



Ballou Channing District
Consultation on Youth Ministry
Summary Report

November 18, 2006

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The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth District Information

Full name of district: Ballou Channing District

Date of district youth ministry gathering: Nov. 18th 2006

Type of gathering: Stand-alone event

Length of gathering: 7 hours

Participation:

Total number of participants: 25

Number of youth participants: 9

Number of adult participants: 16

Does your district have a Youth-Adult Committee/Youth Steering Committee/the equivalent? No

Is there a youth on your district's Board of Trustees? No

Do youth serve on any other district committees? No

Does your district have a youth coordinator/minister? Yes

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth The State of Youth Ministry in the District

Question: What do the survey and congregational input imply about the current state of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry in the district?

STRENGTHS

- Some paid staffing
- Having UU camps and conferences is helpful in sharing the larger UU world
- The smaller and more personal the better
- Geographically close
- Spontaneity of cons
- Frequency of cons

CHALLENGES/AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Having more fun to attract more youth
- It is shocking there is such lack of vision
- Lack of vision due to having spontaneous fun just to attract kids and less learning
- It's great that most congregations have youth groups, but it is getting youth to commit to being a part of the program that's a problem
- I feel that we should reform disc!
- Should identify when youth groups meet: during church, evening, or both (class/structure during church, youth group in evening)
- Need strong district events that support youth/adults going back to local level to lead, etc.
- Small churches and youth groups finding enough advisors to be active – network and share advisors for district events?
- Youth going to other UU churches
- Strategic inter-congregational connection
- more staffing
- assessment of history (no one knows how culture got to be this way)
- trainings
- hard to get congregations together
- more youth in leadership
- two island congregations
- more mentor opportunities
- bring board and youth together
- more folks at cons
- clear understanding of what a district's role is
- lack of knowledge about what can happen (little trading of info btw districts)

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Identifying Needs and Changes

INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure Need/Change #1: Youth Involved beyond “youth programming” – Reps on Boards (district and congregational), committees and leading services.

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Empowerment • Give youth a voice. • Enrich board and committee work • Enhance youth / adult relationships.

Infrastructure Need/Change #2: Establish Clusters within the District

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide larger groupings • Give experience with other youth • Share resources • Cost effective 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Contact congregations (youth advisors)	Sue Bollens and the YAC
2. Decide what they would do – have clearly defined programming ASAP	YAC – Youth and Youth Group Advisors
3. Do It!	

Infrastructure Need/Change #3: Reconstruction of DYSC / YAC with lots of youth leadership YAC to do consistent meetings / programming.

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep track of funds • Calendar dates for conferences • YRUU Reps from Steering Committee on DYSC / YAC • Communicating to other youth about conferences • Establishment of policies.
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RESOURCES

Resource Need/Change #1: Training, Networking and Support for Youth Advisors

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance Communication • Build Confidence and competence • Build Community and get more people involved.

NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Determine what type of training to offer.	

Resource Need/Change #2: Resource directory, including non-UU faiths.

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saves time and effort • Provides broader info and ideas • Easy to tap into
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Resource Need/Change #3: Money and Fundraising as activity or programming.

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide resources for events training, speakers, scholarships, travel. • Involvement-gets people participating, can be intergenerational. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Come up with idea or focus a. Identify your market – internal, external to your groups	
2. Dates and Details a. Planning b. Advertising	
3. Set up, execution and have fun.	

PROGRAMMING

Programming Need/Change #1: Programming development by youth, for youth.

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership in youth • Social skills in youth • More opportunities in the congregation for possible volunteer work and life lessons • Improve youth leadership in the congregations • Better results in other programming areas. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Identify and gather existing Youth Group leaders	District staff, board and youth leadership
2. Identify barriers to empowering youth	Youth and adult allies
3. Con on developing youth empowerment skills and put together an LDC	

Programming Need/Change #2: Love Restoration

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach others about Love: Nature, general love, human • Opening peoples eyes to other things • Better more peaceful way of living.

NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Make this subject of fall 2007 District Gathering	District Staff

Programming Need/Change #3: District Wide Social Justice projects

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More people will get involved in a social justice project. • Training youth • Empower youth • Impact more people (larger projects -> larger impact) • Shared resources • Congregation learn how to by being involved at district level. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Put together a group of social justice leaders	District board and staff
2. Develop an template for planning a social justice project	The social justice leaders
3. Look at existing social justice resources and coordinate with others	The social justice leaders and resources identified during planning.

TRAINING

Training Need/Change #1: Dance Party

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring tons of youth together. • Big Fun • Power in numbers • Leadership opportunities for those planning • Could be a fundraiser • Bonding / community building • Non structure • Ideal for outreach. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Have taskforce throw a dance party in the spring / end of year	BCD youth ministry task force.

Training Need/Change #2: Outreach / Talking about your Faith

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get new people involved in district • Increase interest/ability to verbalize what our faith is. • Being comfortable talking to other youth. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Have youth groups visit other groups to up interest in district.	Sue Bollens

2. Bring to share ideas at advisor conclave	Sue Bollens
3. Include in cons Wrap sessions	People planning next con.

Training Need/Change #3: Regularly Schedule Youth Office Trainings; especially Spirituality and Leadership.

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putting the R back in YRUU • Turnover will have a less negative impact • On going learning • Would Always have skilled leadership worships and leadership • Training can evolve year to year. 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Journaling – recording history – district level or local individual churches	DYSC and local youth leaders
2. Give responsibility of scheduling / organizing basic advisor, LDC, SDC trainings to BCD Consultant while there is no DYSC	Sue Bollens
3. Set up official way for churches to express need for advisor / youth trainings. Place request form on district website. BCD consultant mail to churches each year.	

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Youth Ministry

Working Definition

Unitarian Universalist youth ministry is a collaboration between youth and adults to create authentic, anti-racist, anti-oppressive,* multicultural, and intergenerational communities which empower and support:

- The spiritual and religious development of youth
- Mutual love, respect, and trust between and among youth and adults
- Relationship-based ministry and support among youth
- A youth-driven ministry of justice that calls all of us to live out our values in the world.

Like all ministry, ministry with youth is the responsibility of the whole congregation and the whole community.

“The great end in religious instruction...is not to make them see with our eyes, but to look inquiringly and steadily with their own.” – William Ellery Channing

* Anti-racist and anti-oppressive communities are ones in which individuals actively work against individual and institutional racism and oppression while striving for safe, welcoming, and radically inclusive communities. The language of “anti-“ is used to emphasize the prevalence of oppression in the world. It is our calling as people of faith to actively dismantle oppression in Unitarian Universalist communities and the world at-large.

Feedback:

- ⊕ ”Youth driven” – should all aspects of youth ministry be youth driven?
- ⊕ “Youth-driven ministry of justice” seems limiting. Why only a youth driven ministry of justice?
- ⊕ Need to be able to measure and rate effectiveness of our ministry. (youth, children, adult, family, etc.)
- ⊕ Youth ministry definition should include a statement that it includes multi-faceted opportunities to achieve different objectives
- ⊕ How about evolution instead of transformation? Transformation implies to me becoming something else or different
- ⊕ How about “spiritual growth and transformation” instead of “development?” development: real estate, economic; preconceived ideas of how things will go. Growth: like a garden, or a person! Life-living.
- ⊕ How about a UU driven ministry?
- ⊕ Translate final definition into non “UU-speak” that the average human can understand...
- ⊕ Looking at youth ministry, in context of a healthy lifespan UU ministry and faith / UU development
- ⊕ For a district that is predominately white, how will the learning/understanding happen around what does this mean to be an anti-racist/anti-oppressive/multicultural community
- ⊕ There are many/unlimited “anti-“ that could have been included. Seems exclusive to specifically mention these.
- ⊕ Safety. Nothing is said about the safety of youth.

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Youth Empowerment

Working Definition

A covenantal practice in which youth are recognized and affirmed as colleagues who are essential and vital to our faith community. A practice based on mutual respect and trust between youth and adults, youth and youth, as well as adults and adults. This practice encourages all to grow in a free and responsible way.

This is achieved by:

- A youth-adult partnership in all parts of decision making, including worship, resources and programming.
 - Talking directly, openly and honestly with love and respect in that relationship.
 - Mentoring relationships.
 - Youth coming together to strengthen confidence, build collective voice, and realize a more robust expression of themselves.
 - Recognizing youth ministry history as part of our collective history.
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What comes to mind when you think of “youth empowerment?”

- ⊕ I see empowerment as removing the blocks that keep people (youth) from accomplishing their full potential. Youth ministry empowerment must therefore focus on identifying what youth are capable of adding ministry wise – leading, caring, worship, etc... we have a very low bar right now. My hope is that you can learn from our adult small group ministry movement, just as the adult small group ministry has learned from youth ministry. Translation = higher commitment = make youth lead groups at higher level. = all youth graduate as trained small group ministry leaders.
- ⊕ Youth empowerment. When others try to get youth involved by giving them the choices and the ability to change without authority.
- ⊕ Youth having opportunities to grow into leadership.
- ⊕ Youth empowerment. Giving youth a voice. Giving youth respect. Giving youth rights and responsibilities.
- ⊕ A new hope for a better, brighter, future
- ⊕ Youth empowerment: UU jargon! Encouraging youth to lead and take charge.
- ⊕ Empowering youth to grow not only into themselves but into their role as a part of loving, accepting, and supporting communities. With that, being able to take the love, acceptance, and support into communities, that may need it.
- ⊕ Youth empowerment. A vision of a destination to which we (adults, congregation) work with youth to intimately (ultimately?) arrive a continuum or a ladder – a tool. Under different circumstances, youth will be ready to be empowered at different degrees (leader and delegation). The ultimate goal/destination is that as young adults, the youth are capable of independence.
- ⊕ Youth able to choose – vote – on things that concern them.

- ⊕ Rev. Deb Cayer minister in Sharon MA, has thoughtfully asked: “youth empowerment is fine, but youth empowerment for what?” Deb’s question has been running through my head ever since. If we’re empowering youth to build a more vibrant UUism - then I’m all for it!
- ⊕ Youth empowerment. The opportunity to make group decisions and act on those decisions in a responsible manner that respects the rights and values of group members and others.
- ⊕ Youth empowerment. Providing opportunities to express themselves openly. Full partners with each other and adults in programming and governance – neither having adults overpower and inappropriately direct youth decision-making nor have youth think they are entitled to do things.
- ⊕ Youth empowerment: providing an environment where youth feel they have a voice, can make things happen, be respected within safe boundaries agreed upon and support by interested adults.

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Process Schedule

Morning

9:00	Gathering
9:30	Opening Reading and Song
9:35	Facilitators Welcome
9:45	Participant Introductions
10:00	Covenant
10:15	Youth Ministry: A Common Understanding
10:25	Youth Survey Results and Congregational Conversations
11:30	Process Check
11:40	District Task Force

11:45 Lunch

Afternoon

12:45	Share implications that participants came up with during data presentation
1:00	Youth Ministry Definition – read out comments
1:15	Break/Setup
1:30	Round Robin Brainstorming – Needs and Next Steps
2:10	Break
2:20	Prioritize Needs/Next Steps (small groups)
2:40	Expand and Define Needs and Next Steps (small groups)
3:10	Discuss Needs and Next Steps, Resources (small groups)
3:30	Report Back from small groups
4:00	Wrapping Up and District Task Force Selection
4:15	Youth Empowerment
4:20	Evaluation
4:45	Closing