

Unity Northwest

Youth Ministry Program Guide



259 E. Central Road, Des Plaines, IL
unitynw@yahoo.com
unitynorthwest.org
847-297-0997

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Purpose Statement

The Purpose

As a spiritual youth community, we provide a safe place of love and acceptance where our children and teens experience the recognition of their oneness with God.

Our purpose is to create programs and experiences that invite the Divine potential in each individual to grow and expand. Using the tools of affirmative prayer, Living Curriculum, meditation and service, we practice Unity Truth principles as a way of life.

Program Guide Goals

Unity Northwest seeks to insure a safe environment for our children and teens, the staff and volunteers who work with the then. Additionally, we seek to safeguard Unity Northwest against any allegations or claims of child abuse. Included in this program guide are:

- **Program Overview**
 - ✧ This section contains information on how our Youth Ministry program functions and includes safety procedures that are designed to help us know who is a part of our programs and where they are in the building.
- **Sacred Safety**
 - ✧ This section includes our church safety policies and our instructions on the prevention of child abuse.
- **Youth Ministry Program Staff**
 - ✧ In this section you will find our policies regarding being on staff as a volunteer teacher/leader, sponsor and/or classroom assistant.
- **Teen Ministry Events**
 - ✧ **Regional policies and event descriptions are included here.**
- **Lesson Structure**
 - ✧ This section provides an overview of our Sunday morning lesson structure along with details of the how and why of what we do.
- **Unity Basics**
 - ✧ The final section gives a brief description of the basic teachings of Unity.

Parental Involvement

Parents are encouraged to get involved in their children's spiritual education. Handouts and materials are available to help the learning continue at home.

Program Overview

Registration

- Spiritual Education classes are available for children 0 to 18 years old during the 11:00 am service only.
- Registration forms are required for each student. They can be found on the sign-in table just outside the classrooms.

Drop Off & Pick Up

Arrival

To ensure the maximum safety for the children, a parent/guardian is required to sign children from 0 to 10 years old into the classroom with the same person signing them out immediately following the service.

Please try to drop children off by 11:00 am so that:

- We are able to greet each child
- They are able to take advantage of the pre-session activities.
- They are able to join us at the beginning of the experience rather than walking in after we are already started.
- They feel comfortable. Some children find it difficult to walk into an activity that is already in progress and may not feel a part of the group.

Departure

All classes end with the children & teens joining the adults in the sanctuary. As soon as the closing song is complete the children and Uniteens are returned to their classrooms. Nursery & preschools back to their room. Children and Uniteens to the Uniteen room.

Toys, Electronic & Attire

Toys & Electronics

Please leave toys and electronics at home or in the car. Our children are busy with the day's spiritual exploration and toys distract them from the program and group building experiences of the class.

Attire

- Please dress children in clothing that they are comfortable in.
- Please note that, while every precaution is taken, we sometimes do activities that may soil their clothing.
- Please dress preschool children that make trips to the bathroom easy for them.

Recuperation Policy

If children are working through a health challenge, he/she will have difficulty participating in class and need the caring attention and healing atmosphere of their home. Health challenges include the symptoms of fever, diarrhea, vomiting, rashes, and/or eye infections.

Program Overview

Registration Form Sample

Unity Northwest Church

Youth Ministry Student Registration Form

Please Print

Student's Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Cell Phone _____

E-Mail _____

OK to Add to e-mail parent newsletter Yes No

Birthday _____ Current School Grade _____

Allergies/Medical Conditions _____

Special Educational Needs _____

In case of Emergency, contact: (Name & Phone)

Mother _____

Father _____

Other _____

Photography Release: I hereby grant the Church, Unity Worldwide Ministries, the Great Lakes Region and their representatives permission to use photographs and videotaped images in which my child appears, in any manner whatsoever such as, but not limited to: publication, display, advertising, slide show, etc.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Program Overview

Classroom Divisions

Nursery & Preschool

Ages 0 to 2 & 3 to 5

Young children are noticing more about the world around them and their place in it. They are full of curiosity and questions and are developing the capacity to respond in a loving way to others and to take responsibility for their actions.

Generally they...

- Need adults to model appropriate behavior
- Need consistent rules; responds to clear and simple expectations
- Are still awkward with writing and small, detailed activities
- Love to have stories read to them
- Love to help out in the classroom
- Like a lot of physical activity
- Need to move frequently from one activity to another; short attention span
- Soak up information with incredible speed
- Think very literally
- Learn best by playing, exploring, role play

Curriculum Focus for this Age Group

- To help the children understand that they are loved just as they are.
- To explore Jesus as a human being and as a model of love and goodness.
- To help the children understand that they, too, have the spiritual potential to act in ways that bring out their best selves.
- To help the children develop their spiritual potential to express love and caring for others.

Elementary

Ages 6 to 10

These students are energetic, curious, open imaginative, and enthusiastic. They are learning what it means to be in relationship with each other. They still need adult help and reassurance but also need time on their own to explore new ideas and concepts. They are developing the ability to talk about and explain their ideas.

Generally they...

- Have growth and development of their small motor skills so writing is becoming easier
- Can listen well but may not always remember what they heard. Repetition is important.
- Can have a tendency to choose things that are too hard and then may give up

Program Overview

Class Divisions

- Can be insecure about their abilities so may not jump right into a new project
- Love new ideas and asking questions
- Learn well through games, hand-on activities and exploring how things work

Curriculum Focus for this Age Group

- To see Jesus as a person who had challenges and difficulties but created a relationship with God that helped him to move through these challenges with loving kindness and generosity.
- To use who Jesus was and how he behaved to create a model of behavior for their own lives.
- To help the children explore how they, too, can let God live through them as an expression of life, love and kindness.

Uniteens

Middle School - Ages 11 to 13

Preteens are going through huge physical and emotional changes. They can be unpredictable and hard to read as they swing between childhood and adulthood. They are making an attempt to move into adulthood but can still be drawn to things in their childhood. Preteens are excited to be moving into the teen years but also scared of the unknown. They are exploring who they are and their peers are very important to them.

Generally they...

- Need experiences and activities that give them the opportunity to interact with their peers.
- Need rituals that help them to mark turning points in their lives.
- Need opportunities to take on major responsibilities in the classroom.
- Need to be with adults who are compassionate with all they are going through yet able to give loving guidance.
- Are very concerned with their appearance and where they fit into the group. They need to feel a sense of belonging.
- Are capable of self-awareness, insight and empathy.
- Like to focus on things they think are important and tend to be careless with things that they think are unimportant like cleaning their room.
- Are impulsive and don't yet have the full capacity to think things through in detail.
- Need a lot of physical exercise
- Developing an interest in social justice and fairness
- Able to enjoy abstract thinking and like to explore many sides of an issue.

Curriculum Focus for this Age Group

- To understand that Jesus was a human being who lived and is also the example of God moving in and through us.
- To know they are inherently good and they have choices as how they can show up in this world.
- To begin to understand that Jesus is our elder brother and way-shower.

Program Overview

Class Divisions

Y.O.U.

High School - Ages 14 to 18

Teens are going through rapid changes and continued growth spurts. They face a lot of temptations and constant peer pressure. They spend a great deal of time worrying about how others view them. They are beginning to want to be treated as adults. They have the ability to think through problems on their own and want to be respected for who they are. Their emotions are often mixed, sometimes feeling like an adult and ready to assume more responsibility and sometimes feeling like they can't handle anything.

Generally they...

- Alternate between moments of brilliance and moments of "what were you thinking?"
- Need adults who will help them think through choices for their lives and to affirmation that their dreams for their lives are possible.
- Want to be respected for who they are no matter what that appears to be and want their opinions to matter.
- Want to spend time with their friends
- Need the opportunity to explore how they personally feel about what they study in class
- Are able to engage in abstract thinking and discussion
- Have their own ideas about spirituality
- Are interested in exploring ideas and beliefs outside their own.

Curriculum Focus for this Age Group

- To be receptive to the idea that God is a mental attitude that works in and through us.
- To understand that they are the creator of their own world through the thoughts they give power to and what they choose to see and believe.
- To gain the ability to look past the literal appearance of a situation and to focus on the good the situation brings.
- To know that the Kingdom of God is within them.
- To know that each has the power to live and do and Jesus did.

Sacred Safety

Building & Classroom Safety

General Safety Procedures

The Building and its safety is an important part of the general safety of our youth. The building safety consists of several integral parts including:

- The set up
- The individual rooms
- Insurance policies
- Fire safety procedures
- Tornado procedures
- Lock down procedures
- Ratio of adults accompanying the children at any given time
- Room safety, such as outlet covers, fire extinguisher location, toddler safety issues

Unity Northwest is insured by Church Mutual. The policy can be found in the administrator's office. It is renewed annually. The church building has updated emergency exit floor plans and highlighted emergency exit signs in the main areas.

Fire Drill

The teachers will calmly organize their groups, have them stand in line, head for one of the exits and walk down the hall and go outside. The Buddha Garden near the garage is the meeting area.

There are two exits, as indicated in the emergency exit plans located in each youth ministry room. The children and teachers are to use the exit at the end of the hallway near the Y.O.U. room.

The teenagers are asked to stop by the nursery room in order to help them exit the building. Each adult and teenager will take at least take one smaller child.

The elementary children and uniteens are to exit the building without further delay.

If the exit by the Y.O.U. room is blocked, Y.O.U.ers and Uniteens will go through the elementary room and exit through their doorway, and stopping in the nursery area to help them exit safely through the main entrance.

- Teachers and children will not try to find their parents inside.
- The parents will find their children safely outside at the designated meeting area.
- Call 911 with a cell phone from outside.
 - ✧ There are three fire extinguishers in the building: One in the sanctuary; one in the kitchen and one in the hallway near the youth ministry classrooms.
 - ✧ Only one adult should use the fire extinguisher, all other adults should take care of the children!

Sacred Safety

Building & Classroom Safety

Tornado Safety

When the tornado siren(s) begin to sound, the adults will immediately escort all children at once to the dedicated “safe zone,” in the hallway near the closets and the Y.O.U. room.

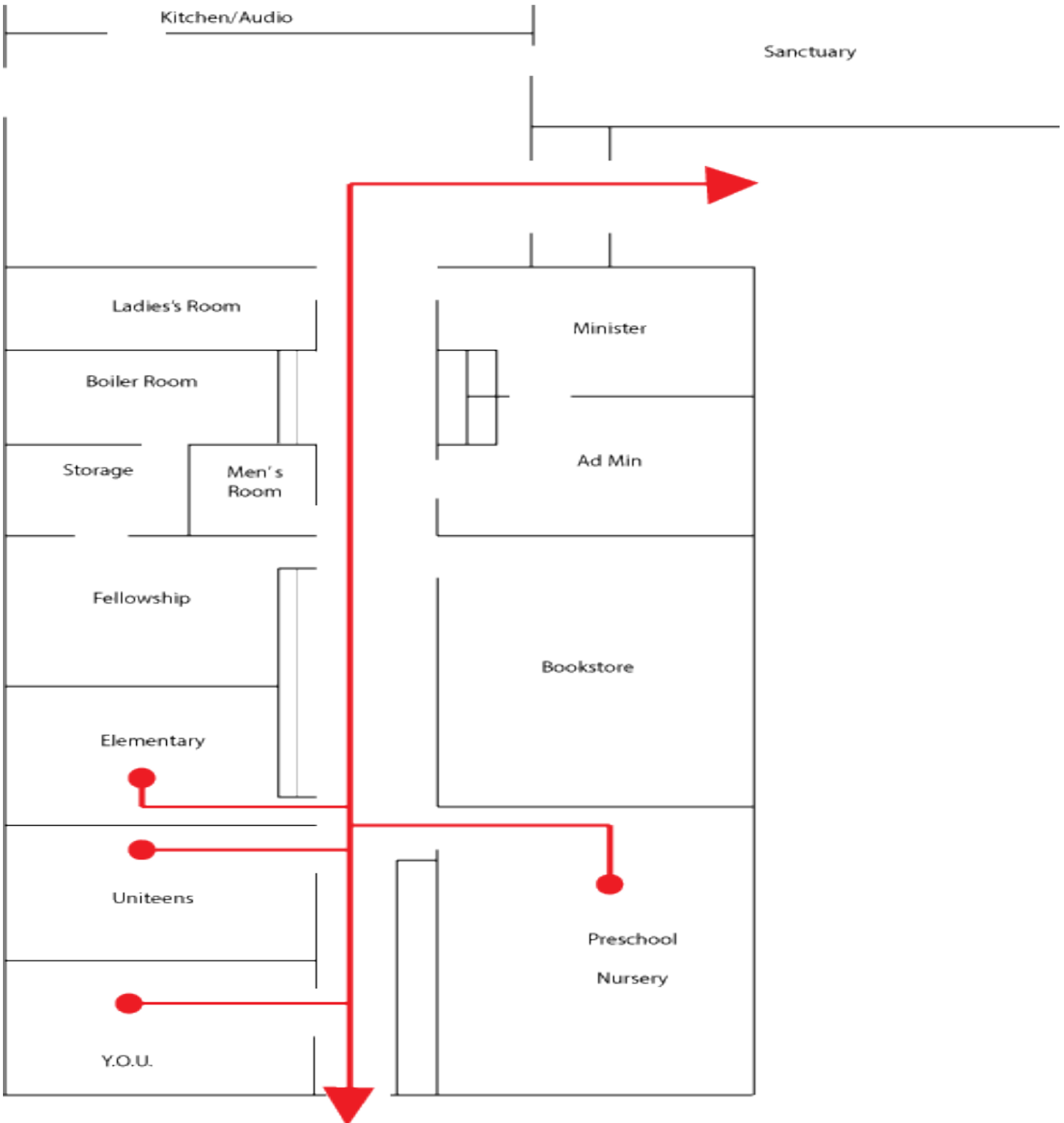
Staff volunteers will not try to find the parents!

- If the parents want to be with their children, they will have to come the safety zone.
- All the children will sit on the floor side-by-side. At least one adult will stay with the children at all times.
- If coats or blankets are available, the children will put them over their heads.
- Small children will be held by an adult.
- Stay in the “safe zone” until a staff member or the Minister comes or the siren has stopped sounding.
- Just remember:
 - ✧ Take control of the situation immediately.
 - ✧ Don’t panic.
 - ✧ Keep your cool.
 - ✧ Communicate clearly with all the other adults who are working with you.
 - ✧ Communicate clearly with all the children.
 - ✧ Try to keep the children calm.
 - ✧ Move immediately into the “safe zone”.
 - ✧ Don’t leave the “safe zone” until a staff member or the Minister comes or the siren has stopped sounding.

Unity Basics

Emergency Exit Plan

Emergency Exit



Sacred Safety

Diaper Changing Policy

Unity Northwest
Youth Education Ministry
Diaper Change Permission

I herewith authorize the staff of the Unity Northwest Nursery to change my child's _____ (Name) diapers if needed, even if only one staff person is present.

Guardian's Name: _____ (printed)

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Abuse Prevention

Reducing the Risk

Material from an article in Jan/Feb 2004 Children's Ministry Magazine.

Signs of Abuse

- They are in our midst, although often nearly invisible. They may act out. They may withdraw. They may cover up as they try to laugh and fit in with other kids. They are children who have been, or are being sexually abused. They are there, often unnoticed, without help, without hope...not because we don't care about these innocent children, but because we don't see and may not want to hear about the horror of sexual abuse in our midst. We need to face the reality of child sexual abuse and find ways to effectively reach out with love, hope, and healing to the children and families wounded by this abuse.
- While it is not possible to tell an abused by outward looks, there are signs children may show to indicate that they may be an abused child. Know what to look for and how to help children and families who are victims of abuse. As you become more alert to signs of abuse, move with caution. Falsely accusing someone of abuse can destroy an innocent person's life. Don't just react to something you think you see. Take time to check it out and confirm the Truth. Be alert, but be cautious.
- Sexual abuse is criminal behavior that the abuser is solely responsible for. According to the American Medical Association, child sexual abuse is "the engagement of a child in sexual activities for which the child is developmentally unprepared and cannot give informed consent. Child sexual abuse is characterized by deception, force or coercion."

The physical, behavioral, and verbal signs to watch for:

Physical signs may include:

- Lacerations and bruises
- Irritation, pain or injury to the genital area
- Difficulty with urination
- Discomfort when sitting
- Torn or bloody underclothing
- Sexually transmitted diseases

Behavioral signs may include:

- Nightmares
- Anxiety when approaching the church or nursery area
- Nervous or hostile behavior toward adults
- Sexual self-consciousness
- Acting out sexual behavior
- Withdrawal from church activities and friends

Abuse Prevention

Verbal signs may include the following statements:

- I don't like (name).
- (Name) does things to me when we are alone.
- I don't like to be alone with (name).
- (Name) fooled around with me.

While these are common signs an abused child may show, any one or even a few signs may not mean a child is being harmed. Keep in mind that while these signs are common, all of us are unique individual, and each child will respond uniquely.

Helping the Child

Josh McDowell and Bob Hostetler in Josh McDowell's Handbook on Counseling Youth offer an intentional approach to helping those who have been through this type of traumatic experience.

1. **Listen.** Be slow to speak and quick to listen.
2. **Empathize.** Don't lecture, but rather be someone the child can cry with, hurt with, and mourn with. Offer love unconditionally.
3. **Affirm.** Help the child understand that you believe him or her, and affirm that the child is an individual with infinite worth.
4. **Direct.** Point the child to Spirit as the source of healing and wholeness. Help the child turn the responsibility of the abuse from him or herself onto the perpetrator and to realize this process of healing and recovery will take time.
5. **Enlist.** Allow the child to choose caring people who can encourage and offer a fuller support system. In most states, you must also enlist the involvement of law enforcement and social services. Rather than fearing these people's involvement, understand that they are trained professionals who, for the most part, care deeply about children.
6. **Refer.** Bring a professional counselor into the situation. It is imperative to invite professionals into this very sensitive situation.

Ministry to the Family

- To often our response is simply to pretend sexual abuse doesn't exist and to never deal with it, forcing those who are wounded by abuse to continue to struggle on their own, and never finding the healing the Christ presence provides. Instead, your church can help the children and families who have gone through such a traumatic experience.
- An abused child and his or her family need others to come alongside them to provide support and encouragement as they begin the difficult journey of dealing with the abuse and learning to trust again. Abuse shatters trust. If the children who have been abused and their families don't find help and hope in the church, where will they find it?

Abuse Prevention

In his book *Caring for Sexually Abused Children*, R. Timothy Kearney identifies a number of struggles families and the church must deal with.

- **Communication** – Church members' gossip about the situation can be very painful for the family, so encourage the church to interact with the family and faithfully pray for them while not taking sides.
- **Isolation** – Some families isolate themselves because sometimes those trying to help may have the tendency to overcompensate and treat the family as special or different. The family needs to be treated as normally as possible while receiving whatever attention is needed.
- **Shame** – Help the child and family deal with feelings of shame and guilt by first identifying the difference between true guilt and false guilt. A victim and his or her family have no reason to feel guilty. The true guilt should be placed solely on the shoulders of the perpetrator. Help the family to understand that the child did nothing wrong.
- **Love** – It is critically important that children and families affected by abuse have people who are willing to take the time to listen intently to their story as they feel able to share it. These families need to be believed without skepticism or judgment. They need people who will lovingly pursue them and initiate contact with them, recognizing that simply offering to be available may not be enough.
- **Patience** – The help offered will need to endure, just as the pain and struggles do. Abuse has physical and emotional consequences that can be tremendously devastating and traumatic for the child and they can be lifelong. Families need people who will be patient as they work through the physical and spiritual ramifications. Ultimately, they need the church to be real and to become educated about how to properly reach out and effectively care for them.

Sacred Safety

Reporting Policy

Illinois state law requires all adults to report any suspected child abuse. Call the Department of Children and Family Services, (1-800-252-2873). Suspected means just that. If a child says or does something that makes you think he or she may have been molested you are required to report it. Children almost never lie about having been molested. Take any comments seriously. Let the authorities investigate; that's their job.

All reporting is confidential and discrete. Reporting is an act of caring not disloyalty. A list of possible indicators of abuse follows:

- Physical injury (non-accidental)
- Sexual abuse including assault or exploitation
- Willful cruelty or unjustifiable punishment
- Neglect

When reporting the following information will be needed:

- Name, age and gender of child
- Address, phone number of child
- Description of suspected abuse or neglect
- Current condition of the child

If you are an adult serving the children at Unity Northwest and suspect child abuse the following is required in addition to contacting Child Protection Services.

1. If the child is in immediate danger, call 911.
2. Immediately, contact the Director of Youth & Family Ministry,
3. If the director is not available, contact the senior minister.
4. Be prepared to complete an Incident Report (sample enclosed) in writing:
 - ✧ Who: Who is involved in the incident? Who else witnessed the incident or who else can verify information?
 - ✧ What: What did you observe, be specific facts only? List only what you know. What are the signs/symptoms that you observed?
 - ✧ When: Day, Time, Activity.
 - ✧ Where: Where on the child's body did you observe signs?

For the safety and support of our youth every volunteer and parent working with or around our children must submit both an information and background check form. These are held in strict confidence. Volunteers and parents should have six months active attendance prior to working with the children. This ensures our children are giving a safe, consistent, spiritual, loving environment.

An Incident Report Form must be completed for any type of incident for example; children biting, any time first aid is given, if a child puts themselves or others in danger, etc. The forms need to be completed at the time of the incident to ensure accuracy of events. The Incident Report Forms are located in the class roster clip board or may be obtained from the office. Please return to the Director of Youth and Family Ministry or Senior Minister.

Sacred Safety

Reporting Form

Incident/Accident Report Form

Please fill out this form for any incident or accident that occurs while you are serving in Youth and Family Ministry, whether or not the incident resulted in injury. Provide as much detail as possible and turn in this report as soon as possible after the event.

Today's date _____

Date and time of incident/accident _____

Name of affected party (1) _____ Age _____ Male Female

Parent/legal guardian (1) _____ Phone _____

Name of affected party (2) _____ Age _____ Male Female

Parent/legal guardian (2) _____ Phone _____

Witness 1 _____ Phone _____

Witness 2 _____ Phone _____

Place of incident _____

Description of incident: Relate as much detail as possible, including quotations if possible. Explain action taken and by whom. Draw a diagram on the back of this sheet, if useful.

Cause of incident (in your opinion): _____

Print name of person completing report _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Signature _____

Know Sex Offender Policy

Unity Northwest Church Policies

SECTION: 4 - Committees and Task Forces

TITLE: D. Youth Education and Family Ministries

1. Known Sex Offender Procedures

DATE APPROVED/REVISED: Approved:

Revised:

DESCRIPTION: This policy outlines the actions to take when a know sex offender seeks to attend functions at the church.

A. Notification

1. In the event that a congregant of Unity Northwest Church becomes aware that a person (or persons) who is a known sex offender is attending or plans to attend our services and/or other church functions and may interact or be near children, it is the member's responsibility to notify either the Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader, Youth Minister/Director or Board Member of this person's presence or possible presence. Once notification has taken place, the following steps will be taken:

- Confirmation (to be done by Minister/Spiritual Leader or Youth Director) of the information and a determination, by checking with police and/or data base of whether or not this person may pose a threat. Charges and/or conviction that would indicate a threat include, but are not limited to: rape, assault, endangering the welfare of a child, kidnapping and child molestation.
- After confirmation, the following plan of action will be in affect.
- Said convicted person involved will be informed in writing & copy to police of the plan of action which will also be communicated to the staff by the Senior Minister/Spiritual Leader or a designated member of the church. It is incumbent upon the Church staff to ensure that the plan of action is being followed. If it is not, local authorities will be contacted.

B. Plan of Action

1. Said person may be on church property only if church staff is notified of said person's intention to attend 24 hours beforehand.

2. Said person may only attend 9:00 am Sunday service and may not attend any other activities or events where children are present.

3. A Board Member or other designated person (cannot be a family member) will meet said person at their vehicle as they arrive on church property and will be their constant companion until said person has left church property. This includes bathrooms, during the service and/or other events and all other places on church property.

4. The Board Member or other designated person is to write a brief note (need to create a form) such as this: "I stayed with (name of person) from the moment I met him/her outside on (date) throughout the service, and until I left the building and he/she left church property." Then the Board Member or other designated person signs it, gives it to the Senior minister, the Senior minister keeps it in a file. This note is to be written and filed each time said person in on church property.

5. Said person shall not, under any circumstances, enter the rooms/areas that are designated for use by those under the age of 18.

6. Board members, staff, parents and other church members will be notified, in writing, that a known or convicted sex offender is in our community. They will also receive the church's plan of action.

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Staffing Procedures

The children's safety depends primarily on the teachers and volunteers directly involved with the Youth Ministry. The teachers should guide and act as a role model and mentor, as well as complying within regulations and safety measures.

The process to become a classroom teacher or assistance includes:

- **Length of Time:** is the possible volunteer/staff member known to the community? Is the potential volunteer a member of Unity Northwest? If so, for how long? It is recommended that the potential volunteer have been a part of the Unity Northwest community for a minimum of three months.
 - ✧ Does the possible volunteer/staff member come from another Unity? In this case the Unity will be contacted and information about the volunteer inquired.
- **Application:** Application form is filled out and turned into the youth minister.
- **Interview:** An interview is conducted to determine the qualifications of the potential volunteer and to ascertain what age group they prefer to work with.
- **Background Check:** A criminal background check is performed. If the potential volunteer will be working with the Uniteens or Y.O.U. group a driving record check is also performed.
- **Commitment Form:** The commitment form outlines the program expectations as well as the benefits provided to the potential volunteer.
- **Job Description:** Job descriptions and responsibilities are provided to each potential volunteer.
- **Training:** Each new volunteer will fit the role of teacher's assistant for one to two months in order to get a feel for how the program functions. This give the new volunteer the opportunity to sit in with different age groups and to learn the program structure as we go.
 - ✧ In addition, funding is provided for the volunteers to attend regional and national youth ministry trainings.

General Requirements

- Volunteer is available to teach at least once a month, twice a month being the preference.
- Volunteer arrives to the classroom by 10:45 a m, prepared to facilitate the classroom experiences. *Note: all curricula and supplies are provided.*
- Volunteer assists with room set up and clean up.
- Volunteer attends the quarterly teachers' meetings/
- Volunteer attends area-wide youth ministry trainings. (Fees to be paid by Unity Northwest.)

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Classroom & Event Staffing

General Policies

- It is recommended to have either two unrelated adults in one classroom or have a set up where visibility is at a maximum level and supervision is possible at any time.
- This could be:
 - ✧ Open classroom doors
 - ✧ Windows in the door
 - ✧ Classrooms close and visible to one another.
- Open door policy: parents are welcome to stay with their children, but they will not be allowed to be alone with a group of children.
- Buddy system for using the restroom. Two older children going together or two younger children going with one adult.

Nursery Staff

- Nursery care is offered during the second service only. It is for children aged infants to 2 years old.
- One paid nursery staff person is present during this time period. However, due to high visibility and frequent checks from the leadership, as well as an open policy for the parent to come and check on their children at any time, this is acceptable, with one to three children present. If the number of children exceeds three, a second screened adult will be added.
- Some situations require more supervision, e.g. any activity that is located off the church property or activities on church property, but at a different time or location than usual.
- In these instances at least two unrelated adults (depending on the number of children more than two), should be present.
- No one adult should be allowed to be with the children unsupervised.

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Forms: Youth Worker Application, Pg 1

YOUTH MINISTRY FACILITATOR INFORMATION

This form is to be completed by all persons who work in any educational ministry in our church.

CONFIDENTIAL

Personal Information

Name (PLEASE PRINT)		
Street Address	Apt. #	Valid Driver's License # if providing transportation for events.
City, State	Zip Code	DL# State Are you 25 years or older? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Home Phone	Work Phone	E-mail (PLEASE PRINT)

Special Gifts

Special Skills & Training
Special Interests & Hobbies

Experience

What experiences in the church or community have you had in working with children?
What factors (experiences, gifts, training, etc) have contributed to your interest in working with our children?
What are your greatest concerns and apprehensions as you contemplate this ministry?

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Forms: Youth Worker Application, Pg 2

Unity Background

How long have you been attending this ministry?	Are you a member? <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes...How long?_____
What Unity classes have you taken?	What age children/youth do you prefer to work with? <input type="checkbox"/> Nursery <input type="checkbox"/> Preschool <input type="checkbox"/> K – 2 nd <input type="checkbox"/> 3 rd – 5 th <input type="checkbox"/> Uniteen <input type="checkbox"/> Y.O.U.
	What role do you prefer? <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher/Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom Assistant <input type="checkbox"/> Chaplaincy

Personal References

Two people we may contact:	
Name:	Name:
Street Address:	Street Address:
City, State, Zip:	City, State, Zip:
Phone: E-Mail:	Phone: E-Mail:

Child Safety & Protection

Have you read our church's policies on child and youth safety and protection against abuse? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
What questions do you have about these policies?
Will you submit to a background check? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you ever been convicted 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.

Applicant's Statement

"I certify that the facts contained in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I hereby authorize this ministry to conduct an inquiry into my background to include personal and public record information. I specifically release criminal information repositories, courts, schools and institutions from any liability so that they may freely and completely respond to any inquiry relating to 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 agree to be bound by the policies of this ministry and to refrain from inappropriate behaviors in the performance of my duties.

Signature _____ Date _____

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Forms: Background Check

Permission to Obtain a Background Check

*(This form authorizes the church to obtain background information and must be completed by the applicant.
The church must keep this completed form on file for at least two years after requesting a background check.)*

I, the undersigned applicant (also known as “consumer”), authorize __Unity Northwest__ to procure background information (also known as a “consumer report and/or investigative consumer report”) about me. This report may include my driving history, including any traffic citations; a social security number verification; present and former addresses; criminal and civil history/records; and the state sex offender records.
insert church name

I understand that I am entitled to a complete copy of any background information report of which I am the subject upon my request to __Unity Northwest__, if such is made within a reasonable time from the date it was produced. I also understand that I may receive a written summary of my rights under the Fair Credit Reporting Act.
insert church name

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Identifying Information for Background Information Agency (also known as “Consumer Reporting Agency”)

Print Name: _____
First Middle Last

Other Names Used (alias, maiden, nickname): _____

Current Address: _____
Street /P. O. Box City State Zip Code County Dates

Former Address: _____
Street /P. O. Box City State Zip Code County Dates

Social Security Number: _____ Daytime Telephone Number: _____

Driver's License Number: _____ State of Issuance: _____ Date of Birth: _____ Gender _____

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Forms: Youth Ministry Commitment

Youth Ministry Commitment

I willingly commit to:

- Hold the children, teens and families in prayer.
- Practice Unity principles in my life. Strive to respond to children, teens and co-teachers from a point of love, appreciation and support.
- Share information with others as appropriate.
- Seek support when needed and maintain open communication with the Youth Director/Minister.
- Review the job description for my position and agree to adhere to it.
- Be a team player and understand that all classes and events operate under the umbrella of the ministry and under the direction of the Youth Director/Minister.
- Getting approval from the Youth Director/Minister for any special events that involve the children/teens of this ministry before proceeding.
- Follow all requested procedures related to the safety of the children and teens.
- Give attention to preparing thoughtful and interesting lessons. Allot at least one hour per teaching week for lesson review and preparation.
- Make a commitment of 6 months to one year to the Youth Ministry Program.
- Teaching/assisting a minimum of 2 Sundays per month, unless another time-frame has been agreed to with the Youth Director/Minister. *(New sponsors/leaders will work with existing group for 4-6 weeks to make sure it is a fit on both sides.)*
- Assist with keeping the classrooms tidy and organize.
- Participate in scheduled trainings and meetings – if unable to attend, contact Youth Director/Minister for notes
- Accompany teens to local and regional rallies and retreats, as needed. Sponsors also oversee the group's transportation to and from events and are participants and chaperones during the events. *(Uniteen Leaders/Y.O.U. Sponsors only)*
- Make sure that registration paperwork and medical release forms for activities are filled out correctly and funds are collected, then all are submitted to the Youth Director/Minister in a timely fashion. *(Uniteen Leaders/Y.O.U. Sponsors only)*

The Youth & Family Ministry Department agrees to lovingly provide for me:

- A director/minister to guide the program and coordinate activities.
- Resources, equipment, and supplies for all activities.
- Training opportunities.
- On-going ideas and current resources.
- A safe, supportive, responsive and loving environment.
- Prayer and support.
- A free CD of the Sunday lesson for each week you volunteer.
- Opportunities that help me to develop new skills and enhancing my Spiritual understanding.

Name _____ Date _____

YFM Director/Minister _____ Date _____

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Staff Responsibility Descriptions: Teachers/Leaders/Sponsors

Qualifications

- Has general understanding of Unity principles
- Has been a participant of the church for at least 6 months
- Has some experience working with children
- YFM paperwork and background check completed (Church will arrange for this)

Commitment

- Willing to make a commitment of one year to the Youth Ministry Program
- Available a minimum of 2 Sundays per month (New teachers/assistants will work with existing group for 4-6 weeks for training in our practices.)
- Participate in scheduled trainings and meetings – if unable to attend, contact Youth Director/Minister for notes

Responsibilities to the Youth Ministry Team are to:

- Communicate with regularly and clearly
- Request resources from Youth Director as needed: (Curriculum, supplies & event finances)
- Communicate absences promptly
- Coordinate/define class room roles and responsibilities

Responsibilities to the Students are to:

- Hold everyone in prayer
- Be on time to greet everyone as they arrive
- Get to know them individually
- Build relationships with students/families. Encourage regular Sunday attendance
- Communicate by e-mail
- Recognize visitors and make them feel welcome
- Be prepared with the lesson

Responsibilities to the Curriculum are to:

- Use what is supplied by your Youth Director or Minister or discuss ahead of time changes you would like to make.
- Become well acquainted with each lesson
- Have a basic understanding of the scope and sequence
- Be prepared with your lesson plan and supplies each time you are teaching

Additional Responsibilities for Uniteen Leaders and Y.O.U. Sponsors

- Be a “Team Player.” The Y.O.U. chapter & Uniteen group and the sponsors/leaders operate under the umbrella of the church and under the direction of the Youth Director/Minister.
- Be willing to accompany YOUers and Uniteens to local and regional rallies and retreats. Sponsors also oversee the group’s transportation to and from events and are participants and chaperons during the events.
- Complete registration paperwork and medical release forms for activities and collect funds. Submit to the Youth Director by posted deadlines.

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Classroom Responsibilities

Nursery

Description

- Nursery staff reports to the Youth Ministry Director
- Ages: 0 - 2 years of age

Purpose: To create a safe and sacred space for our youngest members. To offer music, story and activities that stimulate the heart so they know that they are loved.

Nursery Function

- To provide an environment where both children and parents feel safe.
- To provide a space filled with age appropriate tools and activities that meet the children exactly where they are in their development.
- To help the children understand that they are loved and are part of our spiritual community.

Preschool & Elementary Classrooms

Descriptions

- Preschool & elementary teachers report to the Youth Ministry Director
- Preschool Ages: 3 years through Kindergarten
- Elementary Ages: Ages 6 to 10 or 1st to 5th grade

Purpose:

- To create lessons and experiences that reinforce the idea that God is within us, around us, everywhere present and loves us unconditionally.
- To create a learning environment that is safe and sacred.
- To continue the understanding that we are expressions of love and to move into a very basic understanding of the Bible, where the stories can be found and how the stories reflect our Basic Unity Principles.
- The beginnings of metaphysical interpretation are introduced in the Elementary classrooms.

Preschool & Elementary Classroom Functions

- To help the children understand that they are loved and are part of our spiritual community.
- To encourage the children to participate in the functioning of the classroom through the use of job cards.
- To explore what Unity principle is, what they believe about it and how it shows up their lives and the lives of those around them.
- To provide experiences of prayer, meditation and tithing.
- To provide a variety of creative experiences that invite the children into living the principle being explored.

Uniteens

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Classroom Responsibilities

Descriptions

- Uniteen Leaders report to the Youth Ministry/Director
- Ages: 11 to 13 or 6th, 7th & 8th grade

Mission Statement:

As Uniteens we honor and celebrate each other as the unique and perfect spiritual beings that we are. We provide through love, support and understanding, a safe place for growth. We encourage the awakening and expression of the spirituality already within each of us. We provide experiences, which promote greater self-acceptance and strengthen self-esteem.

Purpose:

To create a learning environment that focuses on the unique needs of middle school aged preteens. Students meet each Sunday to share in the process of spiritual self-discovery in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, and honors each individual where they are in their development.

Organization:

The group is facilitated by Leaders who have been trained in using the Living Curriculum Philosophy. Each Uniteen Group is recognized by the Regional Uniteen Consultant and must follow regional guidelines in order to attend regional events.

Uniteen Group Function

- To provide weekly opportunities to explore a concept in Truth, provide prayer and meditation experiences in an atmosphere of total acceptance. This assists the students in establishing their own identify, self- worth and confidence and a creates a feeling of community.
- To provide a safe environment for sharing and exploring feelings. This helps students define THEIR OWN life purpose and develop a method of finding answers to life's complexities.
- To offer service and social activities (such as Unitreats, social outings and informal get-togethers) in order to foster a closer connection of group members and provide an opportunity to practice spiritual principles as they apply to daily life.
- Our Uniteen group gives young teens and preteens an age appropriate program with its own identity - not an older kids' Sunday school or junior YOU. This is a dynamic youth group that is as important to them as these teen years are to their lives.

Team Members Roles within the Group

Uniteen Leaders

- To practice Unity Principles in their daily life and have a sincere desire to bring these principles to young teens.
- To serve as facilitators and chaperons for local, sub-regional and regional events.
- To follow the direction of the youth and family ministry director
- To provide direct leadership, guidance and empowerment.

Youth of Unity (YOU)

Descriptions

Unity Basics

Classroom Responsibilities

- YOU Sponsors report to the Youth Ministry/Director
- Ages: 14 – 18 or 9th – 12th grade

Purpose:

To encourage and assist in the spiritual growth of all teens who are seeking to express the indwelling Christ in accordance with the principles of practical Christianity as taught and interpreted by Unity Institute and the Association of Unity churches. Teens meet regularly to share in the process of spiritual self- discovery in an environment that is physically and emotionally safe, and honors each individual where they are in their development.

Organization:

The group is facilitated by Sponsors who have been trained in using the Living Curriculum Philosophy. Each YOU Chapter is recognized by the Regional YOU Consultant and must follow regional guidelines in order to attend regional events. The levels of organization are Chapter (church), Area-wide, Region and International.

YOU Chapter Function:

- To follow the tenets of their chapter.
- YOU functions to facilitate a space of balance of study, prayer, service and fellowship. This involves sub regional events, regional events and International events
- To participate in service and social activities (such as fun outings and informal get-togethers) to foster a closer connection of group members and provide an opportunity to practice spiritual principles as they apply to daily life.
- To develop leadership skills that they can use not only within the YOU but in their daily lives as well.

Team Members Roles within the Group: YOU is a youth lead, adult guided group

Sponsors

- To practice Unity Principles in their daily life and have a sincere desire to bring these principles to teens.
- To serve as Spiritual Leader, Facilitator, Coach, Mentor, Chaperone and Liaison, advising the YOUers while promoting a spirit of cooperation.
- To follow the direction of the youth and family ministry director

YOUers

- To take on leadership roles and consult the sponsors on all decisions to be made on behalf of the group.
- Are responsible for planning, conducting and evaluating activities under the guidance of the Sponsors.

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Teen Ministry

Ethics of Leadership

(Adapted from Empowered Leadership by Rev. Diane Venzera)

You will be an influence on those you serve/lead whether you choose to or not. As a representative of Unity we must seek to always be a loving, harmonious and positive influence

Model Appropriate Behavior

- Speak, act and behave as a spiritual leader
- Be mindful of your role ... what you do thunders so loudly I can't hear what you are saying
- Be mindful of your appearance: First impression are made in the first 8 minutes of contact
- Be fully present and prepared for class; arrive at least 20 minutes early
- Demonstrate responsibility by meeting deadlines,
- Exercise good judgment in your social conduct ... be careful of what you post on Facebook and other social media sites
- Be consistent: Demonstrate continuity to the attitudes you express

Live the Truth You Know

- Dedication to the principles of Truth As taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ
- Look to the indwelling Christ to guide, govern & prosper you
- Divine wisdom & judgment to guide you
- Constantly speak and affirm the highest vision of the Youth Ministry Program
- Demonstrate Truth and Integrity

Be Prayed Up

- Develop or deepen your commitment to prayer practice
- Consecrate yourself to Spirit
- Express Humility. Glorify God in all you do.

Work in Harmony With Ministry Leadership

- Be the Light; express Love and Harmony in all your relationships
- Work (Unity) with the leadership of your ministry, neighboring ministries and the region

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Teen Ministry

Leader & Sponsor Roles

(Source: Unity South Central Teen Ministry)

1. Your Role as Teacher:

- Prepare engaging spiritual lessons that provoke personal experience & thought
- Be fully present and prepared ahead of class time
- Speak, act and behave in a manner appropriate of spiritual adult

2. Your Role as Youth Advocate:

- Point out the needs of the youth to the congregation
- Constantly speak to the highest vision of the Youth Ministry program
- Speak, act and behave in a manner appropriate of spiritual adult

3. Your Role as Mentor to Teens

- Always see their highest potential and their Christ light
- Accept that you are their role model
- Coach them to stretch and grow
- Coach them to speak their mind without offending
- Coach them to remember to use their spiritual tools in life
- Coach them to reach out and communicate to their parents & adults
- Speak, act and behave in a manner appropriate of spiritual adult

4. Your Role as Mentor to Parents

- Accept that you are a guide to their understanding their teen
- Coach them to keep learning about their “child’s” development
- Coach them that they no longer have a “child” – but a teen with a mind, beliefs, consciousness, values, likes and dislikes of their own; and to accept and respect that
- Encourage them to never “give up” as a parent

5. You Report to the following:

- You are directly responsible to reporting to the Youth Director
- The Youth Director is directly responsible to reporting to the Minister
- Speak, act and behave in a manner appropriate of spiritual adult

6. Your Support System:

- Your Youth Director is your biggest advocate
- Your Minister
- The Regional Education Consultants
- Peers – network with other Unity Churches and Youth Volunteers
- Your personal relationship with God

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Teen Ministry

Sponsor's Role in Developing Leaders

Many youth leaders make the mistake of trying to be “all things to all people” thinking they must plan, coordinate, and carry out the YOU activities and projects themselves. This is not the case. ***As often as possible, the sponsor should encourage and help develop leaders within the group.*** The sponsor, who continues to “do it all,” will never experience the rewards of seeing students learn to do it themselves, and more than likely, will become the victim of “burnout.” Gradually, turn more and more leadership over to the youth. You can do this by assisting and coaching them about their responsibilities until the youth are completely in charge of their own activities and learning. However, the delegation process begins anew each year with the arrival of new students.

Did you know?

As an adult sponsor, you are in an ideal position to encourage all teens to develop as responsible individuals.

Help them realize:

- The more responsibility they take, the stronger and more capable they will feel
- As they take responsibility, they learn they have the power to shape their own life
- They should be responsible on a daily basis, not just once in a while
- They should talk with an involved adult if they feel too much is being expected of them
- Taking responsibility can be fun and will open new doors of opportunity

5 Phases of Mentoring Leadership

I Do It

Before delegating authority or responsibility, model how to effectively complete the task. This gives the youth an understanding of what is expected.

We Do It Together

Invite the YOUer to work along with you. This gives the youth experience and confidence.

You Do It, I Will Support

Know when it is time to “step aside” and allow the YOUer to solo. Ask him or her to lead, but be close by to offer support and encouragement. Let them know that they are in charge but that you are close by for support.

You Do It, I Will Move On

If we seriously want to transfer leadership, then this phase is a “must”. We must step out of the way and not allow our egos to prevent us from the beautiful experience of seeing that our YOUers can and will do a good job.

You Teach Someone Else

Time to give them wings! This is the most exciting phase of all, for it truly involves the extended involvement of more people teaching others. This phase is something you can help your new leaders learn by teaching them the above phases and allowing them to practice them with others.

Youth Ministry Program Staff

Teen Ministry

Six Ways to Contribute to the Success of a Teen Ministry Group

Provide Adequate Resources/Safe Space

- It is the leader's responsibility to make sure group members have the tools they need to succeed. Curriculum, supplies, etc.
- Create a safe space, where teens are both physically and emotionally safe.

Team-Building/Group Building

- Make sure those you lead are a single-minded team and not a group of individuals.

Accountability

- Follow through on projects and check in with those you lead
- Check in with those you must report to Youth Ministry Director
- Hold teens accountable for their actions/choices. Uphold agreements and follow through with consequences
- Keep accurate attendance records
- Uphold deadlines for paperwork, etc.

Honor Learning Styles & Individual Needs

- Disruptions are often caused by boredom. Honoring individual learning styles and needs results in better focus and less disruptions.

Improve Communication

- Never assume that because something is clear to you it is clear to others.
- Frequently solicit feedback to ensure that you are being clear.

Preparation

- Be sure to spend enough time preparing for and practicing the lesson material ahead of time.
- Spend time daily in prayer and meditation
- Remember to take time for yourself
- Pray before the Uniteens arrive.

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region Teen Ministry Policies

Types of Teen Ministry Events

Regional

- Hosted by the Regional Team. All of the chapters in the Region are invited.

Area-Wide Events (A.W.E.)

- Hosted by one or more Chapters. All Chapters in the Sub-Region are invited.

Community Events

- Hosted by one or more Chapters. Five or more chapters in a 3-hour driving radius are invited.

Chapter/Local Events

- Hosted by a local Chapter or Church. Five or less local Chapters/Churches are invited.

Who Can Attend?

Uniteens:

In order to attend a regional Unitreat or Area Wide Event, Uniteens must be in grades 6, 7, 8 or equivalent, with a minimum age of 11 and a maximum age of 14 on the first day of the event.

Uniteens must maintain a 50% attendance and have attended at least 3 Sundays in the 2 months prior to registration. Uniteens must also have 4 hours of service.

Y.O.U.:

In order to attend a regional YOU Rally, Retreat or Area Wide Event, YOUers must be in grades 9, 10, 11, 12 or equivalent, with a maximum age of 18. A 19 year old may only attend if they are still in high school – Consultant permission required. Youers must maintain 50% attendance in their chapter and have attended at least 12 meetings. They must also complete 12 hours of service.

Qualifications for Uniteens & YOUers

- Uniteens must be able to honor heart agreements, function in a group setting.
- Youers must be mature, responsible, self-disciplined teens, endorsed by sponsors, parents and minister.
- All Uniteens & YOUers MUST attend the entire weekend from check-in on Friday thru closing on Sunday.
- Youth with special needs requiring close, personal adult supervision must be accompanied by a parent or familiar adult who is not the primary adult responsible for the rest of the group. Youth Events Director reserves the right to request a doctor's permission for youth with high medical or emotional needs to ensure their safety.

Adult Leadership Requirements

- Adult chaperons can be the leaders of the group and/or other adults approved and screened by your ministry. Chaperons must be members of the church, be familiar with Unity principles and have a national criminal background check on file at your ministry.
- A minimum of one sponsor/adult who is at least 25 years old from your ministry must travel and stay on-site with your group for the entire event. It is highly recommended by the Great Lakes Region and Church Mutual Insurance Company that two adults accompany groups

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region Teen Ministry Policies

while traveling. (Be sure to check your church's insurance requirements regarding drivers and travel coverage.)

- Junior Sponsors age 21-24 may attend but may not be the lead chaperon for the chapter and may not drive to/from the event.
- Seat belts must be provided for & used by ALL occupants of cars and vans.
- Co-ed leadership is REQUESTED for co-ed groups. This helps with housing and provides co-ed support from your local ministry for your YOUers. Male leadership is especially needed.
- All adults MUST attend the entire weekend from check-in on Friday thru closing on Sunday.

Criminal Background Checks

For the safety of our youth and in compliance with the guideline of Unity Worldwide Ministries, a National Criminal Background Check must be held on file at the ministry office for all adults attending regional and national events.

Y.O.U. Candidates for Regional Officers

- Request the "What Do I Do" sheet for detailed information.
- All teens interested in running for regional office must submit a completed Officer Candidate form to the Youth Events Director postmarked by May 1st. Applicants for Regional Office must be present at the time of nomination at the Official Regional Rally business meeting.
- Applicants must be:
 - ✧ 16 to 18 years of age when installed in office.
 - ✧ If application will be in college, they must be able to attend a YOU chapter meeting twice a month.

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 seat belts mandatory? Yes! Do not put more people in a vehicle than you have seat belts and let everyone know that the vehicle does not move until all seat belts are fastened and being worn.

Teen Ministry Events

Goals for Overnight Experiences

Goal for Overnights

This handout will assist you in recognizing the fulfillment of the GOALS of the Uniteen / YOU programs in preparing teens to attend Regional, National and International YOU Events and be a spiritually mature representative of your church or center.

Why have all these plans & schedules for an overnight?

The primary focus of the Unity Youth Ministry program is to offer the youth an experience with a spiritual focus. Attendance at a Uniteen or YOU Regional event is no exception. All activities are designed to create a balance of spiritual study, prayer, service and social interaction. There exists the expectation that teens and adults in attendance will practice principle in their daily experiences.

The Uniteen or YOU Overnight is a building block to the experiences the teens will have at a Regional Uniteen Retreat or YOU Rally. Preparing the youth and adult knowledge base regarding guidelines, traditions and behavior expectations sets the tone for our youth to be fully prepared to grow into the spiritual leaders they will become in the future.

As a Uniteen, this is the first opportunity for a Spiritual Retreat without the supervision of their parents. Some teens may not yet have had the courage to attend an overnight at a friend's home. We as adults have a responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment for the most introverted youth. They already feel welcome and accepted in the classroom, it is critical that a sense of safety and acceptance is carried into the overnight experience.

A general recommendation is for a new YOUer or adult Chaperone or Sponsor to attend a two day weekend event in the Region as a first YOU Rally experience. A time of learning our traditions and understanding the flow of the event is normal. A "Rally Buddy" is advised to be assigned to the new person to be their guide and mentor throughout the weekend. It is important to review the Trust Agreements and expectations prior to the weekend event as this builds a sense of comfort in the new persons experience and they will certainly enjoy themselves more and not feel as though they are an outsider in any way.

Inviting the teen's friends:

Sunday class time is open to anyone. For special social events in which friends have been openly invited, the teen's parent must approve of any of their teen's friends that attend. In addition, a Registration Form and Medical Release with parent contact information are required to arrive with the friend in case of a need to contact parents.

Attendance on Sundays:

Regional events are open to all "Active Uniteens; YOUer's and their Leaders / Sponsors". In regard to Sunday attendance, this means that teens must attend class sessions. Approximately half of the year should be attended, with spiritual discernment used for exceptions in attendance.

Teen Ministry Events

Group Agreements

Part of what makes a group is becoming conscious of “being” a group. Creating agreements helps to create this consciousness and gives us guidelines on how we will treat one another ... and affirm one another.

The Heart Agreement

Below is a “SAMPLE” group agreement. Groups should be allowed to brainstorm their own Heart Agreement.

The leader/facilitator will need to guide them so that their list includes the basic elements of trust and respect listed below. As a leader you may include agreements that are important to you for the group and any agreements you feel necessary to maintain church policy.

Once the list is complete, each member of the group/class should sign the it, indicating their willingness to commit to the agreement.

Heart Agreement Essentials

1. Confidentiality. What is said here stays here (unless a the group member is in immediate danger. Group leader needs to inform group of their responsibility. If something is said that indicates a youth may be in danger or a crime is being committed it is the leader’s responsibility to report this.
2. No Put Downs. (Many groups include that a put down needs to be remedied by saying two nice things to the person offended – called “Put Ups”)
3. Respect Self
4. Respect Others
5. Respect Our Room
6. No cross-talk/Interruptions or causing a distraction when someone else is speaking
7. No kicking, pushing or hitting
8. Respect personal space
9. Participate.
10. Right to pass. During check-ins, heart talks or discussions each person has the right to pass. This does however does not release them from the responsibility to participate.

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

Please contact the regional consultant for complete information, guidelines, policies and procedures prior to organizing any details of the event.

All events are to be discussed with and approved in writing by both the host Minister and the Regional Youth Events Director prior to inviting other churches or making any commitments to facilities or resource persons. Written approval is obtained by completing the GLURC Minister/Ministry Approval Agreement form and the GLURC Event Notification form.

Purpose of Hosting An Event

The purpose for hosting any event is to provide spiritual, social, service, and skill learning opportunities for your church's youth and other Unity church's youth in your area. It is also an opportunity for the host Church to develop stronger youth leadership skills and youth /adult team partnerships.

Financial Responsibilities of Hosting an Event:

This host ministry guarantees payment of all financial responsibilities fees, in the event any of the financial obligations are not paid in full. Any profits generated from an Area-Wide or Community event will be returned to the Regional Treasury. The Regional Treasury supports events for all youth in the region.

Insurance Responsibilities of Hosting an Event:

The hosting church is responsible for the insurance needs of the event. For events hosted off-site, a certificate of insurance may be required by the facility. Churches should check their current insurance coverage and determine if they are adequately insured.

NOTE: Any exceptions to any GLURC Regional Policy must be approved through the Regional Youth Events Director and discussed with the Education Liaison on the GLURC Board by the Regional Youth Events Director.

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

Event Request Paperwork

Chapters wishing to host an Area-Wide or Community-Wide Event must request an Event Notification Form and Ministry Approval Agreement. Upon receipt of the signed forms, the Regional Youth Events Director will send a complete event packet and place your event on the regional calendar.

Get Church Approval of all plans and dates

Get approval from your church for all of your plans and proposed dates. Keep the Youth Director and church staff informed throughout the planning process.

Determine Insurance Needs

The hosting church must verify insurance coverage for hosting such an event and provide any necessary documents to the facility. You may need to add a rider to your church coverage and the cost can be added to your event budget. If your event will be held at a camp or retreat center, they may require a Certificate of Insurance.

What is our Purpose?

Clarify with your group, what is the purpose of this event. Setting the intention is very important. Example: "The purpose for hosting a Area-Wide event is to provide spiritual, social and educational learning experiences for our chapter and other chapters in the Sub-Region."

Create a Mission Statement

Example from Evanston: "Evanston Chapter commits to each other to create a warm and spiritual environment in which we love and grow with perfect prosperity."

Y.O.U. Commitment Agreement

Create a commitment agreement with all involved.

Example:

- "I _____ agree to attend all planning meetings, be present in mind, body and spirit at all meetings.
- I agree to meet all deadlines for all of my committee work. I am responsible for finding out when the meetings are scheduled. If unable to attend, I will call a sponsor at least one day in advance of a scheduled meeting.
- As a service to our Sub-Region, our chapter and the Unity movement, I acknowledge that I am part of a sacred work. In loving service, (Name & Date)

Choose your Theme-Topic

Select a Theme for your event. All of your family material and activities should relate to this theme.

Set location of event, determine cost of site

Determine where your event will be held. Will it be held at a camp, retreat center or at the church?

Create A Time-line

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

Create a time-line for the tasks that need to be completed. Be sure to determine who will be responsible for each task and when it is due.

Event Contact Person

Designate the contact person who will communicate with the Regional Youth Events Director on a regular basis with information on the progress of event. When complete, send a schedule of event activities and a copy of the Family Material.

Event Registrar/ Treasurer

Designate the adult who will handle registration forms and fees. This person will be responsible for submitting the financial report to the Regional Consultant following the event. Teens should not handle registrations and fees.

Registration Fee

The registration fee should be based on determined costs of the event. Area-wide events are not for profit. Therefore, you need to take into account the cost of the site along with projected expenses. Please use good judgment in determining expenses. You want to make the area-wide event affordable for as many to come as possible. Area-Wide and Community Events are not a competition to present a bigger or better event than the other Chapters. It's about consciousness and quality.

Submit event details to Youth Events Director 10 weeks prior to event

- Theme; speaker(s) if applicable
- Location of event (including city and state) along with a map
- Time/Date event begins and ends
- Emergency contact telephone number for parents to contact teens
- Name of person handling registrations and address of where to send registration forms
- Registration Fee
- Who the Chapter registration check should be made out to
- Registration due date (postmarked 4 weeks before event.)
- The final date you will accept registrations
- The deadline for cancellations in which you will give a reimbursement
- List of items that YOUers should pack
- The contact person and phone number if any chapters have questions?

Registration Process

The Regional Youth Events Director will mail out a registration packet to the chapters in the sub-region or the packets may be sent by email. This should go out to the chapters 6 – 8 weeks in advance of the event. Deadline for mailing registration back to you should be 3 to 4 weeks, whichever you feel most comfortable with.

The Regional Youth Events Director will provide the hosting church with current required registration forms and will assist the ministry in electronically mailing registration forms to chapters in the sub-

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

region. Electronic forms will also be hosted on the Regional website.

Registration packets should be sent out 6-8 weeks in advance of the deadline. The deadline should be set for 3-4 weeks prior to the event. (Check with the off-site facility to determine when they need a final count. This may affect your deadline)

The official contact for the event must supply the Regional Youth Events Director with a copy of the Chapter Registration forms as they are received.

Create a Schedule for the Event with Event Theme and daily themes

- What activities will you have, workshops, speakers, joy songs, vespers, decorations, props.
- Contact Regional Youth Events Director for sample copies of schedule, script, family material format, and Tranquility sheets for family groups and housing)

Create Family Material

Includes spiritual material keeping the chosen theme, using Unity principles, Bible verses and Affirmations. Family Material should be mailed to family co-facilitators three weeks prior to event. If all family co-facilitators are from your chapter, then that won't be necessary. Please make sure you have two adults in each family – this is not an option – this is policy.

Create T-shirt Design obtain Manufacturer (optional)

If you are going to have a t-shirt (this means to do not have to have one) the company the region has used is from the Oak Park Illinois. His name is Zen and you may contact him at: ZenonPro@aol.com. Submitting artwork and T-shirt count as early as possible will help to defray the costs.

Registration Process

- Handling the incoming paperwork and money should be done either by a sponsor or supervised by a sponsor. Do Not have a YOUer handle this process alone. As registrations come in, create a log which shows: (1) Chapter Name (2) Total number attending (3) All forms submitted Yes/No (4) Check amount (5) Check number. Balance your list against your checks.
- Upon Receipt of Registrations from Chapters:
 - ✧ Submit a copy of the Chapter Form for each Chapter to the Regional Youth Events Director
 - ✧ Go over medical release forms and note anyone that may be on medication or any medical information you need to be aware of.
 - ✧ Note any dietary restrictions and report these to the camp or those preparing food
- Create family groups and assign Family Facilitators.
- Create housing with sponsor supervision

Head Sponsors

- Do you want to have a Youth Support Team?

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

- Assign who will do Joy Songs, Meal Grace, Vespers, God Squad
- Assign sponsor opportunities or you may have sponsors sign up for duties at the beginning of the event
- Prepare a detailed Script for the event for the presenters to follow which starts with the time event begins, what is to be said and also what announcements need to be made. (Sample may be obtained from Consultant)
- Do a practice presentation with all presenters, which includes anyone who is doing a workshop or a talk. This is every important. Remember presentations are 90% perspiration and 10% inspiration.
- Prepare for a Family Leader Meeting and Sponsor Meeting to be held before event starts.

Other Considerations

- Work with site regarding food and menu keeping vegetarians in mind
- Determine boundaries of site and create maps/posters
- Dance?? (Optional)
 - ✧ If you have a dance, the music must be appropriate. Please use a variety of music that everyone attending can relate to. Assignment of Chuck & Myrt (guidelines for dance which consist of those Heart Agreements that pertain to the dance.
- Create an Opening and Closing for the event (based on event theme). Present to the group your theme, what it means, how it relates to Unity principle. Your theme and family material should all tie together.
- Free-time
 - ✧ Do you want to have optional activities for free time? Please allow two hours for this.
- Name Tags for everyone showing their housing and family group
- Create Family Bags
- Make copies of schedule for everyone attending
- Walkie-Talkies
 - ✧ Depending on the size of the site, you may need walkies for checking in with Leaders and Head Sponsors or event leaders may use cell phones to contact each other.

Wellness Person and Medical Kit

- Overnight events should have a first-aid trained adult present. A wellness person such as a Rieke Practitioner is also recommended.
- A first aid kit should be readily available at the event. Include ear plugs for those people that have trouble sleeping
- Talk with the site on what medical assistance they have available or require
- Determine nearest medical facility, directions and the phone number
- All prescription and over-the-counter medications, with the exception of inhalers and epi-pens must be turned in to the wellness person at the start of the event or safely secured by the Sponsor throughout the event

Teen Ministry Events

Great Lakes Region: How to Host an Event

- A medical log must be kept by the wellness person; who indicates date, name, situation and action taken on any person that comes to wellness. This includes any medicine that was brought by a YOUer, held by the wellness person and taken by the YOUer.

Incident Log

An incident log must be kept that covers any problems that may come up during the event (broken Heart Agreements). It needs to show the date, persons involved, what was the incident, and the action taken. Make sure all details are included. Keeping this log is a MUST HAVE!! (A form will be included with your Event Packet)

- Sponsors & YOU Officer team hosting event need to have a procedure in place in the event that there are any broken heart agreements.
- Any report of a broken heart agreement needs to be brought to the attention of the hosting chapter, the YOUer, the sponsors of the YOUer involved, and the regional team in attendance.
- Depending on the situation, there may be a need to send the YOUer home.
- Any broken heart agreements should be brought to the attention of the Parents by the sponsor.
- All incidents must be reported to the Regional Consultant. Again, depending on the situation, the YOUer may not be able to attend the next regional event.

Review of Heart Agreements

When the Heart Agreements are being presented to the group at the opening, the presentation should be with respect and dignity. Never should the Heart Agreements be presented with a joking or humorous overtone. These are to be taken seriously. The Heart Agreements presented at the dance can be done with humor as long as it is in good taste. (These agreements pertain only to the dance)

Closing

Be sure to acknowledge those who helped make the event possible at your closing.

After the Event

- Incident Reports must be submitted to the Regional Consultant immediately following the event
- A financial report must be submitted to the Regional Consultant within two weeks following the event showing income and expenses. Proceeds after all financial obligations are met must be turned in to the Regional YOU Treasury
- Send Thank You Notes to all those who assisted your chapter in hosting the event; i.e. church staff, church board, family facilitators, etc.

Lesson Structure

The Living Curriculum Philosophy

The Living Curriculum “is a philosophy, a process and a program of spiritual support to assist children, teens, families and the church community.”

It seeks to draw the lesson from the student through experiences, stories and creative expression. Through the living curriculum approach lessons are created that will relate to real issues in a person’s life and through a process of questions & discussions, helps them to connect with God and their indwelling Christ spirit.

A Living Curriculum

1. Lives in the question
2. Uses the vehicle of story and/or experience
3. Is issue based
4. Is engaging
5. Is an adventure
6. Elicits creativity
7. Involves everyone
8. Always has debriefing

Unity Worldwide Ministries Educational Philosophy

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

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

- Identify which issue, theme, or need is currently active in your group’s lives.
- Choose a story, movie passage, song, Bible story, or experiential activity that will introduce the issue/theme and help the participants connect to it.
- Find a method to explore the issue or theme in order to make it relevant:
- Use open-ended questions, worded to avoid yes/no answers, to progress from safe, “out there” answers to more internal “in here” answers. [See Discussion Question Guide Below
- Choose an open-ended activity to awaken the story within, for example: art activities, music, movement, games, journaling etc. Expressing spirituality is a multi-sensory experience.
- Allow time for participants to share, if they choose, what the experience awakened in them. Encourage action related to the story.

Issue Based Lessons

“Living Curriculum is 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.” ~ *Unity Worldwide Ministries, Youth and Family Ministry Guide*

Lesson Structure

The Living Curriculum Components

Issues in Stories

- Our lessons are based on issue because real life has issues.
- We use stories that help our children/teens figure out how to make their way in life, move into life with grounding principles are their foundation. This gives them insight into how to step into life in a more powerful way.
- The stories help us find common ground for our issues.
- The tension in the story is about real life.
- Use the Bible to illustrate modern issues from our daily lives.
- The stories are our mythology and contain universal wisdom.
- You are every character in the story.

The Intention

- Defines the intention of the lesson, for example: The intention is to know; to understand, to explore, etc...
- Includes universal principles; Bible or sacred quotes; affirmation statements
- All parts of the lesson reflect and reinforce the issue and intention to be explored.

Sacred Circle

- This is the transition between arrival and moving into the lesson experience. It helps to create community and belonging and includes a variety of activities.

The Story

- What story, movie passage or experiential activity are you using to introduce the issue or theme and help the children create a connection to it? Any lesson connects better when the participants can have a common experience or see themselves in the story. Then, the discussion is more apt to stay focused on what they have shared together.

The Questioning Strategy

- This is where we use the questioning strategy. We are encouraging the children to explore this issue or theme in order to make it relevant to their lives.

The Creative Experience

- What methods are you using to allow the children to express the parts of the story that have meaning to them? This needs to be an open-ended activity that will awaken the story in them, moving them from their heads to their hearts. Examples are: art activities, music, journaling,

The Closing

Allow time for the children to share what the lesson meant to them. Also encourage them to continue exploring the issue or theme on their own by asking them to take a particular action that is related to the story. Help them to make the lesson relevant to their lives.

Lesson Structure

Sacred Circle: Preschool

With young children, the adult leads and moves the time forward; children as helpers are guided in how to do their piece.

Transition to the Circle

- Because the younger children may be at activity centers, use a signal like a chime to signal that it is time to stop what they are doing and listen. Then sing them to the circle.
- Use a song to transition the children from the opening activities into the circle time. As you sing the song, look into the eyes of the children. Eye contact is important.
- While you are singing, have the circle helper set the circle. This might include: round felt cloth (the color can change for the season or for the power of the month), a candle, offering basket, hearts, Safe Keeping Chest, Wish You Well wand.

Affirm the Children

- I see the love of God shining from your eyes and I can feel the love beaming through your heart.
- Put your hand on your heart and feel the energy.

Safe Keeping Check

Tell the group that your responsibility is to keep them safe and their responsibility is to keep it that way.

- Invite the children to pick up a heart from the center cloth. Have them hold it in their hands while you explain that your responsibility to them is to keep them safe.
- Invite them to place their heart in the safe keeping chest letting them know that you will keep their hearts safe during the class time.

HeartMath: Shift & Shine

- Put your hand on your heart and feel it beating
- Now pretend to breath in and out through your heart
- Think of someone or something that makes you feel special.
- Allow the children to experience this feeling or about 10 seconds, increasing each week.

Prayer

- Invite the group to say what/who they want to pray for. Have the prayer helper start the prayer with, "I am grateful for _____."

Offering

- Let the offering helper lead the blessing. Make it short for the younger ones.

Closing

- Focus on the candle again. Pray: "God, make my life a little light within the world to glow. A little flame burning bright wherever I may go. Candle, candle burning bright, thank you for your loving and radiant light." Candle lighter then turns off candle as all affirm God's presence in our lives.

Lesson Structure

Sacred Circle: Elementary

In the elementary through Uniteen classes, the children are more able to do parts of the lesson. The use of Service Opportunity Cards helps them understand what the opportunities are. The adult is beginning to move into the background and just providing support and direction as needed.

Set Up the Circle

- Invite the Circle Set Up Angel to set up the sacred items for the circle.

Bell Ringer

- Rings the bell to signal transitions or to call for centering when needed.

Candle Lighter

- Turns on the light.

Connection Leader

Chooses from the following:

- My name is _____. I am _____. The class affirms the child by repeating the statement.
- My name is _____. My favorite _____ is.... Fill in the blank...

Safe Keeper (Teacher Role)

- Invites the children to select a wooden token or to write what they want to release on a paper heart. Teacher shares he/she is there to keep all safe. Children then places items in box.

Blessing Angel

- Invites the children to send a Wish You Well Blessing to all those here and not with us today.

Sacred Breath Leader

Leads the group in a centering activity:

- Breath Choices: DRAIN; BALLOON; PRETZEL....

Prayer Angel

- Invites everyone to place their prayer stick into the sand. Invite the rest of the children to do the same. Share the PRAYER FOR PROTECTION.

Love Offering Angel

- Leads the children in blessing the love offering and then passes the basket.

Celebration Leader

- Passes out the shakers and invites the children to share something they would like to celebrate.

Closing Affirmation Leader

- Shares the affirmation of the day. Teacher leads a discussion about what it might mean. Invite the children to commit to it for the week.

Lesson Structure

Sacred Circle: Teen

The YOUers are now able to facilitate their own circle experience. The adults remain in the background as support. They provide guidance only if needed. Invite the YOUers to select a role as they enter the room.

Set Up Circle

- Candle, Daily Word, Basket of Stars, Love Offering Basket

Music - Gathering

- Song/Joy Song

Opening Prayer

- Lead a prayer that include those in the circle and those who are not with us this morning.

Light Candle

- As the candle is lit, a reminder is given that the candle represents our inner Christ light.

Daily Word

- Read today's Daily Word. Invite teens to share any insights that might have come up.

Check-in (Use 1 of the following)

- Name and one word to tell us how you are feeling this morning.
- Highs & Lows

Attendance

- Take attendance

Announcements

- Share announcements and reminders of upcoming events.

Getting to Know You Activity

- Share your name and finish the sentence – “If you came to my house I would show you.....
- Use Ice Breakers if your group is new

Love Offering

- Invite the Love Offering Angel to lead the love offering blessing. Share that we are blessing the world with whatever we would like to see more of in the world. They can share one word or money.

Meditation

- Lead the group in a short meditation.

Closing Prayer

- Lead a closing prayer.

Lesson Structure

The Story

Selecting the Story

~ Unity Worldwide Ministries, *Youth and Family Ministry Guide*

- After identifying the issue, look for a story that illustrates the issue.
- Consider which story best presents the issue on an age-appropriate level.
- 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. 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.

We Use Stories Because Our Life is a Story

- Our lives are made up of stories. Some of us easily tell our stories and others hold them close, revealing little. But no matter how we choose to share them, the stories we tell help us to make sense of our world.
- Sometimes our life experiences can feel so difficult that our imaginations begin to shut down. We allow fear to be our guiding force and we can no longer envision ourselves any place other than where we currently appear to be. Change seems impossible.
- A story, as metaphor, provides us with a safe haven through which we “come to ourselves.” By speaking in terms of the symbols, characters and events of the story, we can teach ourselves about the issue without ever seeming to discuss the “topic.”
- Unlocking our imagination is one of the essential keys to regaining access to our amazing ability to create the life of our dreams. Join us as we explore the power of story and the art of imagination.

Decide How You Want to Tell the Story

- **Read it:** Either you or one of the children, *who is a strong reader* can share the story
- **Drama:** Drama, and/or re-enacting a story, is an effective way to involve the children in the actual story. They can be the characters and experience, first hand, what it might have been like to be those people. Make sure the children are familiar with the story and instead of reading the story, invite the children to retell the basic elements of the story in a way that they understand them. They do not have to stick to the details of the story but can use some of the metaphysical interpretation or deeper meaning of the story in their reenactment. If they need help getting started then begin by reading some of the lines of the story and then prompt them to continue with statements such as: Then what happened, How do you think they felt, What would you have done, etc. This will help them to gain a deeper understanding of it and how they can use the story's message in their everyday lives.

Lesson Structure

The Questioning Strategy

“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. You may think that using just the same four questions every week becomes very boring. Each can be worded in different ways.” Unity Worldwide Ministries, *Youth and Family Ministry Guide*

The Value in Questions

Source: <http://kmmwiki.wikispaces.com/Power+of+questions>

As facilitators we need to appreciate the role and power of questions because...

- Questions are very strong attractors in the chaos of ideas, they gather, focus, attract and energize the conversation.
- Only questions have the power to break our current mindsets, they set in motion the deep reflection needed to alter our beliefs.
- It is the place and the space ‘between not knowing and our desire to know’ where we are most attentive, self-aware and alive. Questions hold the key to this special area.
- Compelling and quality questions drive knowledge creation and expansion in a fundamental way. Knowledge emerges around good questions.
- Questions energize and glue our conversation, draw people into the circle to participate and gather diverse opinions.
- Questions keep the conversation moving forward, awaken dormant discourse and may be used to guide the subject back on course.

The Questioning Strategy

1. “What is Happening in the Story?”

By asking these questions we have a chance to hear what facts the listener actually picked up and which ones they missed. You want to focus the children on what actually happened in the story not their interpretation of it for now. We are looking for the facts.

Examples of possible questions:

- What happened first? Then what happened?
- What do we know about (a character, the location...)?
- Describe what was going on between...
- What else happened?

2. “What are the Characters Feeling or Experiencing?”

We begin to move out of the story bubble and begin to invite the children to think about what the characters might be feeling because of the experiences they are having.

Lesson Structure

The Questioning Strategy

Examples of possible questions:

- How do you think the disciples were feeling when the storm began to rock the boat?
- What do you think they wanted to do when they saw Jesus sleeping?

3. “How is This Happening in the World?”

This is a “bridging question.” It shifts the focus from the story to the present time. By doing so, the child begins to see how the story connects to life. The question is also impersonal. It is about someone else. Keep in mind that the younger the child the smaller their world.

Examples of possible questions:

- How do you see this happening in your friend’s life / your school / your community?
- How is this happening in the world right now?

4. “How is This Story Happening in Your Life”

As the story comes alive within each child, the facilitator will begin to sense children straining to talk about it in terms of their lives. This is when it is time to step out of the story world bubble and into the world. We use the following types of questions:

“How is this story an event in your life?”

With this question, a person begins to go beyond the story and considers applying a concept to what is happening to them. This step guides one to see themselves as part of the story.

Examples of possible questions:

- Tell me about a time you experienced a storm?
- How are you like...?
- Who do you identify with in the story? Why?
- When has something like this happened to you? Describe it.

5. “How Would You Like It To Be? Or How Else Could This Be?”

This final question involves encouraging the children and teens to go beyond how something shows up in the world or in their life. It asks them to consider ways in which something could be different. It helps them explore alternatives and possibilities. Then they can see that they have a choice – allow something to continue and do something about it.

Examples of possible questions:

- What would you have done in this situation?
- What power do you have to change things?
- How would you change the ending of this story? How else could this have turned out?

Lesson Structure

The Creative Experience

The creative experience immediately follows the story experience. Its purpose is to invite the children into a exploration of what the story and lesson meant to them personally. It is helpful to offer more than one creative experience choice per lesson.

A creative experience:

- Is open ended
- Allows the children individual expression
- Is directly connected to the lesson intention
- Takes into consideration the different learning styles of children
- Is age appropriate

Types of creative experiences

- Quiet and meditative
- Loud and active
- Art based
- Games/active
- Science based

Other points

- Some creative experiences are blended into the storytelling portion of the lesson,
- Creative experiences can be set up in stations around the room so the children can choose the activity they most resonate with.

Active Learning

It is quite simply learning by doing. It is an adventure; it is fun and interactive; it involves everyone even the observers; it is student based with the students making their own discoveries; it is process-oriented and the experience is evaluated through discussion. It is also relational because the students must interact with one another.

The Benefits

- Learning becomes an adventure with surprises.
- 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.

In order to help the students to get the most from their experience, you must help them interpret their experience. Active learning takes on power when we reflect on the experience.

During debriefing we ask:

- What just happened here?
- How can we learn from it?
- How will we be different because of it?

Lesson Structure

Types of Creative Experiences

Art Activities

There are many ways to use art as a creative experience. Some ideas from Joanne Ramseyer, MA, ATR, LCPC

- After reading a story, invite the students to choose the part of the story that had the most meaning to them and create an art piece around it.
- As a group, invite each person to illustrate a piece of the story using torn tissue paper and thinned glue. When complete, put the pieces together and retell the story.
- Invite them to create new illustrations for an old story.
- Read a story almost to the end and invite the students to create art pieces that tell different possible endings.
- Create a booklet in response to any story.
- Create masks or puppets in order to retell the story.
- Illustrate different emotions.
- Create a new environment for the characters.
- Invite the students to create an image of one of the teachings in the story.

Food Activities

What better way to help students recall stories and Spiritual principles than to connect them with food. How many of you are immediately transported back to a wonderful memory upon just the smell of certain foods. Using food and creativity helps make the lessons and principles real it is something the students enjoy doing.

Science Experiments

The use of science experiments helps to ground abstract principles in concrete learning.

Games

Use games to engage them in fun and to also offer a learning experience about what happened during the game.

Closing Circle

Gather all children together again in a closing circle.

Invite children to do any of the following:

- Share any creations from today.
- Share one thing they learned today.
- Say what they might do differently this week as a result of what they learned today.
- Repeat today's affirmation.
- Speak today's Bible scripture.
- Say the Affirmative Prayer for Protection or the Prayer of Faith
- Close with prayer of gratitude for something in the day or something in their lives: "I am grateful, God, for _____."

Unity Basics

5 Basic Principles

Unity's 5 Basic Principles

(Taken from the textbook for Unity Basics.)

- God is absolute good, everywhere present.
- Human beings have a spark of divinity within them, The Christ spirit within. Their very essence is of God, and therefore they are also inherently good.
- Human beings create their experiences by the activity of their thinking. Everything in the manifest realm has its beginning in thought.
- Prayer is creative thinking that heightens the connection with God-Mind and therefore brings forth wisdom, healing, prosperity, and everything good.
- Knowing and understanding the laws of life, also called Truth, are not enough. A person must also live the truth that he or she knows.

The 5 Principles adapted for children and teens:

(Taken from the Association of Unity Churches poster for youth.)

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

The 5 Principles adapted for adult learners:

(Taken from the Association of Unity Churches poster for adults.)

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

Unity Basics

12 Powers

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

For lessons on the 12 Powers, see: "A Celebration of our 12 Powers" Parts 1 & 2 by Rev. Diane Venzera

Unity Basics

Denials & Affirmations

Denials

With Denials, we deny the power of our fear based thoughts. We don't deny the condition, only the power we allowed it to have over us. (This is not to be confused with wishful thinking.)

“Denial is putting away of the mental error and an entering into conscious relaxation of both mind and body.” (Christian Healing, 53)

“Denial usually comes first. It sweeps out the debris and makes room for the new tenant that is brought into the mind by the affirmation. It would not be wise to eliminate the old thoughts unless you knew that there are higher and better ones to take their place.” (Prosperity, 178)

“We deny anything that is not true of spirit even though it may seem to be true from an earthly point of view.” (Your Hope of Glory, 36)

“A denial does not declare that the negative appearance does not exist; it declares that the negative appearance is powerless over us.” (Handbook of Positive Prayer, 22)

Affirmations:

An Affirmation is a statement of spiritual Truth, which may appear contrary to the physical evidence. Using the Law of Mind Action, we shift our energy and ultimately consciousness and experiences of the future. Change instantly occurs on the spiritual level, but it make take years to physically manifest.

Affirmations build up, while denials dissolve.

“An affirmation is a positive and orderly statement of Truth. By affirmation we claim and appropriate that which is ours.” (Keep a True Lent, 142)

“Prayer is not supplication or begging but a simple asking for that which we know is waiting for us at the hands of our Father and an affirmation of its existence.” (Jesus Christ Heals, 67)

“Each affirmation helps to build up a substantial, firm, unwavering state of mind, because it establishes Truth in consciousness.” (Keep a True Lent, 143)

“An affirmation is a statement of Truth; not a statement of the outer facts. It is a statement of the Truth within the situation.” (A New Way of Thinking, 125, 126)

Unity Basics

Prayer Defined

Prayer and meditation are the foundation of Unity teachings.

What Is Prayer?

- Conscious awareness & connection
- Open-ended
- Allowing the highest possibilities
- Aligning ourselves with universal principles
- Holding the “High Watch” for others
- Heart-felt and sincere
- Grateful and trusting

Affirmative Prayer

- State the need
- Become still - breathe and go to the heart
- Deny our belief in the condition.
- Attain a realization in consciousness/Affirm
- Give thanks in advance

Seven Necessary Conditions for True Prayer – Charles Fillmore

1. God is recognized as Father/Creator.
2. Oneness with God is acknowledged.
3. Prayer must be made within, in “the secret place.”
4. The door must be closed on all thoughts and interests of the outer world.
5. The one who prays must believe that he or she has received.
6. The Kingdom of God must be desired above all things and sought first.
7. The mind must let go of every unforgiving thought.

Unity Basics

Unity's Five-Step Prayer Method

1. RELAXATION

We relax our bodies and empty our mind and become open and receptive to Spirit.

Cultivate "a calm state of mind and a relaxed condition of body. It is said, 'You cannot pour into a vessel already full.' This is true of the individual whose mind and body are already preoccupied with some tense or strenuous state of mind or feeling." (The Silence, Ingraham. Pg. 17)

2. CONCENTRATION

We center our attention on an idea and if our mind wanders, bring it back to our center.

"Concentration is the centering of the attention on a particular idea. Concentration forms a mental loadstone in the mind to which thought substance rushes like iron filings to a magnet, bringing the forces, whether mental or physical to a common purpose. (The Revealing Word, Charles Fillmore. Pg. 39-40.) We reach a point of such concentrated intensity that another change takes place and we are drawn into another state of awareness."

3. MEDITATION

Once we are centered on a God idea, we turn our attention inward.

"Continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything; realizing the reality of the Absolute; a steady effort of the mind to know God; man's spiritual approach to God. The purpose of meditation is to expand the consciousness Christward; to bring into realization divine Truth; to be transformed in spirit, soul and body by the renewing of the mind." (The Revealing Word, Charles Fillmore. Pg. 131)

4. REALIZATION

We have faith deep within us that our prayers have been answered.

"The deep inner conviction and assurance of the fulfillment of an ideal...the dawning of Truth in the consciousness...It is the inner conviction that prayer has been answered, although there is as yet no outer manifestation." (The Revealing Word, Charles Fillmore. Pg. 164)

5. THANKSGIVING

Giving thanks in advance frees us to accept our good.

"Instead of supplication, prayer should be a jubilant thanksgiving. This method of prayer quickens the mind miraculously, and, like a mighty magnet, draws out the spiritual qualities that transform the whole man when they are given expression in mind, body and affairs". (Christian Healing, Charles Fillmore. Pg. 76)

Unity Basics

Guidelines for Heart Felt Prayer

1. The reason for prayer is more important than the method, length or time.
2. Prayer does not change God; it changes us – inside, which changes things outside.
3. Prayer won't change someone else, pray for their highest good in the situation only.
4. The most powerful form of prayer is when our thoughts, feelings and actions are in sync with our words.
5. Pray from a place of oneness - with faith and gratitude to open yourself to your highest good, (not necessarily what you want or expect.)

The most powerful form of prayer is when our thoughts, feelings and actions are in sync with our words.

Leading a Prayer

(Taken from the Association Handbook for Licensed Unity Teachers)

1. You are leading a prayer for others rather than just yourself. Don't turn your thoughts inward. Project them outward.
2. Speak clearly. You can be spiritual and still be articulate! To speak quietly and yet make yourself heard requires great care.
3. If you have an affirmation to be repeated, make it simple! Complicated statements will be fumbled, causing great confusion and distraction.
4. Repeat the affirmation twice. This allows people to become familiar with it before you ask them to repeat it with you. Be definite. Let the group know when you wish them to repeat with a clear direction of "Together".
5. Determine the length of the time you are allotting to your prayer time and keep to it.
6. Do not use the time of prayer to preach a sermon. Your words are simply to prepare people for a particular consciousness. Keep it brief and allow time for quiet reflection.
7. Be sure to close with an audible "Amen" or some suitable closing. Thus the group will know the silent time and prayer have concluded. Other wise it is an unpleasant shock to feel the shift in awareness as you go forward into your lesson while they are still absorbed in the silence.
8. Give a few moments for everyone to come back from the stillness of prayer. We have so many people in Unity with various levels of experience in prayer and meditation that some will take longer than others to be fully aware.
9. Acknowledge the power and strength gained in the time of prayer as you move into your next activity.

Unity Basics

Basic Unity Prayers

Prayer For Protection

(Motions used with young children)

The light of God surrounds me,
(arms reach up, then down to sides making a circle)

The love of God enfolds me,
(hands folded over heart)

The power of God protects me,
(show your strong arms)

The presence of God watches over me.
(point to eye with index finger)

Wherever I am, God is.
(pat top of head gently)

And all is well.
(give yourself another big hug)

(Written By James Dillet Freeman)

(Music located in Wings of Song page 82)

(Motions from "It's a Wonderful World" curricula)

The Prayer of Faith

(Is a series of affirmative statements.)

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.

(Written by Hannah More Kohaus)

(Music located in Wings of Song page 78)

Unity Basics

Basic Unity Prayers

The Lord's Prayer

Taken from Matthew 6:9-13 is a series of affirmative statements.

Our Father,

(We are all children of the same God,)

Who art in Heaven,

(Who lives in a higher understanding
of love and trust in the good of all life,)

Hallowed be thy name.

(Whole and perfect is what God is.)

Thy kingdom come,

(Restore Divine order,)

Thy will be done

(And Divine wisdom)

On earth

(Here in my mind)

As it is in heaven.

(As it is in the Divine Mind.)

Give us this day

(Remind us today)

Our daily bread

(All our needs are provided for)

And forgive us our debts

(And release our minds from error thought)

As we forgive our debtors

(As we hold no one in judgment)

And leave us not in temptation,

(And remember the power to choose,)

But deliver us from evil,

(Wisdom in place of error thinking,)

For Thine is the kingdom

(For God wisdom is whole)

And the power,

(And all powerful,)

And the glory, forever.

(And perfect, always.)

Amen.

(It is done.)

Unity Basics

Basic Unity Prayers

The Prayer To Our Father - (in the original Aramaic)

Abwûn

“Oh Thou, from whom the breath of life comes,

d’bwaschmâja

who fills all realms of sound, light and vibration.

Nethkâdasch schmach

May Your light be experienced in my utmost holiest.

Têtê malkuthach.

Your Heavenly Domain approaches.

Nehwê tzevjânach aikâna d’bwaschmâja af b’arha.

Let Your will come true - in the universe (all that vibrates)
just as on earth (that is material and dense).

Hawvlân lachma d’sûnkanân jaomâna.

Give us bread (understanding, assistance) for our daily need,

Waschboklân chaubên wachtahên aikâna

daf chnân schwoken l’chaijabên.

Detach the ropes of faults that bind us, (Karma)
like we let go the guilt of others.

Wela tachlân l’nesjuna

Let us not be lost in superficial things (materialism, common temptations),

ela patzân min bischa.

but let us be freed from that what keeps us off from our true purpose.

Metol dilachie malkutha wahaila wateschbuchta l’ahlâm almîn.

From You comes the all-working will, the lively strength to act,
the song that beautifies all and renews itself from age to age.

Amên.

Sealed in trust, faith and truth. (I confirm with my entire being)

Charles Fillmore Invocation

I AM NOW in the presence of pure being
and immersed in the holy spirit of life,
love and wisdom.

I acknowledge Thy presence and Thy power,
O blessed Spirit.

In Thy divine wisdom now erase my mortal limitations
and from Thy pure substance of love
bring into manifestation
my world according to Thy perfect law

~ Charles Fillmore

Unity Basics

Meditation Defined

“Meditation” is continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything; realizing the reality of the Absolute; a steady effort of the mind to know God; man’s spiritual approach to God.”
(*Revealing Word by Charles Fillmore, p. 131*).

“When beginning the practice of sitting in the silence, do not feel that you must go and sit with some other person. The presence of another personality is apt to distract the mind. Learn first how to commune alone with the Creator of the universe, who is all-companionship. When you are able to withdraw from the outside and be alone with Him, then sitting with others may be profitable to you and to them. (*H. Emilie Cady*)

Leading a Guided Meditation

(*Edited from the Association Handbook for Licensed Unity Teachers*)

1. In leading a guided meditation or group prayer, realize there may be various states of consciousness within the group, such as skepticism, blind faith, guilt, sadness, etc. You can shift that consciousness by centering into the Spirit of peace, which dissolves the negative.
2. Silently, beforehand, wrap them all in love. Bring them close to your heart and to the heart of God. They are hungry, even though some may not realize it, and they long to be fed. This is the mothering consciousness which finds a quick empathy.

PREPARATION:

In the beginning, you may wish to write a group meditation or jot down the central ideas you wish to convey.

RELAXATION:

Encourage the group to close their eyes and take a deep breath. You may wish to lead them through a brief relaxation experience. Choose a few words on relaxing, letting go, or on peace and quietness.

MEDITATION:

Share your meditation, speaking distinctly and slowly. You will lead a meditation in your own unique way – different from anyone else – yet incorporating the similar conditions or steps to produce the effective centering results.

Unity Basics

Keys to Effective Group Meditation

(By Trish Robinson; included in the Association Handbook for Licensed Unity Teachers)

- Please invite or suggest that I shut my eyes, place my feet flat on the floor, take a deep breath, etc – DO NOT TELL ME TO.
- If you tell me to take a deep breath, I appreciate it when you give me time to do this. Most people are telling me to take another deep breath when I haven't exhaled the first. DEEP is the key word. Allow time for the process.
- Please remember a meditation means MEDITATIVE. I have heard some very good talks that were preceded by: "We will now meditate". Too many words for a meditation.
- When you say "We'll have a moment of silence," please give me enough time to recognize that there HAS been a moment of silence. It's really a bummer to me when someone implies more than a moment and there's only been a couple of seconds. I would like at least 30 seconds when the word 'moment' is used.
- When you make a statement or an affirmation, and suggest or invite me to take it within or incorporate it into my being, PLEASE give me the time to do so. If you are not going to allow time for this, don't invite or suggest it.
- Please be aware of the PRONOUN you start with (I or You) and stick to it (unless you verbally give reason for the transition).
- Please do not DROP your voice so low that many of your words are not heard. Unless, of course, you want us to do our own thing, and if so, why not lead us into the silence and BE STILL?

Teaching Meditation

- When starting out, for yourself or in guiding another... encourage them to write out their meditation. Practice it a few times, very slowly. Write in (pause) where you would like to allow time for reflection. Practice is the only thing that builds confidence here.
- Then, when and if they are ready, encourage them to just write an outline, so their words are more spontaneous. Allow the individual to grow at their own pace in leading meditations.
- Remind them and yourself to "feel" and "see" the images they are creating with their words as vividly as possible. This helps those participating to also see and feel the meditation vividly as they will be inspired and encouraged by the words we speak to fully relax and trust in the process.

Unity Basics

Types of Meditation

Relaxation:

- Relaxation Drill: Invite them to relax. Start at the top of the head and work down to the feet, telling each muscle to relax.
- Deep Breathing: Have them breathe deeply and slowly and concentrate on their breathing – feeling the air go in and out.
- Breathe In God Life, Breathe Out Tension: Have them imagine this happening. Use colors in the visualization.

Centering Techniques:

- Candle: Everyone concentrates on a candle (or other visual focal point) at the center of the circle, then close their eyes and still imagine the candle in their mind.
- Chant: “I am”, “Om”, “I Am, God Is” or a short affirmation, etc. in a slow manner.
- Glowing in Light: have them imagine a ball of light at the center of their being – expand the light until their whole body feels as though it is glowing in light, hold this image or feeling.
- Inhale, Exhale thru the Solar Plexus: Have them feel themselves breathing in energy at the Solar Plexus from all directions and radiating energy out of the Solar Plexus as they breathe out.

Affirming & Feeling:

- Affirm and Describe Feeling: Speak statements of Truth as you are inspired to. Then describe the feelings related to it. (Example: “feel God’s love moving thru your heart and out into the world” after affirming “God is Love. Divine Love fills me.”)
- Concentrate On A Quality: Use one Divine quality (love, strength, light, joy, peace, etc.). Affirm it, have them feel it, describe how it moves through them, use it to radiate out and share with the world, etc. You may add a soft color to your light from the 12 Powers.

Imaginary Journeys:

- Take a trip in your mind: Go to a place that brings peace, upliftment and joy. Describe the scene; the colors, images, sounds, feelings, sunlight, temperature, everything you can in great detail to make it very vivid.
- You may want to invitee them to their favorite resting place: Allow for individual variations and suggest it may be their room, a comfortable chair, outside under a tree, at the water’s edge or a mountain top. Be sure to invite them back into the room before you close.

Fun Meditation Projects:

- Stand Back to Back: Feel the energy between you.
- Wheel: Lying on the floor, heads together at the center, bodies like spokes on a wheel.
- Music Meditation: Use instrumental music or drumming, chants, or a song with a message as a quiet time for reflection. Background music alone or with a guided meditation works well or focusing on the words of a song with a message can serve as a guided meditation.

Unity Basics

Types of Meditation

Imaging:

- Radiating Light: See light radiating out through you and into the room, touching others around you, filling the building, street, community, city, state, nation, country, and world.
- You may add a soft color to your light from the 12 Powers.
- Expanding Self: Feel your self and your personal energy, expand this energy 6" in all directions, then expand this energy 1 foot in all directions, then 3 feet, fill the room – into the ground, trees, wind, fill the earth and bless it – expand into the universe. Be sure to bring them back to themselves before you close.
- Grounding the Self: With your feet flat to the floor, feel your energy as a golden cord go down into the earth from one foot, wrap itself around the core of the earth and return up to the bottom of your other foot. Know that you are grounded and supported in the activity you will participate in this day. Feel the every flowing cycle of energy moving thru you and constantly flowing.

Projection Meditations:

- Sending Love: Imagine all the people you are grateful for (one by one, picturing their face) and send them your love from your heart, wrap them with your energy and blessing. You may add a soft color to your light from the 12 Powers.
- Radiate Light: To the world or special projects, activities and events.
- Forgiveness: Bring up an image of a person or situation you are having a challenge with, affirm forgiveness for the other person and yourself. Bless and release them. (Example: I forgive ___ and release them to their highest good.)
- Release Fear: Bring up an image of a situation that causes you fear or anxiety; affirm God is present in this situation (Unity Principle #1). There is no spot where God is not! Express gratitude for your new awareness and God's presence in your life. Feel completely your inner 12 powers called up to empower you in this area with confidence.
- Self Image: See yourself the way you "want" to be. Visualize yourself and Feel as though you are that way already. Fully notice how you look, act, what you are doing, saying and keep the faith. What you believe and hold onto is powerful. (Cancel all thoughts of doubt as they come up.)

Ending the Meditation:

- Return to your Outer Self: return your attention to this room, feel your body as it is supported by the chair / floor, breathe deeply, move your fingers and toes, open your eyes slowly, stretch your shoulders up and breathe deeply.
- Ways to Close
 - ✧ With a heart-felt prayer such as "Mother, Father, Everything God, we give thanks for our awareness of your presence..."
 - ✧ With a Group Recited Prayer or Song such as the "Prayer for Protection", "Lord's Prayer" or a "Yeah, God!"
 - ✧ Sing a centering song together. After a song end with a one line prayer (Example: And so it is, and so we let it be. Amen.)