public Playground Safety*, published by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, Washington, DC. It is available online at www.cpsc.gov/cpscpub/pubs/325.pdf and can be printed immediately. The handbook includes recommendations and considerations about all types of playground equipment, plus a playground safety checklist and a general maintenance checklist. Be sure to check with the codes of your area and keep up with the surfaces and care of the equipment.

Play equipment needs to be washed down periodically. If there has been blood, use a diluted bleach solution (1 part bleach:9 parts water). The new equipment being made out of recycled plastic is easy to clean and doesn't absorb heat like metal does.

Be sure you post the rules for behavior and the times when it is available. Decide on whether the playground will be open to the public or not. If not, a fence is recommended to keep people out and little ones in.

TODDLER Swing signage:

For ages
2–5 only

BIG KID Swing signage:

For ages
5–18

Playground signage:

For ages
5–12 only

Check with your insurance agent if there should be a disclaimer posted.

(Example: Unity Church is not responsible for injuries.)

PLAYGROUND SIGNAGE:

(for overall environment)

Welcome!

ADULT SUPERVISION required at ALL times.

Playground CLOSED during ALL worship services.

Use play equipment only when dry.

Wear shoes at all times.

Respect others using play equipment.

NO pushing or jumping off play equipment.

Unity Church
is NOT RESPONSIBLE for injuries.

EMERGENCY/EVACUATION PLANS

- Have you an evacuation plan in case of fire or other threat that would necessitate an immediate exit 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, 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 need them?
- 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 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. 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 can not 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: 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.

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.” (See later in this chapter.)

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 that 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 risk management, programming consists of what happens inside the physical location. It embraces the comings and goings of people, the content of the time spent together, and how that all comes together to create and support dynamic relationships. Keeping people safe is paramount. Consider the following areas.

- **Do you have a registration form for each child participating in your program?**

Registration Forms: Keep a form on file for every child and teen who attends any of the youth and family programming. (See Chapter 19 “Forms.”) This form provides you with vital information to help keep each child safe. The cards are confidential and information is shared only with individuals with a direct need to know, such as the child’s teacher. For example, teachers would need to know of any allergies, who is authorized to pick up the child, and if there is any special consideration such as fear of the dark, etc. Update the card on an annual basis. Registration forms for the nursery may include a place for a photo so the nursery staff can see who is authorized to pick up the child.

- **Do you have a procedure to check children 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. (See “Attendance Sign-In Sheet” in Chapter 19.) Require adults to sign their children (infant through 5th grade) in and out, using their signatures or initials each time. Educate the parents on how necessary this procedure is and make it as easy as possible. 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 children and teens.

This helps with attendance and emergencies. This form is what the teacher grabs in

SNACKS

With more awareness of food allergies today, consider posting the “menu” of what you will be serving where the parents can see it. Then parents can inform the staff of any allergies. Some churches even post the ingredients so the parents can make informed decisions.

case of evacuation or to check if a child is missing. Some forms include a space for the adult to write where he or she will be during the hour (class, usher, service). You may want parents of young children to list any food or environmental allergies there as well. Save the forms and store them in case there should ever be an allegation of abuse. Check with your insurance agent on how long the forms should be saved.

- **Do your parents feel assured of their child's safety?**

Inform parents that there is an “open-door policy” in Youth and Family Ministry but give clearly stated and posted guidelines on what that entails. Parents should always have access to their child and be welcomed to check up on their child through a door window or peeking around the corner at any time. Depending on the size of the room, the activity for the day, or the emotional climate of the children, a parent could be invited to stay with their child until the child feels comfortable being on her own. Adults without children in the classroom should not be allowed to “sit in” unless pre-arranged with the director. Train volunteers on how to work with parents so that the parent, his/her child, and the other children feel comfortable and safe.

- **Who is responsible for the children before, during and after the services?**

Be very clear with everyone about when you have direct and indirect responsibility for children on church property. The standard has been that the child becomes the youth ministry staff's responsibility when the parent signs the child into the class and then releases responsibility when the parent signs the child out of class. For teens, it is between the time they sign in and then out of their class or event.

However, the church is responsible for children's 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 child becomes isolated from adults that know him. Educate parents, staff and volunteers that young children must stay with parents before and after services, and older children 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 children must be supervised at all times while on the property. You may require that they use church-trained adults for their child care.

- **Do you have medical releases and permission slips for children involved with activities?**

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 children 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. Yearly have everyone complete a form 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.

A permission slip is recommended anytime a child participates in a church activity that is outside of the regular Sunday service time. 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 at another 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.

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?
- Does your insurance cover 15-passenger vans?
- 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 to 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 travel packets for the drivers or accompanying adults? (See medical releases in Chapter 19.)
- 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?

TRAVEL PACKETS

Plastic, expandable closable envelopes

Copy of parent permission for event

Copy of Medical/Liability Release for each individual (use regional form for regional events)

Copy of photo release form—often on the medical release form

Map and directions to each child/teen's home

Incident/Accident 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 Chapter 19 "Forms."

- **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 community or nation. Planning ahead helps you to maintain a calm and quiet demeanor that helps those around you feel safe.

SAFETY, 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 contact lead teacher, youth director or floater).
- If a doctor, nurse or other licensed health-care provider 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 Youth and Family Ministry Director of anything unusual, i.e., an incident or injury which occurred in the classroom. Complete and turn in an Incident/Accident Report Form. Keep these in each classroom and in the office.

General Guidelines for Emergencies

1. Stay calm.
2. If there are any bodily fluids, put on gloves. Examine the victim carefully.
3. Stop any bleeding. (Basic first aid items should be stored in every classroom and a larger kit located somewhere in the youth area.) Any outlying classrooms should have their own first-aid kit.
4. Do not move the victim unnecessarily.
5. Send a third person to call for help.
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/Accident Report Form as soon as possible and turn in to the director.

General Guidelines for Minor Injuries

1. If there are any bodily fluids, put on gloves. Clean minor cuts, bruises or injuries with soap and water.
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 give a child medication.
6. Complete and turn in to director an Incident/Accident Report Form.

FIRST-AID KIT CONTENTS

Bandages (latex-free assorted sizes and flexibility)

Hydrogen peroxide

Rubbing alcohol

Aspirin or non-aspirin

Throat lozenges

Antibacterial ointment

Antiseptic wipes or spray

Bug bite cream or lotion

Tweezers

Disposable rubber or latex gloves

Disposable thermometers

Gauze pads

Roll gauze

Medical tape

Instant ice packs

First Aid and Emergency Guidesheet

Mouthpiece for CPR

Natural options:

Tea tree oil is a natural antiseptic.

Drink water at the first sign of a headache.

Use natural-ingredient throat lozenges.

STAFFING

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 often 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 conditions may lead to a 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, do not hinder them; for to such belongs the kingdom of God." (Mark 10:14 RSV) 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.

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 risk management, 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 risk management 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.

1. **Reducing the Risk:** www.reducingtherisk.com
Resources include training manuals, CD presentations, and online support to create a comprehensive risk reduction program concerning staffing and volunteers.

2. **Group's Church Volunteer Central:** www.churchvolunteercentral.com
Resources include articles, tools, training, forms, ideas, and reduced-rate background checks.

Non-subscription websites to keep current with are:

3. **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.
4. **Unity Worldwide Ministries:** www.unity.org
Updates on risk management and recommendations are posted on our website www.unity.org/yfm. Click on the Tools & Tips tab on the right side of the page and select Sacred Safety.

You can also go online and check with youth organizations like scouts and the YMCA to see what they have available.

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 risk management.

Pre-Screening: Be sure to use a written application (Application Youth Ministry Volunteer, Chapter 19) 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 the age or attendance requirement is 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. A good model for this is available in Chapter 19 "Forms." See Application Youth Ministry Volunteer and Background Check forms. Take time now to compare this to your present application.

Once the application is filled out, it is essential to check the personal references listed on the application and then interview the applicant. You must show that in good faith you followed up on the information provided to you to assure the well-being of the children placed in this person's care. For more information about screening and interviewing, see Chapter 13 "Volunteer Team Building."

In summary, screening involves providing the volunteer applicant with a job description, having them fill out an application form, checking the personal references given on the application, conducting a face-to-face interview, and instigating a background check. When that process is finished and the person is cleared to work with your children or teens, the next step is training.

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.

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. It gives 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 policies, procedures 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 awhile 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. Chapter 14 “Volunteer Training and Recognition” discusses training needs for volunteers and provides guidance in planning training.

Important to risk management 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 and Procedure Handbook that impact Youth and Family 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 policies, procedures and principles are followed. Supervising means providing on-going education and training plus 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 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 in the prior paragraph and go online to your state’s child protection website. 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 following response steps 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 churches can no longer defend themselves from liability by saying that they 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/procedure handbook.

- **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, and 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 supremely important.

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 the fact that 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/Accident Report Form. (See Chapter 19.) 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/Accident 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 or the church attorney. If you have any questions, contact the Children's Ministry Coordinator at Unity Worldwide Ministries (816-524-7414 or 816-434-6869).

- **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. Create a checklist to make sure that all the steps for reporting in your state 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 strong document is created while putting your Policy and Procedure Handbook 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, such as (give examples), to prevent this behavior; and that the church has a reporting procedure in place which will be followed in strict concordance with the law. A complete policy handbook is available at the church office.

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 alleged 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.**

There are those who will need to know—the director and minister—but no information should be given to any other party. If the state authorities become involved, cooperate with their requests. (You may want to contact your church’s lawyer.)

DEVELOPING A POLICY AND PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

Policy and Procedure

Handbook: 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 Youth and Family 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 and to what systems are in place to make sure the department or church runs smoothly and within the parameters of legal liability.

ESSENTIALS FOR POLICY/PROCEDURE HANDBOOK

- What forms are necessary
- How to manage the structural part of Sunday morning
- Attendance and bathroom procedures
- Where to find the first-aid kits
- How and when to notify the director when you can’t be there on 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, or other emergencies

As the director, you will want to put in the handbook everything that people should know about the who, what, where, why and how of Youth and Family Ministry. Provide a handbook for each volunteer staffing the youth program.

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 understood the material. Anything not understood is a great place to start training. More information on this can be found in Chapter 14 “Volunteer Training and Recognition.”

Your handbook will have policies and procedures 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 are here, also.

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.

Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care” contains a 15-point “Sign-In Procedure” for anyone working in the nursery. This clearly defines best practice for all nursery workers whether volunteers or employed individuals.

Writing Procedures: Each youth program will want to develop policies and procedures specific to their situation. To illustrate this, consider the classroom Attendance Procedures at the end of the chapter. Those procedures were based on the following:

- 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 taking 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. The YFM director is responsible for storing and keeping track of the documents. We recommend saving the attendance records for a minimum of 15 years. It is best to check with your insurance agent regarding your state’s requirements.

- 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.

In Chapter 15 “Nursery & Child Care,” you will find four specific procedural sections: Staffing/Volunteers for nursery workers; Nursery Policies for Families; General Housekeeping Procedures; and Safety, First Aid and Emergencies.

Writing Risk Management Policies: In writing risk management 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, but 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 decreases while accountability

increases. In contrast, if the room is away from a general area, the door is 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, lack of 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.)

Other Considerations

Procedures when there is concern about a child/teen harming another child:

- Never let the child/teen be alone with other children or adults.
- When the child is on-site, have a supportive, attentive adult become a buddy. This adult should follow the child every minute that the child remains on grounds.
- Befriend the mother/father and support the parent; become a listening friend.
- Go to teachers and instruct them that the child has a problem with boundary issues so the 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 working with youth sign in agreement. Secure these in their personnel file. See Spiritual Educator's Code of Ethics at the end of this chapter.

In Unity, 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 keep safe 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 take the steps to promote and protect a healthy environment for the developing lives of our young people so that their spiritual and physical growth will not be stopped by human frailties and woundedness.

We affirm: God's love, wisdom, and grace guides all that we think, do and say. Everything we need to do this work is illumined in us. We are a blessing to our children and to the truth that sets us free.

Attendance Procedures—For children, nursery through 5th grade

1. Attendance sheets can be found in the classroom tub before class.
2. When the classroom is open to receive children (classrooms open ONLY after the two staff adults have arrived), have one volunteer at the door welcoming the children and the other adult making sure the adult signs the child in.
3. Remind the parent/responsible adult that they are expected to be the one to pick up the child unless they notify you at that moment of the name of the person who they expect to sign the child out.
4. At end of class, have the adult sign the child out. If the adult picking the child up is someone you do not recognize, ask for a picture ID to match with the name the first adult gave you. If there is any question or concern, contact the director immediately.
5. Express your gratitude for the child's presence to the child and the adult.
6. Check the attendance sheet to see if everyone was signed out correctly and put the sheet in the classroom tub.
7. Return the tub to the youth ministry office.

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.

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.
4. At end of class, have the teens sign out. If there is any question or concern, contact the director immediately.
5. Express your gratitude for the teen's presence.
6. Check the attendance sheet to see if everyone was signed out correctly and put the sheet in the classroom tub.
7. Return the tub to the youth ministry office.

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 “Event” forms in Chapter 19.)

- Church and senior minister approve of the event.
- Appropriate event paperwork has been filled out and placed on file.
- Event is staffed by known adults and led by adults who have been 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.
- Sponsor’s Code of Ethics is gone over with the leadership and supporting adults.

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 World Headquarters at Unity Village and Unity Worldwide Ministries.
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.



17 Creating Vision, Mission and Goals

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Create a Vision Statement
 - ☞ Create a Mission Statement
 - ☞ Create Goals
-

*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

CREATE A VISION STATEMENT

What is a vision statement?

A vision statement is the dream of the ministry, what they intend to become, the destination, what the church or youth ministry is about. An inspiring vision gives hope and meaning.

A youth ministry vision states what the program is being called to accomplish—how it will best serve the children and teens. It is God’s vision for this specific program of things we cannot do on our own.

Why create one?

The youth 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 those who are passionate about the program, those who want more for those the program is intended to serve. In the case of youth ministry, include youth, parents, volunteers, staff and others from the congregation who hold a larger vision of what the church can offer their youth.

How is it created?

- Bring together those who want to dream big about the future of the youth ministry program. Avoid limiting this to those currently involved in the program. Your youth 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

Assemble a vision team: The team number (6-10) includes the Youth and Family Ministry Director or coordinator, a board member or minister, and volunteers from the parents, teens and congregation at large. 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. 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 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, 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 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 church's vision statement.
- As a covenant to the commitment, ask all participants to sign the statement as their agreement.

"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 Ministry Consultant

Before the meeting, write the "Creation Statement Outline" on a large sheet of easel paper.

Through our _____
We commit to _____
In order to create _____ .

Implement the vision

- Submit the youth ministry vision statement to the 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?

SAMPLE VISION STATEMENTS

Centered in God, we co-create a world that works for all. —Unity Worldwide Ministries

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 church 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 church’s statement and has also adopted it as their own.)

CREATE A MISSION STATEMENT

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 that reflects core values and how we are going to make the vision happen. It is best as one clear and precise sentence.

How to create a mission statement with a small group

1. Ask everyone to individually pick out 10 verbs, then choose three of those verbs and write them down. Have each person say their words. If someone used the same verb, 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.

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	

2. Write your core value(s). Create a consensus from the teams' core values. What do you stand for? 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? Environment, education, media, health care, elderly, children, the poor, the homeless, energy, performing arts, animals, churches, 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 create and support vibrant, diverse spiritual leaders and communities that foster transformation and inspire people to make a positive difference in our world.

—Unity Worldwide Ministries

It is our mission to provide love and inspire spiritual transformation.

—Unity of Louisville, KY

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 Church of the Valley, Vacaville, CA

Creating a Mission Statement With a Large Group

When creating a mission statement for a church, a much more extensive process is used to provide numerous opportunities to receive input from everyone. This can be done through surveys, focus groups, and meetings. A core team typically facilitates this process and from the input drafts a mission statement presented for acceptance.

CREATE 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.

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 church community, and with our world.
- 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
 - Encourage discussion of Unity Principles and how they can work for our good and the good of all.
- Raise the awareness of our church 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 church community together.

Lord, grant that I may always desire to do more than I am able to accomplish.

—Michelangelo



18 Resources

CHAPTER PREVIEW

- ☞ Web Resources
 - ☞ Classroom Resources
 - ☞ Music Resources
 - ☞ Book Resources
-

CREATING a section of recommended resources is always imperfect at best because new books come out and Web addresses change as soon as the publication is available. Thus, suggestions here are the best available at the time of publication. To keep current, check *The Path*—Unity Worldwide Ministries’ bi-weekly eletter (www.unity.org/enews) and Unity Worldwide Ministries’ Youth & Family webpage (www.unity.org/yfm). As needed, a new list of resources will be posted so that you can print it and insert it into this section.

Note: Products in this list followed by item numbers (0001) are available through Unity Worldwide Ministries.

WEB RESOURCES

Unity Web Sites

These sites all offer information, assistance, contact and training guidance.

Unity Worldwide Ministries	www.unity.org
Youth Education	www.unity.org/yfm
International Youth of Unity	www.unity.org/iyou
Next Generation Unity (NGU)	www.unity.org/ngu
Campus Ministry	http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/ campus-ministry-manual
Regional Education Consultants	www.unity.org/rec

Other Helpful Web Sites

The links offered may assist you in quickly locating supplies, equipment, games, posters and books for your youth ministry program. Some offer Christian resources as well. Unity Worldwide Ministries does not necessarily endorse the contents, opinions or purposes put forth by any of these sites. Neither does Unity Worldwide Ministries maintain or have a voice in the contents of these sites.

Unity Organizations

- www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org

Unity Worldwide Ministries

The organization of Unity churches is dedicated to supporting and strengthening its member ministries by providing human resources, administrative and educational programs.

- www.unity.org/yfm

Youth & Family department for Unity Worldwide Ministries

Site provides information about all aspects of youth ministry and how to contact the youth education staff.

- www.unity.org/regions or www.unity.org/rec

Youth Regional Education Services Consultants for Unity churches provide information and support for spiritual educators involved in child and teen ministry. This link connects you with their websites and email addresses.

- www.unity.org

Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village

Unity's founding organization accepts online prayer requests; provides information about retreats and classes for spiritual seekers—online, in the field, and at Unity Village; provides *Daily Word* online and other information related to unity®.

Risk Management (See Chapter 16 for descriptions.)

- www.reducingtherisk.com
- www.churchvolunteercentral.com
- www.churchmutual.com

Nursery Resources

- www.churchnursery.com

Safe Kids, Inc.—Your Nursery Resource

Offers products such as alert tags, nursery security/identification labels for church nursery use.

- www.jtech.com/church

JTECH

Offers nursery pagers for churches.

Educational Resources

- www.churchvolunteercentral.com

Church Volunteer Central

Primarily a membership site with very helpful information. Includes forms for handbooks, certificates, assessments, articles from magazines, and much more.

- www.search-institute.org

Search Institute

Research-based organization that provides leadership, knowledge, and resources to promote healthy children, youth, and communities

- www.childrensministry.com/cmmagazine

Children's Ministry Magazine

Highly adaptable resource for trends and programming in mainline children's ministry

- www.youthministry.com

Idea source for object lessons, ice breakers, games, etc. for teens

- www.casanet.org/program-management/volunteer-manage/essenvol.htm

Court Appointed Special Advocates - Provides insight essential to volunteer management.

- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Learning_styles

An excellent resource for concise information on learning styles

- www.childswork.com

Childswork, Childsplay

800.962.1141

Resources that address the social and emotional needs of children and adolescents

- www.ComResources.com
Communication Resources Incorporated
800.992.2144
Visual resources for newsletters, children's programs, websites, calendars and PowerPoint presentations

- www.couragetochange.com/
Courage To Change
800.440.4003
General educational resources for emotional growth, games and idea books

- www.freespirit.com
Free Spirit Publishing
800.735.7323
Posters, self-help books for parents, teens and children

- www.orientaltrading.com
Oriental Trading Company, Inc.
800.875.8480
Source for inexpensive small gift items, classroom props, pencils, toys, craft supplies, party supplies, jewelry, holiday items, novelties, etc.

- www.ssw.com
S&S Worldwide
800.288.9941
A multitude of hands-on resources, games, supplies and equipment for both Christian and public programs

- www.smilemakers.com
SmileMakers
888.800.7645
Source for inexpensive small gift items, pencils, posters, stickers

- www.sdteach.com/sunburst-media-s/309.htm
Sunburst Visual Media, distributed by Cerebellum Corporation
866.386.0253
Source for videos and posters relating to emotional health and conflict resolution

Parenting Programs

- www.incaf.com

INCAF is the International Network for Children and Families, a parent-training network that teaches the course on *Redirecting Children's Behavior*. Parents gain fast, effective ways to become calmer and more confident and to raise their children to be responsible and cooperative.

- www.languageoflistening.com

Language of Listening

Offers 4 to 8 week training programs for parents. Publisher of *Say What You See* handbook.

- www.activeparenting.com

Active Parenting is a research-based parenting program available through numerous videos for various ages. Also offered are training programs.

- www.childrenscenter.com

ARK (Adults Relating to Kids) offers online parenting and teaching-skills courses based on self-esteem and unconditional love for a variety of groups.

- www.loveandlogic.com

Love and Logic

A parenting approach that provides practical techniques that help adults achieve respectful and healthy relationships with children. Training guides are available.

- www.spiritualparenting.com

Offers a monthly online newsletter for parents, workshops, and resources all focused on spiritual parenting of children of all ages.

- www.lovingguidance.com

Conscious Discipline

A comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum based on current brain research, child development information, and developmentally appropriate practices. Conscious Discipline has been specifically designed to make changes in the lives of adults first. The adults, in turn, change the lives of children.

CLASSROOM RESOURCES

Note: Products with an item number after them (0001) are available through Unity Worldwide Ministries.

Unity-specific resources can assist with the spiritual education of children as well as create a warm, inviting environment.

- Poster: 5 Basic Principles for Adults and Teens (6917)
- Wallet Cards: 5 Basic Principles for Adults (6914)
- My Twelve Powers/Prayer of Faith Card (6915)
- Poster: My Twelve Powers (6916)
- Poster: 5 Basic Unity Principles (Children's version) (6920)
- Poster: Prayer for Protection (6921)
- Basic Principles Card/Bookmark (Children's version) (6918)
- Age-appropriate posters

MUSIC RESOURCES

- www.sueriley.com/discography.htm

Unite With Me in Song by Fred Bogert and Sue Kroupa Riley

Unity children's songs sung by children, CD (1301) and Songbook (1300). Great for all ages.

- Recordings by Red Grammer (available on www.amazon.com)

Teaching Peace and *Hello World!*

Positive, upbeat, inclusive children's music

- www.kimboed.com/singnsignholidaytimewithgaia_1.aspx

Source for Gaia singing and signing positive songs for children. Great for intergenerational ministry

- www.consciousdiscipline.com/store/pc/home.asp

Positive and fun children's music for learning, stretching and connecting
Songs for I Love You Rituals, Volume I; *It Starts in the Heart* and others

- www.amazon.com

The Twelve Gifts of Birth, music by Susan Kay Wyatt

Companion to the book and great by itself

- www.karendrucker.com

Songs of the Spirit II

Songs and chants, not written for children but used by all ages

BOOK RESOURCES

Essential Resources

Even the smallest Youth and Family Ministry needs a few resources for teachers and the director. This list identifies the essential items.

- *Unity Youth Ministry Fast-Start Training Program*, CD for use in computer (6000)
- *Uniteen Program Guide*, Parts 1 & 2 (1390) (1392)
- *Y.O.U. Handbook* (1330)
- *Youth and Family Ministry Guide* (6010)
- *The Children's Illustrated Bible* by Selina Hastings, DK Publishing (Feb 2004 version)
- *The Simple Truth: Making Sense of God, Life & Other Stuff* by Mary-Alice and Richard Jafolla (www.amazon.com)
- *The Quest* by Richard and Mary-Alice Jafolla (shop.unityonline.org/products/B0148)
- Index for *Children on the Quest* (6788)
- Index for *Teens on the Quest* (Free download. Visit www.unity.org/curriculum)
- Curriculum publications www.unity.org/curriculum
- *The Path*: a free bi-weekly newsletter from Unity Worldwide Ministries. Sign up at www.unity.org/enews
- Education Links archive: contains the “best of” articles on various topics. (www.unityworldwideministries.org/education-links-archive)
- Bible (New Revised Standard Version and New Century Version)
- *The Revealing Word: A Dictionary of Metaphysical Terms* by Charles Fillmore, Unity Books
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary* by Charles Fillmore, Unity Books
- *Wings of Song*, hymnal (available in some Unity churches)
- Concordance (www.crosswalk.com)
- Dictionary

Director's Bookshelf Resource Suggestions

This list contains suggestions that are used frequently today by many directors.

- *Short Plays for Unity Audiences* (2505)
- *How Unity Began: A Storybook for Children* by Janet Bowser Manning (6035)
- *Nurturing Spirituality in Children: Simple Hands-On Activities* by Peggy J. Jenkins
- *The Holiday Spirit: Resources* (6825)
- *Youth Group Trust Builders* by Denny Rydberg
- *Youth Ministry Management Tools* by Ginny Olson, Diane Elliot & Mike Work, Youth Specialties
- *Recruit & Nurture Awesome Volunteers for Children's Ministry* by Christine Yount
- *Teaching Godly Play: The Sunday Morning Handbook* by Jerome W. Berryman

- *The Joyful Child: A Sourcebook of Activities and Ideas for Releasing Children's Natural Joy* by Peggy Davidson Jenkins
- *Transforming Rituals: Daily Practices for Changing Lives* by Roy M. Oswald
- *The Discipline Guide for Children's Ministry* by Group Publishing
- *Getting Thru to Kids: Problem Solving With Children Ages 6 to 18* by Phillip Mountrose
- *Reel Spirit: A Guide to Movies That Inspire, Explore and Empower* by Raymond Teague, Unity Books
- *Twelve Powers in You* by David Williamson, Gay Lynn Williamson and Robert H. Knapp, M.D. (Contact Gay Lynn Williamson-Grigas, 2435 Taylor St., Hollywood, FL 33020, phone: 954.924.6344)
- *The Values Book: Teaching Sixteen Basic Values to Young Children* by Pam Schiller & Tamera Bryant
- *The Family Virtue's Guide: Simple Ways to Bring Out the Best in Our Children and Ourselves* by Linda Kavelin Popov, Dan Popov, John Kavelin
- *Great Ideas for Small Youth Groups* by Wayne Rice
- *Instant Games for Children's Ministry* by Susan L. Lingo, Group Publishing
- *Do It! Active Learning in Youth Ministry* by Thom Schultz and Joani Schultz, Group Publishing
- *Leadership Essentials for Children's Ministry: Passion, Attitude, Teamwork and Honor* by Craig Jutlia. Available at www.onewaystreet.com
- *100 Ways to Build Self-Esteem & Teach Values* by Diana Loomans, Julia Loomans
- *Redirecting Children's Behavior* by Kathryn J. Kvols
- *The Godbearing Life: The Art of Soul Tending for Youth Ministry* by Kenda Creasy Dean and Ron Foster
- *Making Your Children's Ministry the Best Hour of Every Kid's Week* by Sue Miller and David Staal
- *Starbright: Meditations for Children* by Maureen Garth
- *Teaching Meditation to Children: Simple Steps to Meditation and Well-Being* by David Fontana & Ingrid Slack
- *Principles of Meditation: Eastern Wisdom for the Western Mind* by C. Alexander Simpkins & Annellen M. Simpkins
- *Meditating With Children: The Art of Meditation and Centering* by Deborah Rozman
- *Teaching Children to Love: 80 Games & Fun Activities for Raising Balanced Children in an Unbalanced World* by Doc Lew Childre
- *Real Kids, Real Faith: Practices for Nurturing Children's Spiritual Lives* by Karen Marie Yust, Jossey-Bass
- *I Love You Rituals* by Becky A. Bailey

The Basic YOU Bookshelf

- *Joysongs*
- *Earth Prayers From Around the World: 365 Prayers, Poems and Invocations for Honoring the Earth* by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon
- *Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen (6772)
- *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul III* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger
- *The Revealing Word*, Unity Books (B0033) shop.unityonline.org
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, Unity Books (B0078) shop.unityonline.org
- *Daily Word for Teens: Discovering What's Sacred in You* by Colleen Zuck
- *Twelve Powers in You* by David Williamson, Gay Lynn Williamson and Robert H. Knapp, M.D. (Contact Gay Lynn Williamson-Grigas, 2435 Taylor St., Hollywood, FL 33020, phone: 954.924.6344)
- *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger
- *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul II* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger
- *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul on Tough Stuff: Stories of Tough Times and Lessons Learned* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Kimberly Kirberger
- *Teen Esteem: A Self-Direction Manual for Young Adults* by Dr. Pat Palmer & Melissa Alberti Froehner
- *Getting Thru to Kids: Problem Solving With Children Ages 6 to 18* by Phillip Mountrose
- *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey
- *The Seven Best Things Smart Teens Do* by John C. Friel & Linda D. Friel
- *Life Strategies for Teens* by Jay McGraw
- *Teenage Survival Manual: How to Reach 20 in One Piece* by H. Samm Coombs
- *Conversations with God for Teens* by Neale Donald Walsch
- *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom* by Don Miguel Ruiz
- *Way of the Peaceful Warrior: A Book That Changes Lives* by Dan Millman
- *More Building Assets Together: 130 Group Activities for Helping Youth Succeed* by Rebecca Grothe, published by Search Institute

The Basic Uniteen Bookshelf

- *Uniteen Program Guide*, Parts 1 (1390) & 2 (1392)
- *The Simple Truth: Making Sense of God, Life & Other Stuff* by Mary-Alice and Richard Jafolla (5019)

- *Earth Prayers From Around The World: 365 Prayers, Poems and Invocations for Honoring the Earth* by Elizabeth Roberts & Elias Amidon
- *Chicken Soup for the Soul: 101 Stories to Open the Heart and Rekindle the Spirit* by Jack Canfield & Mark Victor Hansen (6772)
- *Chicken Soup for the Preteen Soul: 101 Stories of Changes, Choices and Growing Up* by Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Patti Hansen, Irene Dunlap (6799)
- *More Taste Berries for Teens: A Second Collection of Inspirational Short Stories and Encouragement on Life, Love, Friendship and Tough Times* by Bettie B. Youngs & Jennifer Leigh Youngs
- *Daily Word for Teens: Discovering What's Sacred in You* by Colleen Zuck
- *The Revealing Word: A Dictionary of Metaphysical Terms*, Unity Books (B0033) shop.unityonline.org
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, Unity Books (B0078) shop.unityonline.org
- *Twelve Powers in You* by David Williamson, Gay Lynn Williamson and Robert H. Knapp, M.D. (Contact Gay Lynn Williamson-Grigas, 2435 Taylor St., Hollywood, FL 33020, phone: 954.924.6344)
- *You've Got What It Takes! Sondra's Tips for Making Your Dreams Come True* by Sondra Clark
- *You Can Change Your World: Creative Ways to Volunteer and Make a Difference* by Sondra Clark
- *Teen Esteem: A Self Direction Manual for Young Adults* by Dr. Pat Palmer & Melissa Alberti Froehner
- *Getting Thru To Kids: Problem Solving With Children Ages 6 to 18* by Phillip Mountrose
- *Stick Up For Yourself: Every Kid's Guide to Personal Power and Positive Self- Esteem (Revised)* by Dr. Gershen Kaufman, Dr. Lev Raphael & Pamela Espeland (Teacher's Guide available also) Available from www.freepirit.com.
- *Growing Up Feeling Good* by Ellen Rosenberg

The Basic Elementary Bookshelf

- *The Children's Illustrated Bible* by Selina Hastings (DK Publishing, Feb 2004 version)
- *Nurturing Spirituality in Children: Simple Hands-On Activities* by Peggy J. Jenkins
- *How Unity Began: A Storybook for Children* by Janet Bowser Manning (6035)
- *The Revealing Word*, Unity Books (B0033) shop.unityonline.org
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*, Unity Books (B0078) shop.unityonline.org
- *The Joyful Child: A Sourcebook of Activities and Ideas for Releasing Children's Natural Joy* by Peggy Davidson Jenkins
- *Instant Games for Children's Ministry: Play 101 New Children's Games—Using Just 14 Everyday Items!* by Susan L. Lingo, Group Publishing
- *The Discipline Guide for Children's Ministry* by Group Publishing

- *Twelve Powers in You* by David Williamson, Gay Lynn Williamson and Robert H. Knapp, M.D. (Contact Gay Lynn Williamson-Grigas, 2435 Taylor St., Hollywood, FL 33020, phone: 954.924.6344)
- *Amazing Science Devotions for Children's Ministry* by Group Publishing
- *The Youth Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible Teaching Ideas—Old Testament* by Group Publishing
- *The Youth Worker's Encyclopedia of Bible Teaching Ideas—New Testament* by Group Publishing

The Basic Preschool & Toddler Bookshelf

- *Nurturing Spirituality in Children: Simple Hands-On Activities* by Peggy J. Jenkins
- *The Joyful Child: A Sourcebook of Activities and Ideas for Releasing Children's Natural Joy* by Peggy Davidson Jenkins
- *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes: and Other Action Rhymes* by Zita Newcome
- *Too Many Rabbits and Other Finger Plays About Animals, Nature, Weather and the Universe* by Kay Cooper
- *Teaching Godly Play: The Sunday Morning Handbook* by Jerome W. Berryman
- *God Made You Special* by Eric Metaxas, A Veggie Tales Board Book
- *God Loves You Very Much—A Veggie Tales Board Book*
- *The Peaceful Classroom: 162 Easy Activities to Teach Preschoolers Compassion and Cooperation* by Charles A. Smith
- *I Love You Rituals* by Becky A. Bailey

Wonderful storybooks are available that celebrate our diverse culture. Be sure you have those in your library that reflect the culture of your community.

Classic Unity Resources

- *The Simple Truth: Making Sense of God, Life & Other Stuff* by Mary-Alice and Richard Jafolla
- *Teach Us to Pray* by Charles and Cora Fillmore
- *Keep a True Lent* by Charles Fillmore
- *Prosperity* by Charles Fillmore
- *Christian Healing* by Charles Fillmore
- *Metaphysical Bible Dictionary*
- *The Revealing Word: A Dictionary of Metaphysical Terms*
- *Talks on Truth* by Charles Fillmore
- *The Twelve Powers of Man* by Charles Fillmore
The Twelve Powers contains *The Twelve Powers of Man* by Charles Fillmore and *Christ Enthroned in Man* by Cora Dedrick Fillmore.
- *How to Let God Help You* by Myrtle Fillmore
- *The Story of Unity* by James Dillet Freeman
- *The Unity Way of Life* by Marcus Bach (out of print)

- *Lessons in Truth* by H. Emilie Cady
- *How I Used Truth* by H. Emilie Cady (out of print)
Complete Works of H. Emilie Cady contains the above two books, plus *God—A Present Help*.
- *What Are You?* by Imelda Octavia Shanklin
- *Handbook of Positive Prayer* by Hypatia Hasbrouck
- *Discover the Power Within You* by Eric Butterworth (HarperSanFrancisco)



19 Forms

THIS chapter provides numerous forms referenced throughout the *Youth and Family Ministry Guide*. These pages may be reproduced for use within your church youth program.

On the accompanying CD, you will find Microsoft Word .doc and .rtf files for *each* of the forms published in this chapter. We suggest that you save these to your computer as they are. Some layout alignment may have shifted depending on your software, especially in .rtf, but can easily be adjusted since the forms are not locked. Copy and individualize the forms for your own church needs. Smaller churches may find much more detail than is needed. Growing churches may become aware of new considerations needed for an expanding program.

These forms were developed as guidelines for best practices in 2006. Realize that as you use and adapt them, their accuracy becomes the responsibility of your church. Especially understand that you will want to check the appropriateness in your state of forms requiring signatures that allow action such as Medical/Liability Release or the Background Check. You can learn more about when and how to use each of them through checking the Index for the pages where they are discussed.

In addition to the Word documents, three forms are available in Excel on the CD but are *not* illustrated in this chapter. These forms duplicate what is covered elsewhere in this book but are also set up in Excel to handle calculations for you. For example, budget line items are suggested at the end of Chapter 11 “Financial Foundations.” The Excel form, “Budget Line Item Spreadsheet,” contains the same items grouped as suggested with space for monthly entries and totaling. While this may not be exactly what your program needs, it can guide you in designing what best meets your needs.

Forms in Microsoft Word

Note: When signatures are required for permission/release, youth ages 18 and over must sign for themselves.

Application Youth & Family Ministry Volunteer: Use this form to collect vital information such as Unity background, special gifts and references from everyone who wants to volunteer in YFM.

Attendance Sign-in Sheet: A sign-in sheet for combined ages with a check box for first-time visitors and a place for parents to indicate where they can be found if not in the church service.

Background Check: This form obtains personal history, permission for a background check, and answers to specific questions that are part of a background check. Check with your church lawyer and/or insurance carrier to be sure you are using an acceptable form that meets your local/state legal requirements. If you are using a screening company, a form or template may be provided.

Certificate: Use this certificate at the end of the YFM program year to acknowledge the participation of each of the children and teens.

Change in Registration: Use this short form for recording any changes in information on file. One form can serve the entire family.

Children's Prayer Request: Prayer requests are welcome from all ages. This one provides an easy way for children ages 3-9 to express their request. Use the standard church request for older children and teens.

Commitment Agreement: This agreement is between the volunteer and the YFM department. Both the volunteer and director will want to keep a copy of the signed agreement.

Event Evaluation: This form gives youth and parents an opportunity to evaluate an event. It can provide insight for feedback on event effectiveness.

Event Permission Slip: This form contains event details for parents, plus a section for them to sign and return to the church granting permission for their youth to participate.

Event Planning Form: This provides detailed event information and checklists for the director and other event planners covering aspects such as date/time, location, responsible parties, supplies, agreements, cost, transportation, etc.

Incident/Accident Report Form: This type of form should be available to all volunteers at all times to document incidents and accidents in writing promptly. Clarify with everyone when to use it and how promptly the report needs to be given to the director. **Note:** This form on the accompanying CD varies slightly. You can download the updated version of this form at www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-and-family-policies-and-procedures

Interest Inquiry: The Inquiry, completed by an interested person, provides the director with concrete information about a potential volunteer.

Lesson Outline: This form guides the lesson development process allowing space for a short outline or a detailed one.

Medical/Liability Release: A medical/liability release form needs to be on file for each child or teen who participates in activities connected with the church. One form can serve several events providing the church keeps the original on file. When youth attend an event away from the church, send copies of the release with the adult(s). When medical treatment is needed, consult the form.

New Volunteer Checklist: Use this form to keep track of all the steps involved in screening and training a new volunteer.

Parent Survey: This survey can provide valuable parental feedback regarding their family's desires from the Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) program.

Photography Release and Assignment: Whenever photographs are taken, especially of youth under 18, a release is needed to post that picture in a newsletter, on a website, or possibly even on a bulletin board. Consider having this release signed for all children when they register yearly.

Reference Request Letter (Sample): This sample letter can be modified and sent to an applicant's reference alerting them to your need for information or it can be used as a script for a phone call.

Registration Card: Have every child's parent and every teen (except first-time visitors) complete one of these forms yearly and keep it on file in the director's office.

Retiring YFM Volunteer Exit Questionnaire: This evaluation invites retiring volunteers to contribute suggestions to the program. This is a loving way to value their perceptions and opinions.

Room Request Form: This form guides one through the details to consider when requesting a room for an event.

Supplies Request: Having all requests for supplies turned in on a form simplifies providing supplies. This form includes general supplies, infant/toddler supplies, snack supplies and special event supplies.

Visitor Information Card: This form provides a quick way to gather information from visitors. One side relates to adult interests while the other collects information for Youth and Family Ministry.

Volunteer and Staff Annual Evaluation: Use this form to gain insight into the pleasures and needs of current volunteers and staff.

Volunteer Service Record: This form provides an easy way for individual volunteers to record their hours cumulatively.

In Excel (only on accompanying CD, not included in this book)

Attendance Tracking Sheet: This spreadsheet can assist in totaling and comparing attendance of the various age groups from week to week as well as seasonally. Regroup the age distributions to characterize your program.

Budget Line Item Spreadsheet: This spreadsheet for monthly expenses and income matches the items listed at the end of Chapter 11. Although it may not match your needs, it may suggest areas you would like to add and ways to document your expenses. Consult with your church accountant or bookkeeper for a method that meets your needs.

Classroom Sign-in Sheet: This spreadsheet is a suggested way you can prepare ahead the sign-in sheets with youth and volunteers' names generated alphabetically before Sunday. This helps simplify the sign-in process, especially in situations where the same children participate regularly in the process or where attendance is taken in the classroom rather than at one area.

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 <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly <input type="checkbox"/> Weekday <input type="checkbox"/> 2 Sundays 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?

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** _____

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** _____



Church Name

Celebrates

Name of Child

Congratulations! You're Moving On!

This is given in recognition of your participation in the Youth and Family Ministry program during the past year.

Presented with love this ____ day of _____.

Minister Signature

YFM Director Signature

Teacher 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



CHILDREN'S PRAYER REQUEST

Please pray for _____ (name)



Family/Home



Pets



Friends



Health

Aa Bb Cc 

School



World

My name is _____



CHILDREN'S PRAYER REQUEST

Please pray for _____ (name)



Family/Home



Pets



Friends



Health

Aa Bb Cc 

School



World

My name is _____



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 _____

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

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 _____

Number of participants expected: _____ Children/teens _____ Adults _____

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.

Task or Job	Who Responsible?	Due Date
--------------------	-------------------------	-----------------

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.

INTEREST INQUIRY—YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

(Name of Unity Church)

Today's Date _____

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?

- Contributing a gift of something on the youth ministry wish list
- Praying for a child on a regular basis
- Assisting in a classroom, 2 times per month
- Teaching 2 times per month
- Greeting 2 times per month
- 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 _____

Please contact me so I can learn more about these opportunities. Best days/times to call are _____

Name _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone/other _____

INTEREST INQUIRY—YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

(Name of Unity Church)

Today's Date _____

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?

- Contributing a gift of something on the youth ministry wish list
- Praying for a child on a regular basis
- Assisting in a classroom, 2 times per month
- Teaching 2 times per month
- Greeting 2 times per month
- 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 _____

Please contact me so I can learn more about these opportunities. Best days/times to call are _____

Name _____ Email _____

Home Phone _____ Cell phone/other _____

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

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.

<p><u>ABOUT INSURANCE CARDS—THIS IS IMPORTANT!</u></p> <p>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:</p> <p>Above-named minor's SS# _____ - _____ - _____ Attach copies (front and back) of insurance card.</p>

NEW VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST— YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

(Name of Unity Church)

Name _____ Today's date _____

Address _____ Home phone _____

City, state, zip _____

Email _____ Cell phone _____ Work ph _____

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 _____

PARENT SURVEY—YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY

(Name of Unity Church)

Please Print

Today's Date _____

Please list all youth in your family who participate in Youth & Family Ministry.

Student's name _____ Age _____ Birth date _____

Street address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Youth email _____

Home phone _____ Parent email _____

Name of parent completing the survey _____

Survey results guide us in planning to serve you and your family in the future... Thank You!

Which service does your family usually attend? 9 a.m. 11 a.m.

Do your young people benefit from the programs currently offered? Yes No

In what ways can we further support the spiritual growth of your youngsters? _____

Are you interested in spiritual parenting classes? Yes No

Are you interested in spiritual parenting discussion/support groups? Yes No

In what areas? Preschool Elementary Preteen Teenagers Other _____

Other ways we can assist in the spiritual growth of you and your family? _____

Would you like to be on the Youth & Family Ministry announcement email list? Yes No

To enhance your student's experience in our programs, what would you be willing to periodically help with?

Assist at the Host/Hostess Desk (K-5)

Teach or assist in classrooms once or twice a month Age preferred _____

Substitute teach or assist, or float once a month in the classroom Age preferred _____

Assist with special events (K-12)

Bake or cook for special events (i.e. cookies, gelatin, modeling clay) (K-12)

Other, please specify _____

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.

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Name of Participant

Parent or Legal Guardian Signature

Phone Number

Date

Parent/Legal Guardian name printed

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

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 _____

RETIRING YFM VOLUNTEER EXIT QUESTIONNAIRE

(Name of Unity Church)

Name _____ Date _____

We thank you for the loving service that you have rendered to the children and parents in our program. You have touched the hearts and minds of those you with whom you've connected. Your efforts have made a significant contribution to the program and to our congregation. Bless you for all that you have done as a Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) volunteer!

Please take a few moments to complete this questionnaire. Your comments may help to make the Youth and Family Ministry department even more effective. Your time is greatly appreciated.

1. What has prompted you to let go of your work as a Youth and Family Ministry volunteer?

2. How long did you serve as a YFM volunteer?

3. What did you like most about serving?

4. What did you find most challenging as a YFM volunteer?

5. If there was something you could change about the portion of the program you were involved in, what would it be?

6. Is there something you would like to see added to the YFM program?

7. Did you feel appreciated and cared for as a YFM volunteer? Please explain.

8. Who would you like to recommend as a potential YFM volunteer?

9. What other thoughts/recommendations, etc. would you like us to have? (Use back, if needed.)

Thank you for your insight.

Church Address, City, State, Zip

Phone

ROOM REQUEST FORM

Today's Date _____

Activity _____
(name of class/group/activity)

Requested by _____

Conducted by _____

Room Requested (name/number)

1st choice _____

2nd choice _____

- 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.

Date(s) of Activity _____

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/tape player
- Room sound system
- Sound Tech, set-up/operator
- 2-way Radio

Media

- None
- TV/VCR/DVD
- Overhead projector/screen
- 35mm Slide projector/screen
- 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 _____

SUPPLIES REQUEST—YFM

Classroom _____

Requested by _____

Date Needed _____

Provide quantity desired and color where applicable.

- ____ Crayons
- ____ Markers
- ____ Pencils
- ____ Colored pencils
- ____ Ink pens
- ____ Glue sticks
- ____ Liquid school glue
- ____ Fabric glue
- ____ Transparent tape
- ____ Double-stick tape
- ____ Masking tape
- ____ Ruled paper
- ____ White printer paper
- ____ Colored printer paper
- ____ White or manila drawing paper
- ____ Construction paper
- ____ Paper plates
- ____ Paper bags
- ____ Poster board
- ____ Cardboard backing
- ____ String
- ____ Yarn
- ____ Felt squares
- ____ Foam sheets
- ____ Foam shapes
- ____ Popsicle™ sticks
- ____ Tongue depressors

Teacher Supplies Needed

- ____ Instant film
- ____ Tissues
- ____ Paper towels
- ____ Spray cleaner
- ____ Dry-erase markers
- ____ Dry-erase cleaner
- ____ Dry-erase eraser
- ____ Staples
- ____ Paperclips
- ____ Rubber bands
- Other _____

Snack Angel Supplies Needed

Requested by _____

Date needed _____

Provide Quantity Desired

- ____ Animal crackers
- ____ Goldfish® crackers
- ____ Cracker/cookie packs
- ____ Pretzels
- ____ Fruit Roll-Ups or Fruit Chews

Other _____

Infant/Toddler Supplies Needed

Requested by _____

Date Needed _____

Provide Quantity Desired

- ____ Diapers—size _____
- ____ Diaper wipes
- ____ Bleach sanitizing wipes

Other _____

Special Event Supplies Needed

Group Making Request _____

Requested by _____

Date Needed _____

Provide Quantity/Size Desired

- ____ Napkins _____
- ____ Dinner plates _____
- ____ Dessert plates _____
- ____ Bowls _____
- ____ Plastic Silverware _____
- ____ Cold Cups _____
- ____ Hot Cups _____

Other _____

VISITOR INFORMATION CARD

(Name of Unity Church)

Name(s) _____ Phone (_____) _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

I attended:

- 9:00 a.m. Service
- 11:00 a.m. Service
- Wednesday Night Service
- Other: _____

I am interested in:

- Social Groups/Activities
- Classes/Workshops
- Speaker Events/Concerts
- Support Groups
- Counseling

- Volunteering
- Prayer Support
- Intro to Unity Class
- Mailing List
- Youth Ministry—see back

How did you hear about us? (Please check all that apply.)

- Friend/Relative
- Website/Internet
- Radio
- Newspaper Article
- Newspaper Ad
- Yellow Pages
- Driving by
- Other: _____

PRIVACY POLICY: This information will be used by _____ to better serve you and will not be shared with third parties.
Name of Church

VISITOR INFORMATION CARD

(Name of Unity Church)

Name(s) _____ Phone (_____) _____

Mailing Address _____

Email _____

I attended:

- 9:00 a.m. Service
- 11:00 a.m. Service
- Wednesday Night Service
- Other: _____

I am interested in:

- Social Groups/Activities
- Classes/Workshops
- Speaker Events/Concerts
- Support Groups
- Counseling

- Volunteering
- Prayer Support
- Intro to Unity Class
- Mailing List
- Youth Ministry—see back

How did you hear about us? (Please check all that apply.)

- Friend/Relative
- Website/Internet
- Radio
- Newspaper Article
- Newspaper Ad
- Yellow Pages
- Driving by
- Other: _____

PRIVACY POLICY: This information will be used by _____ to better serve you and will not be shared with third parties.
Name of Church

Visitor Information Card–Youth & Family Ministry

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

I am interested in information about:

- Children's Choir
- Unity Parents Program
- Family Ministry Program

Visitor Information Card–Youth & Family Ministry

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

Child's Name _____ Age _____ Grade _____ Present today

I am interested in information about:

- Children's Choir
- Unity Parents Program
- Family Ministry Program

5. What do you find most challenging as a YFM Volunteer?

6. What would you like to see added to the YFM program?

7. If there were something you could change about the part of the program you are involved in, what would it be?

8. Would you be interested in leading a session at a teacher training? In what area?

9. Do you feel appreciated and cared for as a YFM volunteer? Please explain.

10. Have you any additional recommendations or comments you would like us to know?

Please return the survey to _____.

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