

**LREDA Fall Conference**  
**October 20, 2006; 1-4 p.m.**  
**Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth**  
**Small Group Report Back**

**Group #1**

Name of Recorder: Mary Darner

**Spiritual Needs**

*Questions:*

- 1) How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth in their congregations and districts to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out their faith in the world?
- 2) What is your role as a religious educator in spiritual development of youth?

*Brainstorm:*

1. Teen focused UU written materials
  - That articulates our faith
  - That gives them ideas about spiritual practice
2. Safe place
  - Youth –adult relationships
  - Like minded people
3. Staffing youth programs with paid youth ministers
  - Building awareness
  - Getting commitment from Congregation
4. More relevant youth curriculum
  - Reflects on their life situations:  
Divorce, blended families, cutting, suicide, dating, finding your place in the world, being true to yourself
5. Are partnered with social justice in congregation, committees
  - \*Integration in congregation in many ways, youth sources- get some training and support from worship and liturgy committee prior to doing a service

Role as a religious educator:

1. Give resources to youth advisors
2. Serve as a steady leader and advocate, believer, guide, mentor
3. Draw minister into youth advisor meetings - serves in pastoral care

**Involvement in Congregational Life**

*Questions:*

- 1) What is the best way to motivate youth to become actively involved in the life of the congregation outside of youth group or religious education classes?
- 2) How can congregational leaders create an opening and welcoming atmosphere in which youth would participate in the life of the congregation?
- 3) What is the role of the religious educator?

*Brainstorm:*

1. Connect youth interest with church need
  - a. Tech committee and website
  - b. Rummage sale- clothes area of interest to them- they take charge
  - c. Teen involvement in small group ministry of church
  - d. Have been invited to participate in all the church activities
  - e. Offer social justice activity with adults
    - ex. Habitat for Humanity- UU Indianapolis
  - f. Meet them where they are
  - g. Youth service
  - h. Participate in presentations on family stress
2. Inclusion and welcoming
  - a. Have worship that youth want to participate in
  - b. Provide nametags
  - c. Intentional meetings with church leaders- training about using youth and include youth in trainings

Role as a religious educator:

1. Bridge Builders
2. Broker of talent, skills, make opportunities by speaking with congregational leaders.  
Also serve as protector- to keep all roles appropriate

*Prioritization:*

- 1) Connect youth interest and talents with church needs and opportunities and INVITE their participation.

**Welcoming All Youth**

*Questions:*

- 1) As a predominantly white and heterosexual denomination how can congregations and religious educators support the healthy racial, gender, and sexual identity development of youth?

*Brainstorm:*

1. Recruit youth advisors representing diverse race, gender, and spiritual identity- provide role models
2. Promote OWL and offer parent OWL when teens go through OWL
- \*3. Provide an environment that is welcoming for all creates normality in diversity- dolls, books, stories, behaviors
  - At same time there has to be recognition of some special needs and responses to them
4. Create communities where we are allowed to make mistakes
5. Dilemma- tokenism occurs
  - Can we invite black youth, biracial youth into leadership? Or are those youth fatigued by being asked into these conversations?

6. Draw in youth of color from community- not UU to join with UU youth- unity program of First Universalist Minneapolis

\*7. Be open to having conversations with people who are upset over things that happen in church- related to race, gender, and sexual identity

A “laboratory of experience” that we can learn and grow from- process, process, process

*Prioritization:*

1) Be open to having conversations with people who get upset over things that happen in church- related to race, gender, sexual identity

A “laboratory of experience” and processing lots of it. We make mistakes. We take time to listen, care for one another, and understand one another and grow from our rough encounters with one another

2) Create an environment that is welcoming for all- normality in diversity

**Congregational Conversations**

*Questions:*

1) From the perspective of a religious educator what are the biggest obstacles to providing a quality youth ministry in your congregation?

2) What would you like to change in your congregation?

*Brainstorm:*

\*\*1. Money- and choices we make with our money

a. space

b. staff time

c. youth advisors

d. leaving youth and children on the fringe of congregation

e. better curriculum- flexible, responsive, and interact with passions and interests of youth

Upgrade LIFT

f. more time- youth and adults are too engaged in too many things- stretched too far

3. Out of Sync- youth get anti-racism/anti-oppression training and come back to their congregation that is not prepared, trained to do AR/AO work

\*\*4. Adults are frightened of youth

5. Get parents on board to give priority to spiritual development beginning at birth- in the home- as well as involvement in church activities

6. Be flexible in offerings to youth- give priority to building community

7. Think of youth as being part of us- equal treatment

8. Training resources that are local- make training for youth advisors one day event convenient to congregations- no more than 1-2 hour drive

9. Offer more youth-led services- monthly

10. Active ministerial support for youth programming

\*\*11. Adults are not more important than youth- live this principle

12. Give adults in congregation tools to work with youth

\*\*13. Support families to be “less is more” in terms of life activities so spiritual development can be nurtured in families lives

*Prioritization:*

- 1) Adults are not more important than youth- live this principle in our churches
- 2) Support family lifestyle which is lower activity- less is more in terms of number of activities
- 3) \$\$\$- and choices we make with money

**LREDA Fall Conference 2005**

*Questions:*

- 1) How would you amend these statements after hearing the results of the youth survey?
- 2) What new issues would you raise now?

*Brainstorm:*

Add: What’s holding us back?

Stress, Time

Strategy: Making youth programs a priority

- \*\*\*1. We need to look at the success of the OWL model to make sex ed so important in our congregation in designing and implementing youth programming
2. Reach out to other models in other churches/denominations
3. Multiple age levels- programming that builds to youth programming- getting children looking forward to youth program- being in it
4. Are there ways to get funding from outside resources that can be applied to youth programming
5. The congregation whole heartedly supports the youth program- catches the fever

## **Group #2**

Name of Recorder: Jan Taddeo

### **Spiritual Needs**

#### *Questions:*

- 1) How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth in their congregations and districts to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out their faith in the world?
- 2) What is your role as a religious educator in spiritual development of youth?

#### *Brainstorm:*

1. Involve youth in planning worship- for selves and congregation
2. Provide opportunities for Spirituality Development Cons, Social Justice Cons
3. Support youth in bringing district experiences back to congregation/youth group
4. Living out their faith after they've learned to articulate it- hands on, long-term experiences
5. Talking about what faith is, what faiths are out there
6. Sharing/challenging ideas in safe community
7. OWL- intimate model
8. Small group ministry models/curriculum
9. Opportunities to learn about UU history, faith, identity
10. Saying what you believe in
11. Ensuring that outreach activities are related to the church- make the connection
12. Opportunities to be fully integrated in the life of the congregation
13. More opportunities to be involved in larger continental activities  
e.g. UU-UNO, funding/resources
14. Interface with/Support Adult Advisors
15. -Paid Youth Ministry Staff (PYMS) joining LREDA
16. Professionally supported
17. Advocate for youth- with board, congregation, nationally
18. Pay attention- ensure someone is responsible for youth ministry
19. Identify what's missing and make it happen- empowerment, training

#### *Role of Religious Educator*

1. Interface with/support adult advisors
2. Advocate for professional youth ministry staff- pay professional expenses
3. Advocate for youth- with board, staff, committees, congregation
4. Pay attention- make sure someone is responsible for youth ministry
5. Identify what's missing and make sure it happens- empowerment, training, space

#### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Provide opportunities for youth to learn about UU history, faith, and identity.  
Develop ways to articulate what you do believe.
- 2) Involve youth in planning worship for selves and for the congregation
- (Tie) 3) Opportunities to be fully integrated in the life of the congregation

- 4) Incorporate small group ministry/covenant group models- create more intimate spaces/conversations

### **Involvement in Congregational Life**

#### *Questions:*

- 1) What is the best way to motivate youth to become actively involved in the life of the congregation outside of youth group or religious education classes?
- 2) How can congregational leaders create an opening and welcoming atmosphere in which youth would participate in the life of the congregation?
- 3) What is the role of the religious educator?

#### *Brainstorm:*

1. Traditions- create-maintain-still useful/meaningful to present (youth service)
2. Provide opportunities to learn what congregation does (worship services, committee fairs, etc)
3. YAC/YMC (understanding process of cong.)
4. Mission Workshops (allow for ownership)
5. Understanding different roles- greeter/usher/committee members/teachers
6. Personal invitations
7. Leaders speak to them (approach them) as they do other groups/members of the congregation
8. Match mentors/buddies to youth that join committees
9. Consider youth availability when setting meeting/worship times
10. Consider/invite/have place for youth at other congregational events

#### **Role of Religious Educator**

1. Be mindful of youth/be advocates for youth
2. Advocate for youth with committees/boards through education
3. Recognize constant change with group
4. Be in the know in order to advocate/educate
5. Be filter/gateway/communication agent

#### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Consider youth, invite youth, have a place for youth at congregational events
- 2) Provide mission workshops to create focus and specific objectives for the youth group that relate to the mission and strategic plan of the congregation
- 3) Be mindful of youth, advocate for youth to serve on committees, taskforces, boards- educate youth and adults to improve youth-adult relations and create a welcoming space for youth to serve equally

### **Welcoming All Youth**

#### *Questions:*

- 1) As a predominantly white and heterosexual denomination how can congregations and religious educators support the healthy racial, gender, and sexual identity development of youth?

*Brainstorm:*

1. Continue with AR/AO training across the board in the congregations, including ongoing welcoming congregation
2. Educate the congregation that we are not as far along in this area as we think we are
3. Model an affirming, welcoming experience through the youth group- if it exists
4. Congregations modeling for youth how to be truly welcoming
5. OWL-OWL-OWL, all 6 models
6. Incorporate AR/AO/welcoming congregation into New UU orientation programs- conduct 5 year “renewals”
7. Space to process events that challenges the healthy development of youth
8. Affinity groups/identity groups- for youth and/or parents and/or congregation
9. Pulpit-talk about issues openly from the pulpit
10. Talking about different identities even if no one is obviously part of a marginalized identity

*Prioritization:*

- 1) OWL(1-3)-OWL(4-6)-OWL(7-9)-OWL(10-12)-OWL(YA)-OWL(Adult)  
Offer all 6 modules of OWL and strongly encourage/motivate people at all ages to participate
- 2) Do what it takes so the congregation can model being an anti-racist/anti-oppressive/welcoming community. (Do AR/AO work in the congregation)
- 3) Talk about different identities even if no one is obviously part of a marginalized identity

**Congregational Conversations**

*Questions:*

- 1) From the perspective of a religious educator what are the biggest obstacles to providing a quality youth ministry in your congregation?
- 2) What would you like to change in your congregation?

*Brainstorm:*

Obstacles

1. Money- pay professional youth ministry staff fair wages/professional expenses
2. Busy-ness- church not a priority in lives of families/youth (soccer, drama, SAT classes, sports)
3. Continuity of adult leadership
4. Cultural differences- “fear” of youth, expectations
5. Resistance to change, new ways to approach issues
6. Resistance to professional leadership-youth completely separated/isolated from RE/congregation
7. Youth ministry isolated from congregation-perceived to be working well, but not connected to congregation
8. Not having long range plan, focus
9. Lack of congregational ownership of the youth program
10. Perceived as a program rather than a ministry

11. Challenging to do youth empowerment well/effectively - life long process, not sudden/age-based

*Changes*

1. Paid youth advisors/professional youth ministry staff
2. Youth involved in congregation as individuals not just group activities
3. Youth more denominationally involved/connected
4. Youth/families to shift from consumers to owners
5. Encourage/facilitate youth membership

*Prioritization:*

1) Obstacle:

Busy-ness: church is not a priority in the lives of families/youth

2) Need:

Money: Hire professional youth ministry staff, pay them fair wages, provide professional expenses (esp. to participate in LREDA)

3) Challenge:

To “do” youth empowerment well. Needs to be a life-long process that starts when children are young so that when they become teens they are prepared to take responsibility and ownership.

**LREDA Fall Conference 2005**

*Questions:*

- 1) How would you amend these statements after hearing the results of the youth survey?
- 2) What new issues would you raise now?

*Brainstorm:*

Add: What’s holding us back?

Meeting the spiritual needs of youth

Not welcoming- AR/AO/Welcoming Congregation issues

Add: What’s moving us forward?

Youth are looking for spiritual fulfillment

## **Group #3**

Name of Recorder: Tracy Sprowls-Jenks

### **Spiritual Needs**

#### *Questions:*

- 1) How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth in their congregations and districts to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out their faith in the world?
- 2) What is your role as a religious educator in spiritual development of youth?

#### *Brainstorm:*

1. Looking at youth group as only check-in time
2. Curriculum or structure for youth group
3. Content that equals "UUness"
4. Relationship with other people, not only youth - adults other than parents care
5. Opportunities for problem-solving, creativity
6. Youth are so busy! Meeting youth where they are - overscheduled lives, modeling that church is worth it
7. So many different needs; different responses needed. Really don't like to hang out.  
3 weeks- RE program  
1 week- groups meet together- planning, games, build community, rep to youth/adult committee
8. Youth do a worship service

#### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Youth are so busy! They and their parents are overscheduled. How do we meet them/model for them that church or spiritual life is important?

### **Involvement in Congregational Life**

#### *Questions:*

- 1) What is the best way to motivate youth to become actively involved in the life of the congregation outside of youth group or religious education classes?
- 2) How can congregational leaders create an opening and welcoming atmosphere in which youth would participate in the life of the congregation?
- 3) What is the role of the religious educator?

#### *Brainstorm:*

##### Motivating and Role of Congregational Leaders

1. Brochure with opportunities for youth
2. "YAC" to set ideas from youth
3. Give youth power to determine what they are doing
4. When they attend conference or training- nurturing them to share with congregation
5. Invite to lead worship
6. \*Building relationships
7. Some youth teaching
8. Serve on committees, board, REC

9. \*Invite over, over, and over again
10. Making sure involvement is not free labor
11. Send youth to leadership school

#### Role of Religious Educators

1. Ears and eyes open all the time to encourage adults to be inclusive
2. Help congregation “see” youth
3. Stir pot- larger vision of who we are
4. \*Pay attention to language- inclusive

#### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Pay attention to language- inclusivity
- 2) Building relationships (youth and congregational leaders)
- 3) Invite over, over, and over again

#### **Welcoming All Youth**

##### *Questions:*

- 1) As a predominantly white and heterosexual denomination how can congregations and religious educators support the healthy racial, gender, and sexual identity development of youth?

##### *Brainstorm:*

1. Ally! (2 gay youth harassed- youth group held a “hand holding” rally in park)
2. Our kids are more welcoming in our congregations than other non UU congregations.
3. Our kids our loved! Reinforce over and over again.
4. Building allies system
5. Ministering outside of congregation - addressing issues in society, Letter to editor
6. “Mix-it up” sponsored by SPCL (Southern Poverty Law Centers) bring into schools where are youth so as UU’s
7. Brochures, articles in lobby
8. Variety of art, plays- congregation as a place where these plays/art can have an open, supportive forum
9. Model for youth- working for justice
10. Invite community groups to meet in congregation and advertise it!
11. Support youth in social action work
12. Visibility Matters

##### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Visibility matters! Visibility creates safety, advertises affirmation of diversity  
Visibility is common thread on front page
- 2) Building allies systems

#### **LREDA Fall Conference 2005**

##### *Questions:*

- 1) How would you amend these statements after hearing the results of the youth survey?

2) What new issues would you raise now?

*Brainstorm:*

1. Awareness
2. Youth minister (need a)
3. Time and space
4. Overscheduled youth
5. Dedicated youth advisors/paid or unpaid (needed)
6. Lack of committed parents and youth
7. Traditions (+ and -)
8. Reliance on too narrow a board of resources
9. Getting enough people involved and to be resources
10. Lack of sufficient training for youth advisors, training new folks that is interesting and creative
11. Burnout (need lots of energy)
12. Youth advising as a spiritual discipline (need), finding the right people
13. Transportation

*Prioritization:*

- 1) Motivated adults/training  
People who see youth movement as tremendously important
- 2) Overscheduled youth and adults

**LREDA Fall Conference 2005**

*Questions:*

- 1) How would you amend these statements after hearing the results of the youth survey?
- 2) What new issues would you raise now?

*Brainstorm:*

1. All five of the points in “What’s moving us forward” are 100% congruent with this groups experience (except for 1 or 2)
2. Conversations have been a plus
3. New issue: Youth time/Over scheduling
4. Expectation of attending church
5. Tremendous improvement- relationships with adults
6. Parent advocates- feel connected - “paradigm shift”- good healthy relationships
7. \*Process of conversation has helped

## **Group #4**

### **Program Consultant/District Staff Group**

#### **Spiritual Needs**

##### *Questions:*

- 1) How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth in their congregations and districts to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out their faith in the world?
- 2) What is your role as a religious educator in spiritual development of youth?

##### *Brainstorm:*

1. Welcome them into community
2. Worship with them
3. Engage them in growing relationships
4. Open up discussion about the depth of community and the changing spiritual needs at different stages
5. What does it mean to all be UU
6. How deep is UUism
7. Need to develop a real category of ministry- youth ministry
8. Understanding the division we have created in youth empowerment not being entitlement

##### *Prioritization:*

- 1) Engage in growing relationships of deep respect
- 2) Provide diverse programs and worships and leadership opportunities on becoming, being, and staying UU
- 3) Real category of Ministry that is recognizing “youth ministry”

#### **Involvement in Congregational Life**

##### *Questions:*

- 1) What is the best way to motivate youth to become actively involved in the life of the congregation outside of youth group or religious education classes?
- 2) How can congregational leaders create an opening and welcoming atmosphere in which youth would participate in the life of the congregation?
- 3) What is the role of the religious educator?

##### *Brainstorm:*

1. Go to service once a month, welcomed into worship, youth friendly services
2. Coming of Age-milestone event
3. Give youth leadership responsibility in worship
4. Fostering relationships with particular adults
5. What does it take to run a church
6. Start younger-engage early on
7. Social justice- listen to their interests and all church
8. Soulful Sundown
9. Ask youth how they want to connect

10. Family systems
11. Open to work with youth- all ages- this is a commitment
12. Know their names
13. Small group ministry- even multi generational
14. Keep families together
15. Families in faith

*Prioritization:*

- 1) We are in genuine relationship with one another
- 2) Become multi-generational at all possible times
- 3) Provide diverse programs, worship, and leadership opportunities on becoming, being, and staying UU

## Friday – Group Feedback/Evaluation

### Process Plus

- Networking
- Good
- Move mountains!
- Consistent info is coming out in various conversations – means process is working
- Welcoming the late people

### Process Delta

- Be part of main LREDA program for more participants
- Unsure about overall process
- Missed doing the junior high piece
- Wanted to wrestle with definition of youth empowerment
- It felt rushed at the beginning

### General Feedback

- Have LREDA Large/LREDA Small, need LREDA Youth
- Many are youth and young adult coordinators, two things should intersect with Lifespan model, but still kind of “weird”
  - Why positions together, should we think about this?
- Lift up district gathering/what to expect
- Involve other denominations in this conversation, what can we learn from them
- Needs to have something done with ministers, not just LREDA
  - Need senior minister to support, core teachings on youth ministry

# **LREDA Fall Conference**

## **October 23, 2006**

### **Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth**

### **Whole Conference Q&A/Discussion**

**Present reports from LREDA Fall Conference 2005 and LREDA Fall Conference 2006 (Friday) discussions**

**Question to guide discussion: What issues regarding youth ministry would you add to the 2005 and 2006 reports?**

- **EMPOWERMENT VS. ENTITLEMENT:**
  - Accountability is a key component and can be achieved by one or two adults in the larger congregation knowing them by name. At a “subversive” and micro-cosmic level, they know they are known by name/being recognized and seen and therefore, become more accountable.
  - Move away from “youth empowerment” as it is too loaded a term – too much us and them happens with it. Change to “genuine relationship” – where we listen deeply, act out of our values; attempt to be the best we can be.
- **PROGRAMS OR MINISTRY:** Change from youth programming to youth ministry; change actions to match words (language).
- **POSITIVE OUTLOOK:** Stop looking at youth as a problem.
- **INTEGRATION:**
  - Integration into congregation; youth into leadership and control. Have a part in an all-inclusive full community for all ages; create connections in their communities and congregations.
  - Bring adults into the youth program; not necessarily a long-term commitment.
  - Some structured activities that bring high school youth and/or adults together. Limiting numbers of attendees; with more possibilities presented for the youth.
  - Make opportunities for interactions.
- **MINISTERIAL ENGAGEMENT:**
  - Is adult worship adult programming?
  - Annual meeting in minister’s office for conversations. Conversations with minister around the kitchen table.
  - Continuing education for ministers in youth ministry – CENTER program?
  - Perhaps draw from the Ministry With Youth Renaissance Module
  - Discussion about how much of the culture of the church is determined by the minister
  - **RECOMMENDATION:** Ministerial engagement and training as part of CENTER Program
- **YOUTH IN LEADERSHIP:**
  - Youth have to be responsible if they join a committee and come to meetings – can’t be just tokenism.

- Two-way effort to build/change the committee so that it will accommodate youth.
- Developing congregational leaders is key, and developing youth leaders especially – has to include multi-generational leadership.
- Suppose youth member brought into workshop committee (always send at least 2).
- Process: everyone speaks once before any person speaks a second time
- Key is convincing church leadership this is important. How much budget is there for leadership school? How often this gets cut early on in money crunch.
- Propose giving some of your professional development money to bolster leadership training, because we need more people to understand.
- Invite youth to “intern” on committees and board; assume teaching, not as responsible a position – less burdensome than being a committee member.
- YOUTH ADVISORS:
  - Training curriculum should be one day.
  - District list serves for youth advisors.
- PROFESSIONAL STAFF:
  - District/Regional Level
  - Needham, MA – two-year ministry intern with youth as part of portfolio; youth part of intern search/interview.
  - Churches combine budgets for shared paid youth position.
- CURRICULUM/TRAINING:
  - Decent age appropriate curriculum.
  - More training programs for youth leaders in the history of UUism and spiritual development; one day training; involve more people than weekend trainings.
  - Congregations need more education about youth.
  - Give adults ways to bridge youth resistance to doing curriculum.
  - Make curriculum have a technical component – multimedia
- PARENTS:
  - Address parents’ busyness
  - Parent support and education about importance of church for youth. Communication!
  - Empowering parents to value church (possibly year-round church)
- YOUTH GROUP MISSION STATEMENTS:
  - Youth mission statements in local groups need to be stressed more. Youth groups need more help to develop their statements in line with congregational mission.
- PROGRAMMING AND INVOLVEMENT:
  - Needs balance – leave choice to youth
  - Cool junior high room
  - Sleepovers
  - Gather with other churches to share programming
  - Smorgasbord of opportunities for youth; adults might enjoy different model also.

- RE as different from Academic school model – movies with discussion guide.
- Variety of ways for youth to become involved and connected with the life of the congregation in ways that are meaningful and particular to them; the same way we need to help adults connect.
- What youth are saying they need from church, adults say also.
- Outreach and recognition of gifts and making connection to congregational life is a personal benefit.
- Assume involvement and ask how they want to be involved.
- **SPIRITUAL NEEDS:**
  - Offer content – decent, age appropriate
  - Spiritual practice program
  - Ask youth what they want
  - Look out to other/wider UU world
  - Put the price of “what are you bringing back to “home”
  - Real problem with separateness
  - Start at a younger age making church a priority; connected to adult issues – difficult to say why church is a priority
  - Lift up stories of how youth live their values
  - The importance and prioritization of spiritual development be encouraged as early as possible and upon entering “youth”-hood that can be expressed in many areas of church life, not just YRUU.

**Questions to guide discussion: What do junior high youth (12-14) need? What is the role of the religious educator in ministry with this age range?**

- Six components for Jr. youth as well as Sr. youth
- **CONGREGATIONAL LEVEL:**
  - More programming at all levels (congregations, districts, and larger UU community) specific to middle school youth. Be more intentional about developing age-appropriate programming.
  - Some concurrent programs for junior and senior youth, like OWL, happens in Liz Jones’ church (San Diego).
  - One month Sunday evening, Jr. High Youth Group concurrent with Parent education program with food.
  - Rep. for Jr. youth on RE Council
  - Involve them in church life – greeters, ushers, auctioneer not as build-in baby sitters.
  - Lots of social action events
  - Relationships are key, extra-curricula/non-Sunday activities
  - Be greeters/users/nursery/kitchen to know church community
  - Better content in lessons
  - Have bridging ceremony as part of the church service, done on day of YRUU bridging out of YRUU, a more formal process.
  - Have middle school connection to high school in district events, church events – older youth mentoring, modeling in retreats.
  - UUSC – interest in learning human rights concepts and issues at local levels.

- Youth groups for elementary ages to help build community/commitment
- BEYOND THE CONGREGATION:
  - More programming at all levels (congregations, districts, and larger UU community) specific to middle school youth. Be more intentional about developing age-appropriate programming. Example, afternoon workshops and conferences at district/regional level, not overnight.
  - District CONS and programs support mostly small and mid-size congregations.
  - Regional and district annual gatherings; build a place for all age groups into program.
  - Cluster Events instead – i.e., Atlanta, W. VA
  - Annual Spring/Fall conference.
  - Small cluster groups for Jr. Highers – two programs per year, ½ day or 1 day programs; has spread to high school age - 6 components.
  - Have a taste of YRUU (join part of the CON) so it's not as intimidating
  - Someone at District level that is responsible for Jr. Youth issues.
  - Tim Murphy did junior high programming survey of districts/regions – “cool dude”
  - Lots of social action events
- LANGUAGE:
  - Ambiguous definition of “junior high”
  - Use middle school, 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> age range
  - Preferred senior and junior youth language; 9<sup>th</sup> floats, depending
- RESPONDING TO NEEDS:
  - Remember the community is the curriculum – respond to the needs of kids – if something isn't working, change it “play”. (example – kickball to keep the boys rested in order to keep them rested.)
  - We need a model of inclusiveness for the whole congregation. Educating adults in the congregation about what youth need.
  - Find a way to have a place to belong
- ADVISOR TRAINING:
  - Need specific training for junior high advisors. There is a developmental difference between junior and senior. Offered by Youth Office (continental level).
  - Consistent training from UUA and CUC of advisors and leaders; maintaining strong institutional memory.
- MENTORS/ADULTS WORKING WITH YOUTH:
  - Junior high mentors/mentored
  - Start teaming up adults and youth while they are still open to it in junior high – model and continue it in high school.
  - Development as teachers/counselors
  - In planning retreats that include junior high, middle school youth added to high school – adults need information on their role, how to's in shaping retreats with middle school youth.
  - Dynamic and dedicated advisors
- LEADERSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT:

- Program planned by professional leaders, especially ministers. Jr. Highers take roles, not do planning.
- Roles that have worth.
- Significant development differences in the age category (hard to transfer into district/cluster events) and need for a program designed for them to transition into leadership and development and adolescent growth. Keep it social to get them used to being in community.
- ENGAGEMENT:
  - Parents report that we lose children earlier @ 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade level.
  - Some congregations – strong programming and engagement. Problem is more high school youth.
  - Jr. Youth more enthusiastic than Sr. Youth.
- PARENTS: More parental backup.
- OWL AND COMING OF AGE:
  - Significant clustering of OWL and COA
  - Strong COA is fundamental to healthy youth groups!
  - OWL = bonding
  - COA requirements – participation in worship
- RESOURCES:
  - Good website for middle school youth on UUA website

**Question to guide discussion: What is LREDA's role in youth ministry?**

- YOUTH ADVISORS IN LREDA:
  - Role for youth advisors in LREDA
  - Advisors very diverse in skill, knowledge; training – RE professional role important
  - LREDA grants for youth advisors
- CONSULTATION PROCESS: LREDA as stakeholder. LREDA @ the Summit on Youth Ministry.
- PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT:
  - More youth information/emphasis at LREDA
  - Professional structures in youth ministry - money, organization
  - Have more people in roles as professional youth ministers.
  - Compensation for youth directors/advisors
- WORKING DIRECTLY WITH YOUTH:
  - Intentional/respectful communications between DRE's/MRE's and youth leaders
  - Level of professionalism and youth development knowledge – voice in what's happening with youth
  - LREDA address how to be allies with youth and allies with people who work with youth, like we are doing at this conference with racism and oppression. Places needs to be healed, more at ease with them, easier to work together.
- WORK WITH MINISTERS: We need to be in much better dialogue with ministers and seminaries so there is more collegiality among religious educators and ministers.
- OUTREACH: Go to congregations to encourage people to join LREDA

- LIFT UP SUCCESSES: Breakthrough congregation idea at GA that usually has some aspect of youth or RE; what if at LREDA fall con/GA workshop we started lifting up congregations that are at a certain level of youth ministry and wanted to break through, and got to a level of vibrant youth ministry, how do people breakthrough and make change?

**Question to guide discussion: What would LREDA need from the rest of the Association to better serve youth in our faith?**

- RECOGNITION: Major step for LREDA to recognize youth directors/coordinators to be part of their professional community, and part of LREDA role is to help them get more training, and help them to continue to ID as professionals. Support and promote MORE youth ministry coordinators. Part of Jan Taddeo's praxis with Meadville is youth ministry.
- YOUTH MINISTRY EDUCATION: Jan Taddeo took two seminary courses on youth ministry and she would like to see those kinds of classes from a UU perspective (theological foundations of youth ministry).

**Question to guide discussion: What do professional youth ministry coordinators need from LREDA or other religious educators?**

- RECOGNITION: To be seen as professionals. Fair compensation consultants allegedly tell people that youth coordinators should be at the same level as membership coordinators; needs to be seen as religious educator position.
- FAIR COMPENSATION: Educate congregations on how to be good stewards b/c as religious educators get credentialed, churches can't afford to get salaries they deserve. Better culture around money!
- MONEY/FUNDING:
  - Intern minister in Ottawa said what we need at the UUA is a curriculum as good as OWL on MONEY! Canadian program called "dreams and dollars" that does just that!
  - We need to work on building up our liberal religious communities, that are going to build their souls, and the money will come. Community is part of the answer; this is the home where they are getting what they need.
  - Don't be afraid to ask for money in a personal way.
  - A DRE that is a ½ time religious educator in mid-size congregation: the youth group is very successful and so they are looking to hire a part-time youth ministry coordinator.
- SUPPORT: Support in general from UUs and volunteers – being a member of a church means being a volunteer. Give money AND time. The youth who are most involved have parents who are really involved.