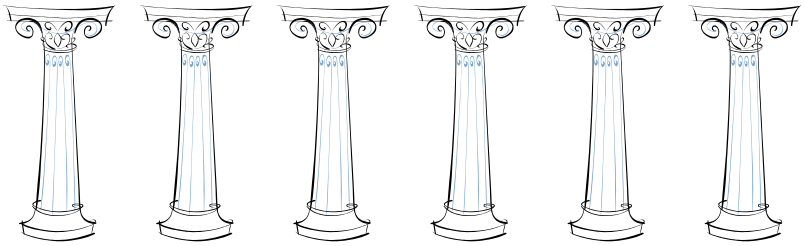
Six Pillars of Balanced Youth Ministry

One way to look at creating balanced youth ministry programming is to consider the **Six Pillars** and make sure they are represented throughout your work over the year. Revised over the years, the **Six Pillars** are Building Community, Social Action, Worship, Learning, Leadership and Congregational Involvement.



Building Community: The social aspect of youth programming, community building offers time to bond, share values, establish trust, generate intimacy and practice acceptance. It is the time we spend getting to know one another.

Social Action: One of the ways we, as Unitarian Universalists, express our faith in the world. This can take many forms, including service projects, witness events, advocacy campaigns, education, and community organizing. Doing social action as a youth group may be a single event during the year or longer-term engagement with certain issues.

Worship: An important and meaningful aspect of youth ministry, worship may take place as part of youth group gatherings, as non-traditional "circle worship," or with youth involvement in weekly Sunday services. Some youth groups plan an entire Sunday service for their congregation every year.

Learning: Learning happens during many youth group events, whether they are social action, leadership, worship and even social gatherings. Think about how to build spiritual exploration and development into activities. Curricula, discussions and skill-sharing sessions are also great opportunities for learning.

Leadership: Youth leadership takes many forms, from elected positions within a youth group and service on committees to taking on responsibility for individual projects or jobs. Making space for youth leadership gives youth the opportunity to learn to work together, facilitate, foster cooperation, and collaborate with others.

Congregational Involvement: Congregational involvement means having the opportunity to share one's gifts with the congregation, connect across generations and participate in the life of the congregation – not just the youth group.

For a more comprehensive model, see the Web of Youth Ministry at www.uua.org/youth