



Pacific Central District  
Consultation on Youth Ministry  
Summary Report

February 10, 2007

Oakland, CA

Facilitators: Tom Rylett and Tera Little

## **The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth District Information**

**Full name of district:** Pacific Central District

**Date of district youth ministry gathering:** February 10, 2007

**Type of gathering:** A stand-alone event

**Length of gathering:** 9:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

**Total number of participants:** 30

**Number of youth participants:** 12

**Number of adult participants:** 18

**Does your district have a Youth-Adult Committee/Youth Steering Committee/the equivalent?** Maybe. There is a YRUU Council, which does not consider district staff as a part.

**What positions/roles does it include?** Facilitator Chair, Energy Chair, CO Co Cos, Editor, RE Outreach, Board Member and Board Liaison, Adult Coordinator, etc.

**Is there a youth on your district's Board of Trustees?** Yes

**Do youth serve on any other district committees?** No.

**Does your district have a youth coordinator/minister?** No.

**What other staff support, if any, exists for youth ministry in the district?** None.

**Does your district regularly offer trainings (Leadership Development, Spirituality Development, Youth Advisor, Anti-Racism Analysis Development, Chaplain, Renaissance Modules)? If yes, which one(s)? How often?** Yes, usually one per year.

**Other exciting opportunities or initiatives in the district:**

We have developed programming to supplement YRUU. We have a Coming of Age program for 8-10 grades, that draws from congregations all over the district. It runs every other year and has been running for at least five cycles.

We have a grassroots movement called DYGGT (Dig it!), District Youth Groups Gathering Together, which promotes the gathering of congregational youth groups to share ideas, see other spaces and meet other youth in a non-conference setting. High School-only with a high ratio of advisors to youth (more of a leadership team strategy).

This is our second year of providing Middle School-specific programming at our District Assembly.

## **The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth State of Youth Ministry in the District Strengths and Growing Edges**

### **Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth**

#### What is important?

- PCD YRUU conferences
- Coming of Age
- Our Whole Lives
- Worship services
- Space for youth to 'own'
- Trips, weekends, overnights
- Congregations pay youth advisors, otherwise support youth advisors
- Family camp/WUUKY
- Supporting development of community
- Congregations welcoming, encouraging youth participation and what they do
- Opportunity for service
- Families supported when youth attend groups
- Small group ministry for parents

#### What we currently do

- Our Whole Lives
- Coming of Age
- Conferences
- Small group ministry
- Advisors help youth see their own strengths
- Acknowledge responsible behavior
- Treat youth as less-experienced, real people
- YRUU district activities
- DRE and youth advisors collaborate
- District UU Legislative Ministry
- Faithful Fools (street ministry in San Francisco) retreats
- Board shows up for youth-related events, intergenerational opportunities

#### What we need

- Youth budget
- On-site showers/full fridges/cupboards
- Family ministry
- Worship services that are livelier, "spiritual" moving, participatory, etc.
- Youth/adult interaction
- Youth representation on board/committees on ministry, etc.

- Leadership development
- Every youth group has a fabulous space!
- Smooth transitions between age groupings
- Integrates youth, mixes with other age groups

#### How could we contribute to spiritual needs of our youth?

- Spiritual retreats (theological exploration, experiential)
- Supporting current programming
- Have adults participate in partnership with youth
- District DRE comes to work with RE Committees
- Dichotomy between RE and YRUU
- Modeling to youth what they do to act on their beliefs
- Providing time for action and reflection - making it sacred
- Make a challenge for youth to meet
- Ministry with youth is strong - ministry TO youth is just getting started
- Youth groups should support vulnerability - no barriers
- Developing worship and ritual to provide opportunities for spiritual growth
- Define markers of spiritual development
- Ministers are not all trained in youth ministry
- “Yoke” youth ministry like circuit rider
- There isn’t a young adult group to transition to
- When we clump by age, not development, we miss opportunities
- Look at whole life OWL, variety for youth, small group ministry
- Include youth thoughts
- Youth involvement as worship associates
- Encourage conferences (Coming of Age helps)
- Share staff
- Youth empowerment - flexible adult advisors

#### **Priorities and Involvement**

What could motivate youth to become and remain actively involved?

- Youth PR
- Youth exposure to needs, no assumptions of what’s needed
  - Find out what youth want-ask them
- Congregational conversations needed to help make it happen
- Community service that’s intergenerational –Katrina?
- Modeling across ages, a college for youth
- Youth need a chance to make contributions, to make a difference and be of service, “helping feels good”
- There are external factors, such as resume building and input for college applications need to be considered
- Needs to be a purpose, vision leading to spiritual development

- Have outreach, become neighborhood center for transformation - multi-faith, after school for at risk youth, tutoring
- Giving people a chance to make a difference with resume building activities feeds in with mentoring, spiritual development
- Youth need to stand up for themselves and adults in the community need to stand for them as well
- Community needs to decide *why* youth are important
- Youth are capable with unique skills and strengths-they are not just a community to be served
- “Give them work that is real”
- Involved at a young age
- UU school-private and paid for by parents
- Eliminate time conflict congregation worship and youth group
- Professional youth worship associate
- Adult transformation to become more welcoming to the gifts youth bring
- Recruiting more than one youth for leadership roles on boards and committees, so they don’t feel so alone
- Organizational support to access district and national opportunities for youth
- More support from local congregation
- Youth encouragement/caring in intergenerational involvement
- Is crossover necessary?
- Cross-training for advisors; consistent, connected leadership
- Ability to switch roles while connecting with youth
- Clear core of UUism
- Offer more/any youth ministry
- Youth group at different time than service
- Community/worship/social action
- Strong youth only? They need more encouragement
- New youth diverted only to youth group
- Need to feel emotional connection to stay or else they will leave
- Need to show more options instead of baby-sitting and clean-up! Worship Associate involvement! Program manager.
- More asking of what youth want, less judging of what they should be doing
- There are more diverse family structures these days and how to deal with them
- Institutional commitment to youth ministry
- Community of best friends (social, emotional needs)
- Trained adults to build community they couldn’t find elsewhere
- Trained adults-leadership development
- Youth Training at PCD conferences
- PCD leadership school – for youth- alumni sharing their skills and experiences that bound us together-added spiritual element
- Fundraising- coffee house with different bands –pay for admission, have dessert

### **Welcoming All Youth and Anti-Oppression Work**

- Let everyone (including hetero and white) feel included
- Be willing to be informed about healthy racial, gender and sexual identity
- Have leadership who is willing to talk about these topics in sermons, workshops, classes and create this culture in youth conferences, YRUU, etc.
- Look at who we are inviting to our congregations
- Don't "identify" or "make spokespeople" when people of diversity come
- Have a sense of humor
- Be open, welcoming, and accepting
- Don't ignore it
- Encourage frank dialogue
- Non-binary (shades of gray)
- Intentional discussions in youth group
- Diverse RE curricula/media
- Role models/teachers
- Break up package deals
- OWL is wonderful
- Hard to talk about
- Cultivate a safe space to talk about this stuff and then TALK
- Programs built on guilt, should be on responsibility and accountability
- Acknowledge complexity in identity - creativity and expression
- All areas of church multigenerational - a must
- Change is no fun but good. End results are better than hardships
- Act on welcoming congregation principles - ongoing congregational commitment
- Radical inclusivity classes/program "teaching tolerance"
- Post and publicize welcome to GBLT folks, by UUA tradition, resolutions, ministers in congregation
- Welcoming - training in anti-oppression, racism, ethnic studies college/high school class
- Community building - time away for hours, days "telling our stories"
- It's OK to be white and straight
- The answer is congregation or denomination wide (not just within youth group)
- Should be working to exemplify that principle
- Outreach
- The whole faith might want to evangelize (or at least not be ashamed to say who we are)
- UU Legislative Ministry, CA
- Welcoming Congregation
- Virtual Peer Communities
- Youth relay direct experiences, i.e. speaking about gender, racism, politics
- Panel discussions, continuing across locations
- Culture and context
- Caucus

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

### Programming

**Programming Need/Change #1:** Intergenerational small group ministry

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building friendships and understanding</li> <li>• Community building across generations</li> <li>• Sense of common experience</li> <li>• Ground youth in congregational life</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Explain why, what are benefits?</li> <li>2. Identify existing small group curricula and adapt</li> <li>3. Research and develop (pilot program), advertise as a youth activity</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Who</u></b></p> <p>YRUU people and adults</p> <p>Congregation, or pilot at District Assembly</p>

**Programming Need/Change #2:** Outreach to congregations not currently involved in district youth programming

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <p>Small churches (and not in the Bay Area) will get youth involved</p>	
<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A road show to promote district youth programs</li> <li>2. Drop the jargon – no more acronyms, break out of the in-group</li> <li>3. Demystify</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Who</u></b></p>

**Programming Need/Change #3:** More social justice component (a social justice initiative)

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not as shallow or episodic</li> <li>• An event, a whole year, etc.</li> <li>• Personal transformation</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A community/cluster of churches form partnership</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Who</u></b></p>

## Training

### Training Need/Change #1: Training for youth to develop leadership skills

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase youth empowerment</li> <li>• Cooperative working with youth</li> <li>• Help transition from youth group to young adult</li> <li>• Keep youth involved</li> <li>• Larger UU vision</li> </ul>	
<b>Next Steps</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Strengthen LDC – offer every year</li> <li>2. Create leadership school</li> <li>3. Create congregational level youth leadership opportunities</li> </ol>	<b>Who</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Council</li> <li>2. Intradistrict and PSWD – YES!!!</li> <li>3. Congregations</li> </ol>

### Training Needs/Change #2: Regular, ongoing, comprehensive training for all adults working with youth

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher retention rate</li> <li>• Improve youth/adult relations</li> <li>• Easier to recruit advisors</li> <li>• Mutually satisfying experience</li> </ul>	
<b>Next Steps</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Training will be done by and with youth</li> <li>2. Youth advisor trainings need to be mandatory</li> </ol>	<b>Who</b>

### Training Needs/Change #3: Train congregations for mutually empowering adult-youth relationships and partnership

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understanding</li> <li>• Acknowledge that we really need each other</li> <li>• Develop mutually respectful relationship</li> <li>• Break down stereotypes</li> <li>• Youth feel supported/respected</li> </ul>	
<b>Next Steps</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Involve minister</li> <li>2. Youth and adult led discussion to counter stereotypes</li> <li>3. Ask youth for collaboration on projectors, side by side with adults</li> <li>4. Creating leadership positions for youth within church</li> <li>5. Guidelines for Boards and Program</li> </ol>	<b>Who</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Congregation</li> <li>2. Congregation</li> </ol>

<p>Committees to fully integrate youth into life of congregations; something more culture-focused, broader than just OWL or COA</p> <p>6. Involve youth's own creation into worship services</p> <p>7. Youth-led worship service</p>	
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## Resources

### Resource Need/Change #1: Communication and networking

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share info, build community, empower people, build excitement</li> <li>• Give access to how-to ideas on: budgeting for youth, space that works for youth, social action ideas, worship ideas, etc.</li> </ul>	
<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Create areas of special interest on PCD website – share ideas, how-to, what works at my church, site where people can add pictures and ideas</li> <li>2. Encourage youth web interaction, blogging, LiveJournal, MySpace, PCD communication with churches, etc. by publicity in many ways</li> <li>3. Better curriculum details on the web</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Who</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PCD Staff</li> <li>2. Churches</li> <li>3. PCD Staff</li> </ol>

### Resource Need/Change #2: Encourage paid staff for churches that need it, by offering infrastructure and support

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <p>Enable yoked youth staff that can serve youth of multiple churches and be paid by the district. May be like a circuit rider, or volunteer support, or coordinator.</p>	
<p><b><u>Next Steps</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Prepare a pitch, reach out to churches</li> <li>2. Get buy-in from members of congregations</li> <li>3. Hiring</li> <li>4. Arrange for participating churches to pay PCD, who will pay the staff person</li> </ol>	<p><b><u>Who</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. PCD Staff and churches who want it</li> <li>4. PCD and participating churches</li> </ol>

### Resource Need/Change #3: Create a menu of PCD resources and services, with good packaging and marketing, roadshow

<p><b>What will this change accomplish?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educate churches on what's available (they don't know the options)</li> <li>• Allow them to show other congregants something clear and inspiring</li> <li>• Help them choose the right support</li> </ul>	
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<b><u>Next Steps</u></b> 1. Put library details online with comments 2. Prepare menu. Pictures helpful. ☺ 3. Send menus, send people to us	<b><u>Who</u></b> 1. PCD Staff 2. PCD Staff 3. PCD Staff
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## Infrastructure

### Infrastructure Need/Change #1: Communication and Outreach

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff member to connect all these groups – youth group to minister, congregation to congregation, congregation to PCD</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Next Steps</u></b> 1. Find funding/Chalice Lighters 2. Other models for paid person	<b><u>Who</u></b>

### Infrastructure Need/Change #2: Youth space

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make space that is comfortable for youth, i.e. away from noisy places, private, near kitchen</li> <li>• Retreat space, probably rented</li> </ul>	
<b><u>Next Steps</u></b> 1. Creative brainstorm of where 2. Help build churches' knowledge of space	<b><u>Who</u></b> 1. PCD Office

### Infrastructure Need/Change #3: Paid support/resources

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b> Need communication person to connect everyone. This person could be from a couple of churches or the whole district.	
<b><u>Next Steps</u></b> 1. Planning calendar 2. Council to set partner	<b><u>Who</u></b>

Note: #1 and #3 are very close so next steps are intertwined.

## **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.

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### **Participant Feedback:**

- A beautiful definition is already in place... One thing I would add: “...which empower and support:...” Develop faculties of youth to be leaders in their own unique ways that affirms life, educates to counter oppressions, and recognizes the larger web of spirit in which we are all a part. Leader development the thing I’m getting at.

## **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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Participant Feedback:

- Explore the question: “What are the strengths of young people their communities?” (They do have strengths unique to their demographic that are not retained in adulthood. The effort to ‘help meet spiritual’ needs is actually a 2-way street)
- Empowerment requires accountability, doesn’t it?
- Mentoring for youth in small congregations
- “Empowerment” is about power- not just the illusion or rhetoric.
- “Partnership” means really working together as partners – not necessarily peers but real power sharing.
- There are many forms of power, “coolness” is one of them.
- Adults need “empowerment” too!
- Who chooses which youth (& adults) to empower?
- ??? too wordy – needs to be concise
- Wikipedia has a good summary with fewer buzzwords

## **The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Evaluation Summary**

24 evaluations were filled out and turned in.

- Many participants appreciated the small group discussions and opportunities for exchanging ideas.
- Reflection questions could have gone deeper and been better tailored to fit the district.
- One person commented that resources/training/infrastructure/programming were not the best categories to use.
- A lot of people commented that the Power Point/survey information was not helpful.
- One person commented that the books the facilitators brought in were helpful (Tracey Hurd's Nurturing Children and Youth, and the National Study of Youth and Religion's Soul Searching).
- The small groups stayed the same for all reflection questions. It was mentioned a few times (in person and in the evaluations) that the groups should have been mixed up.

**The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth  
Process Schedule**

**Saturday, February 10, 2007; 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**

9:30	Welcome and Introductions	Tom & Tera
10:00	Youth Ministry and Youth Empowerment Definitions	Tom
10:15	Data and Reflection Questions Opening Data Spiritual Needs of Youth 20 min reflection time, 10 min report back	Tera
10:45	Break - post data from reflection questions generated so far	
11:00	Survey Data and Reflection questions Priorities and Involvement 5 min slide presentation, 20 min reflection, 10 min report back	Tom
	Welcoming All Youth 5 min slide presentation, 20 min reflection, 10 min report back	Tom
12:00	Lunch - post data from rest of the reflection questions (Tom and Tera create the 'stations' for the afternoon activity)	
1:00	Re-gather and Refocus	
1:10	Identifying Needs and Next Steps Four areas Explanation of process	Tera Tom
2:40	Select PCD Transition Team	Yvonne
2:50	Evaluation	
3:00	Closing	