



# **A Process Guide For District Gatherings on Youth Ministry**

A Resource from the  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
Task Force on Youth Ministry

**UPDATED  
December 2006**

This project is funded in part by the Fund for Unitarian Universalism.

## A Letter from the Task Force

Dear District Leaders,

Thank you for your commitment to intergenerational dialogue about our Unitarian Universalist ministry with youth. In the winter and spring of 2006, over one thousand youth shared their experience with youth ministry by completing a survey, and hundreds of congregations held conversations. Now it is time for our UUA districts and a variety of key stakeholder groups to reflect on the lessons learned so far and to contribute to a shared vision for the future.

A trained youth-adult pair from the Task Force on Youth Ministry will work with the youth and adult leaders in your district to plan and facilitate your district gathering. This process guide is designed to help your district organize this intergenerational meeting of stakeholders and leaders. The facilitators will then work with you to tailor the gathering to the realities and needs of your district.

The district gathering will be an opportunity to reflect on what youth and congregations in your district have reported to the Task Force and to explore opportunities for a more strong, vibrant, and empowering ministry with youth.

We ask that your district schedule this gathering during the 2006-2007 year, with all information returned to the Task Force by May 1, 2007 (unless your gathering is in May). The youth-adult facilitator team will be able to assist you in scheduling this gathering at the best time for all.

If you have questions, please contact Beth Dana, UUA Youth Ministry Associate, at 617-948-4352 or [bdana@uua.org](mailto:bdana@uua.org).

We look forward to hearing from youth and adults in your district at this important time in our movement.

In Faith,

The Task Force on Youth Ministry

Rev. William Sinkford and Megan Dowdell, Co-Conveners

Beth Dana, UUA Youth Ministry Associate

Rachel Davis, DRUUMM Youth Representative

Sara Eskrich, Local Non-YRUU Youth

Judith A. Frediani, UUA Director of Lifespan Faith Development

Rev. Shana Lynngood, UUMA Representative

Jesse Jaeger, UUA Youth Programs Director

Homer Karvonides, DRUUMM Youth Representative

Tera Little, LREDA Representative

Ian Moore, YRUU Representative

Tom Rylett, Canadian Youth Representative

Julian Sharp, UUA Board Youth Trustee-At-Large

Hannah Stampe, GLBPTQQI Youth Representative

Jova Vargas, YRUU Representative

## Table of Contents

About District Gatherings .....	4
Logistics .....	5
Whom to Invite .....	6
Engaging Your District .....	7
Sample Newsletter Article .....	8
District Budget.....	9
District Gathering Models.....	10
The District Task Force .....	11
Before the Gathering: A Step-by-Step Guide for Facilitators .....	12
The Process .....	14
Process Supplement #1 .....	23
Process Supplement #2.....	24
After the Gathering: Facilitator Responsibilities.....	25
After the Gathering: District Responsibilities.....	26
Report Form 1: District Information .....	27
Report Form 2: The State of Youth Ministry in the District.....	29
Report Form 3: Identifying Needs and Changes .....	31
Participant Evaluation Form .....	39

## About District Gatherings

In its 1997 report to the UUA Board of Trustees and YRUU Youth Council, the Youth Programs Review Committee recommended that each district convene their own review committee of youth and adults to address the quality of their youth ministry:

We call on these district review committees to thoroughly evaluate the level of youth leadership in the district, the degree of adult involvement, the adequacy of financial resources allocated by the district, the effectiveness of the district youth governing body, the level of youth representation on the district board, district committees and congregation boards, the needs of local congregations for launching or maintaining their youth group, the quality of youth offerings at camps, conferences and seminaries, and, most importantly, district level support and training of youth advisors...If every district in our association were able to fulfill this charge and act on its results, the Unitarian Universalist religious movement would be capable of developing a thorough and consistent youth ministry, grounded in love and respect, which before long could find itself unequaled among liberal religious movements.

Your district gathering on ministry to and with youth is one way to begin working toward a youth ministry that fulfills the hopes and goals of the 1997 Youth Programs Review Committee, the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth, and the youth and adults in our Association today.

Conversations should focus on the future rather than the past. They should provide space for participants to

- discuss what the district is doing well and could share with the rest of the Association;
- explore additional opportunities for youth;
- envision a vibrant youth ministry in your district;
- identify resources needed to achieve this;
- commit to action and follow-through.

### **These are the desired outcomes of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth:**

1. A youth ministry that is robust, flexible, diverse, and more than just one-size-fits-all
2. Denominational youth work that focuses on serving local congregations
3. Mutually respectful and empowering relationships between and among youth and adults
4. Anti-racism and anti-oppression work infused within every part of youth ministry, with a recognition that there is not one “right” way of doing the work, providing a forum for youth identity development and institutional change
5. A youth ministry that meets the spiritual needs of youth and increases the spiritual depth of our congregations
6. Effective communication within, between, and among all areas of the Association

Updated August 2006 after meeting of the Task Force on Youth Ministry.

## Logistics

Modeling shared leadership is a great start to an intergenerational dialogue, so district gatherings should be the result of collaboration between youth and adults. Youth and adults should be involved in all stages of the district process, from setting a date for the gathering to follow-through afterward.

### Who

The following people should play a role in the coordination of and outreach for the district youth ministry gathering:

- Youth leaders (YAC, DYSC, Youth Ministry Committee or Youth Programs Committee);
- Youth Advisors;
- Youth Coordinators;
- District Staff;
- District Board;
- District President;
- District Religious Education Committee.

The youth-adult facilitator pair assigned to your district should also be part of planning the gathering so that they can tailor it to the needs of your district.

### Responsibilities of the District Coordinators

1. In consultation with district leadership and the co-facilitators, **schedule the conversation** for the fall of 2006 or winter/spring of 2007.
2. **Secure meeting space.** Ideally, you will have either break-out rooms available for small-group work or a flexible arrangement in a large meeting space. Space needs will depend largely on whether your district gathering is part of the district's annual meeting, a youth con, or a stand-alone event.
3. Engage the district's interest and support, and **seek participation** from all groups and congregations in the district. Publicize the event through all appropriate channels.
4. Make photocopies and **gather supplies** (See "The Process," page 14.)
5. Arrange for **food**.
6. Promptly **return all feedback and outcomes** to the Task Force after your gathering. (See "After the Gathering: District Responsibilities," page 26.)

## Whom to Invite

Your district gathering is not just for or about youth, youth advisors, and religious educators. It is not only for adults. It is about the overall life of our religious community. It is about your district's attitude toward youth ministry and its commitment to youth and their families. It is about and for youth **and** adults. This dialogue encourages all participants to think about their roles in this vital ministry and to think creatively about how your district can support transformative youth ministry.

The value of the input, the strength of the vision, and the likelihood of implementation will be greatly increased if all stakeholders and leaders of the district are at this table. While all interested people are welcome, the participation of the following individuals and groups is crucial:

- Youth
  - Middle school/junior high
  - High school
  - All levels and types of involvement in local, district, and continental UU communities)
- Ministers
- Directors/Coordinators of Religious Education
- District Staff members
- Youth Coordinators
- Youth Advisors
- District Board members, including the district board president or chair
- Congregational Board presidents
- UUA Trustees
- District Committee members
- Parents of children and youth
- District Religious Education Committee members

It is important that all participants understand the purpose of the gathering and understand why they were invited to attend.

Feedback from the 2006 district gatherings indicates that the process is most effective with 30-50 participants, with broad representation from the groups listed above.

## Engaging Your District

Getting buy-in from the staff, lay leadership, and congregations in your district is essential to the success of your district youth ministry gathering. Reach out to youth and adults who have a vested interest in and hold decision-making power for youth ministry and programs. This will ensure the commitment of participants to following through.

### Spreading the Word

How can you share information about the consultation process with your district? Here are some ideas:

- Write a column or include the Task Force's monthly newsletter in the district newsletter. (See "Sample Newsletter Article," page 8.)
- Bring information to the youth leadership body, Religious Education Committee, and Board.
- Share information on the district's website/e-mail list.
- Talk about the consultation at the district annual meeting, chapter meetings of religious professionals, youth cons, and visits to congregations.

### Recruiting and Encouraging Involvement

Following are a few ways of achieving a diverse and representative gathering of youth and adults:

- **Identify Allies** – A key principle of successful organizing is identifying allies—people or groups that share your interest in a cause. Doing so will emphasize the importance of this gathering to the district as a whole and all of its congregations, rather than just those youth or congregations who choose to be actively involved in district youth programming.
- **Extend Invitations** – Personal invitations and outreach to individual congregations are effective ways of encouraging people to attend the district gathering. Explain to congregations that you hope they will join in the spirit of collaboration so that the district can provide the necessary resources and services for them to strengthen their youth ministries.
- **Act in Your Sphere of Influence** – Youth leaders can use their influence to invite and encourage other youth to attend the district gathering. Likewise, adult staff and lay leaders can urge involvement among adult congregational and district leaders.
- **Engage Youth** – As with the congregational conversations, getting youth buy-in should be a priority. Youth need to be invited and welcomed actively by other youth *and* adults. A passive invitation in the newsletter is not adequate. There should be intentional outreach both to youth involved in district youth programming as well as youth involved only in their congregations.

Why would locally involved youth want to participate in the district gathering? Because it can give them a sense that there are youth beyond their congregation, and that there *are* support and resources available to them and their adult allies to build the youth community in their own congregation.

## Sample Newsletter Article

The following may be adapted for your district newsletter:

### **Ministry With Youth in the ABC District**

Ministry with youth is about listening, empowerment, and spiritual guidance. It is instrumental to the vitality and growth of Unitarian Universalist communities. The Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations is conducting a two-year process to revitalize and strengthen youth ministry. The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth is designed to be a grassroots process that begins with input from individuals and congregations and progresses to districts and the organizations that provide services and support to the congregations. In 2006, youth and congregations shared their hopes and ideas for how to better serve youth. Now, our district's engagement in this process is essential to its success.

On DATE at LOCATION, youth and adults from around the district will gather to discuss our ministry with youth in congregations and at the district level. Youth, ministers, religious educators, local/district youth advisors and coordinators, congregational leaders, parents of youth, district staff, and Board members are all encouraged to attend. This gathering is an opportunity to learn what youth and congregations in our district have reported in surveys and congregational conversations, and to explore opportunities for stronger ministry with our diverse youth community. Participants will discuss what our district is doing well and could share with the rest of the Association, explore additional opportunities for youth, identify resources needed to move forward, and commit to action.

The gathering will be facilitated by YOUTH NAME and ADULT NAME, members of the UUA's Task Force on Youth Ministry. Mark your calendars, and plan to attend! For more information, contact CONTACT PERSON at PHONE or EMAIL.

## District Budget

Like any event, your district youth ministry gathering will have expenses associated with it. Below is a list of possible expenses; some amounts will vary by district depending on which gathering model you choose. (See “District Gathering Models,” page 10.)

<b><u>Expense Description</u></b>	<b><u>Amount</u></b>
Travel equalization for facilitators	\$750
Housing for facilitators	Varies
Food for facilitators	Varies
Food for participants (meals and snacks)	Varies
Supplies/Photocopies	\$150
Meeting space	Varies
Outreach/Mailings	\$150
Travel subsidies (optional)	\$1,000 to \$2,000

Note: Some large districts may choose to allocate money to subsidize participants’ travel to the gathering. This would enable representatives from congregations throughout a large geographic area to attend.

## District Gathering Models

There are a few models that districts can use for the youth ministry gathering. The best one will vary from district to district depending on the geography, calendar, and budget of the district.

### District Annual Conference

Make youth ministry the theme of your district's annual conference.

OR

If the theme of your annual conference is already set, here are two ways to incorporate the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth into the existing plan.

- 1) Two-Part Gathering:
  - a. Information and Reports – During each Saturday workshop slot, offer an informational workshop including a report and opportunities for reflection on the results of the youth survey and congregational conversations.
  - b. Needs Assessment and Implementation – On Sunday afternoon after the conference has ended, invite participants in the Saturday workshops to process the information and identify the district's needs and next steps.
- 2) One Gathering: Schedule the process over the course of three workshops, expecting people to attend the whole series.

### Youth Ministry District Gathering

For small districts, a stand-alone event may work best so that attendees don't have to travel far or stay overnight. A daylong meeting would begin in midmorning on a Saturday and end with dinner for all on Saturday evening.

### Youth Con

Some districts may choose to hold their district's youth ministry gathering as part of a district youth con. The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth would be the focus of programming on Saturday. In this model, adults and youth who are not attending the con would come only for the gathering on Saturday.

When deciding which model to use, consider which will attract the most diverse and representative group of youth and adults. For some districts, this will be the annual conference because a large number of youth and adults already attend this event for the entire weekend. For other districts (probably the smaller ones), it will be an all-day gathering on a Saturday, so that ministers and others can return home for Sunday morning services at their congregation.

## The District Task Force

A rich collection of ideas and input will be generated at this gathering. It is important that these ideas not get lost, but instead get followed through by youth and adults in the district.

Therefore, we suggest that your district form a task force (short-term committee) of **three youth and three adults**.

The task force should include key decision-makers in the district as well as people actively involved on the local level. Possible members are

- district staff;
- youth involved on the local level in youth groups and congregational life;
- the youth YAC/DYSC/YPC chair;
- youth on the district board;
- the district president;
- youth advisors active on the local and district levels.

Leave room on this task force (perhaps two of the six spots, one for a youth and one for an adult) for participants to join at the end of the district gathering. People may leave the conversation energized and inspired to help follow through. This might also be an opportunity to encourage local leadership.

The formation of the district task force will

- ensure follow-through on ideas;
- prevent the responsibility for follow-through from falling exclusively on staff;
- guarantee that youth have a voice in decision making and a plan for the future.

This task force would be empowered to process the input from the district gathering and make recommendations for change, also taking into consideration the recommendations that result from the Summit on Ministry To and With Youth (July 2007).

The district task force will remain in communication with the UUA's Task Force on Youth Ministry. They will report the outcome of the district gathering to the UUA Task Force, and the UUA Task Force will report the recommendations of the Summit.

# Before the Gathering: A Step-by-Step Guide for Facilitators

## Step 1: Contact the District Leaders

Participants in this call should include: District Staff, District Youth Leaders/Chairs, District Planning Team (if formed), District Trustee

Tools for setting up a conference call: [www.meetingwizard.com](http://www.meetingwizard.com), [www.freeconference.com](http://www.freeconference.com)  
(account information in your post-packets)

Agenda items for this conference call should include:

- ❖ Brainstorm a list of people in the district who the facilitators can call ahead of time in order to learn more about the district
- ❖ Confirm who the primary logistics contact is for the district.
- ❖ Develop an invite list and outreach strategy (see p. 6-7).
- ❖ Start talking about the District Task Force that will be responsible for follow-through (see p. 11).
- ❖ Talk about the format of the gathering, time constraints, etc. so that facilitators can begin working on a schedule.
- ❖ Arrange a follow-up call for one month from this call. Record clear “job jots” for each call participant.

## Step 2: Book Travel (at least 2 months before the gathering)

## Step 3: Do Some Research (2-3 months before the gathering)

Split up the list of people brainstormed on the first conference call. The following are some questions that you should ask them, in order to assess the current state of the district and get a sense of its strengths and key issues.

1. Does the district have a Youth Adult Committee or District Youth Steering Committee?
2. If yes, is it active in the district?
3. Does the district have a Youth Coordinator, Program Consultant, or other staff member responsible for working with youth?
4. How many youth conferences per year? Are they sponsored by the district or by local congregations?
5. Does the district offer Chrysalis Trainings (Leadership Development, Spirituality Development, Youth Advisor, Chaplain, Anti-Racism Analysis Development)?
6. What is the relationship like between youth and adult leaders in the district?
7. Does the district have a Youth Advisor Network or Committee?
8. Does the district use a cluster model (services and programming offered at the cluster level, or groups of congregations within the district)?
9. Is there a youth on the district Board? On any other district committees?
10. Does the district have any DRUUMM or Interweave chapters?
11. Any interesting youth programs or initiatives at the district level?
12. Are there any political dynamics that might have an effect on this work going forward?
13. What do you know about youth perceptions/experiences that may have a bearing on their willingness to participate?

## Step 4: Follow-Up Conference Call with the District (1 month before the gathering)

Agenda items for this conference call should include:

- ❖ Check-in about outreach efforts of the district

- ❖ Facilitators share a preliminary plan for the schedule of the gathering

**Step 5: Logistics call** (1 week before the gathering)

Agenda items for this conference call should include:

- ❖ Housing for facilitators
- ❖ Transportation between airport and site
- ❖ Supplies, including handouts – Clarify who is providing what supplies.

**Step 6: The District Gathering on Youth Ministry!**

# The Process

## Preparation

- Gather all supplies.
- Recruit a youth from the district to light the chalice and do an opening reading.
- Write important information on newsprint, including the agenda for the meeting and the desired outcomes of the Consultation. Remember that many people are visual learners, so handouts and large visuals should be provided.
- Post a blank sheet of newsprint where participants or facilitators can list issues that come up in conversation and should be addressed at a future time, but not necessarily at the gathering. This is sometimes called a “parking lot” or a “bike rack.”
- Write the key concepts/bullet points for Youth Ministry and Youth Empowerment on newsprint. Post a piece of blank newsprint next to the Youth Ministry sheet for comments and feedback.
- Make sure that the space you’ll be meeting in has a flexible seating arrangement, so that participants can break-out into small groups.

## Supply List

- Newsprint
- Easel
- Markers
- LCD projector and screen
- Computer
- Index cards (at least one for every participant)
- Large Post-Its – at least four pads of different colors
- One copy of each report form
- Food/snacks
- PowerPoint presentation

## Process at a Glance

Minimum time: 3 hours, preferably more (3 workshop blocks)

Welcome and Introductions (30 minutes)

Youth Ministry: A Common Understanding (10 minutes)

Survey and Congregational Data: Presentation and Implications (60–75 minutes)

Break (10–15 minutes)

Identifying Needs and Next Steps (2–3 hours)

Youth Empowerment (5-15 minutes)

Evaluation (10 minutes)

Closing (10 minutes)

## Facilitators

The district youth ministry gatherings will be co-facilitated by a trained team of one youth and one adult from the Task Force on Youth Ministry. District leaders and the facilitators should be in close communication in the months leading up to the district gathering.

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

**30 minutes**

### **Opening**

**5 minutes**

A youth from the district will light the chalice and begin the gathering with a reading or quotation.

Encourage the youth to choose an opening that is personally meaningful. If needed, you could suggest one of the following (from *Singing the Living Tradition*, the UU hymnal):

Song #128 For All That Is Our Life

Song #300 With Heart and Mind

Song #347 Gather the Spirit

Reading #502

See Appendix B (Prayer for Youth Consultation) for a suggested centering prayer.

### **Facilitators' Welcome**

**10 minutes**

Welcome the group to the district's youth ministry gathering. Facilitators should introduce themselves by name, state where they're from, and describe their role at the gathering and on the Task Force, if applicable.

Briefly explain the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth and its desired outcomes. Explain that this gathering is building upon the input from youth and congregations gathered from January through September 2006. It is one piece of this two year process to gather input from a variety of youth ministry stakeholders.

Encourage participants to think outside the box and develop creative solutions for change.

Note that the district gathering is an opportunity to

- discuss what the district is doing well and could share with the rest of the Association;
- explore additional opportunities for youth;
- envision a vibrant youth ministry in your district;
- identify resources needed to achieve this;
- commit to action and follow-through.

### **Participant Introductions**

**15 minutes**

#### Option #1: Learning Across the Generations

Ask everyone to introduce themselves to the whole group by sharing their name and congregation. Then ask them to turn to their neighbor, preferably forming youth-adult pairs, to reflect and share on the following questions for three minutes each. Announce when it's time to switch speakers.

Question for Youth: What is one insight you have gained from someone older than you?

Question for Adults: What is one insight you have gained from someone younger than you?

Option #2: Where Do We Come From? Game

**15 minutes**

(location examples are from the Thomas Jefferson District)

Lay out the district on the floor. *This area is Tennessee... This area is North Carolina... This area is South Carolina.... Here is Virginia... And this sliver is Georgia.*

*Jump up and put yourself on the map.*

*Meet three people in the area next to you.*

*Who came the farthest?*

*Who lives the closest to our site?*

*Did anyone come by themselves or in a pair? Yeah! We're so glad you're here!*

Lay out an imaginary line on the floor. *Now place yourself on the line by your chronological age. Youngest here. Oldest there. (You may choose to do this part silently for fun.)*

Same line. *Place yourself on the line according to how long you've been a Unitarian Universalist. People who just converted today are here... People who have been a Unitarian Universalist for thirty or more years are down there.*

*Now turn to someone around you and share what brought you to our religion.*

Follow up song: Where Do We Come From? (#1003 in Singing the Journey; Words: Paul Gaugin – painter, Words and Music: Brian Tate – composer)

**2. Youth Ministry: A Common Understanding**

**10 minutes**

Note: This section should be included at the beginning of the gathering or at the beginning of every informational workshop.

Participants will likely enter this conversation with different understandings of what *youth ministry* means, or perhaps no understanding at all.

Explain to the group that the Consultation seeks to expand the scope of Unitarian Universalist ministry by bringing attention to the theological roots and role of youth in the overall ministry of our congregations. Given the new visions that are emerging from the consultation process, we must look anew at our understanding of youth ministry. Therefore, the UUA and the Task Force are engaged in an inclusive process to develop a strong and clear statement about the roots and significance of youth ministry in our movement. This is a living and evolving statement and it is open to modification throughout the consultation process.

Point out the Youth Ministry working definition that you have posted on the wall. Encourage participants to write their comments and feedback on the blank newsprint next to it, which will form a “written dialogue” of important input for the Task Force.

#### *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.

### **3. Survey and Congregational Data: Presentation and Discussion 60–75 minutes**

Note: If the district youth ministry gathering is taking place at the district annual meeting and is split between Saturday workshop slots and Sunday, this section (#3) should be scheduled for the Saturday workshop slots. Sections #4–7 should be done during the time scheduled on Sunday. Participants attending the Sunday session should also attend one of the Saturday sessions, since the second will build on the first.

This section of the process will be carefully tailored to each district. Facilitators should have one Power Point presentation outlining important ideas from the survey and congregational conversation results, and a district fact sheet (if any congregations from the district participated). Facilitators are welcome to adapt the presentation to the needs of the district by subtracting or adding data from the district fact sheet. Refer to the FAQ for assistance with this and for suggested answers to common questions.

#### **Present and Discuss**

The Power Point presentation provided to facilitators is divided into a few sections, each of which had significant results in the survey and congregational conversations. After each section is a series of reflection questions.

Explain that these presentations will more clearly define what areas of youth ministry the district might want to focus on for improvement. Discussion following the presentations will provide time for participants to reflect on the information being shared and to apply it to their district and congregations.

Presentation  
**section**

**10 minutes or less per**

Share the information on the slides as dynamically as possible! Participants should find these results and issues interesting. Take only clarifying questions, and remind participants that they will have plenty of time to discuss the information in small groups.

Discussion and Reflection

**10-15 minutes per section**

At the end of the section, read the reflection questions aloud. Other questions to help guide discussion are:

- What do these results imply about the current state of Unitarian Universalist youth ministry in the district?
- What are our strengths in this area?
- What are our growing edges in this area?

Then ask the participants to form small groups of about 5 people and to appoint a note-taker for their group. Provide a sheet of newsprint and markers for each. Ask the groups to record their reflections on the newsprint, so that it can be posted for everyone to see throughout the gathering. Encourage groups to focus in on the two or three most important insights coming out of their discussion.

**\*\*Facilitators should transcribe these ideas and include them in the summary report of the gathering.\*\***

**BREAK**

**10–15 minutes**

During this time, facilitators should consolidate the lists generated by the small groups in the previous activity, in order to review them during section 4 (Identifying Needs and Next Steps). This is especially important if section 4 is happening a few hours later, the following day, or with a different group of participants.

**4. Identifying Needs and Next Steps**  
**size)**

**2-3 hours (depending on group**

Note: If this section (#4) is scheduled separately from the above sections, post the ideas developed in the earlier session(s). Also post the desired outcomes of the Consultation process and a list of the four key areas below.

Preparation: Before this section, set up the “stations.” If the group is 30-40 people, post four sheets of newsprint around the room (one station for each key area). If the group is larger, post two sheets of newsprint for each key area, thereby creating eight stations.

Explanation

**5 minutes**

Explain that, using the input from youth and congregations through the survey and congregational conversations, the group will now identify what is needed in four key areas to create a stronger and more vibrant youth ministry in the district. Briefly review the strengths and challenges identified by the group.

The four key areas are

- programming;
- training (education needed to make programming and vision a reality);
- resources (time, talent, and treasure needed to make the desired programming and vision happen);
- infrastructure (organization, communication, and relationships that make it happen).

For each of these areas, the group will identify no more than three major needs or potential changes. This list should be action- and change-oriented, rather than just a list of resources. The group should keep in mind the overall desired outcomes of the consultation process (posted on the wall).

### Station Round

**40 minutes**

Split participants into four groups that each include youth and adults and reflect other relevant diversity (including roles people hold in their district and congregations). If the group is large, it may be necessary to have two small groups for each key area. It is up to the facilitators to decide what the appropriate number of groups is, but remember that smaller groups allow more people to speak and participate.

Each group should begin at a station – programming, training, resources, or infrastructure. Tell participants that they have 10 minutes at each station to answer this question: What needs to change in this key area for youth ministry to be the best it can be? Ask groups to brainstorm a list of needs and potential changes. For example, the Training group might identify the need for more accessible and frequent youth advisor training. Groups should write each idea on a post-it note and put it up on the newsprint sheet.

After 10 minutes, the groups should rotate to the next station until they've posted their ideas for all four key areas.

### Small Groups – Digging Deeper

**1 hour**

Note: Facilitators should circulate around to all of the small groups to check in on them, answer questions, and make process suggestions when appropriate. If the group is straying off topic or has an especially exciting idea that isn't necessarily tied to their key area, encourage them to set it aside and lift it up in the report back, but not to focus too much of their time on it. The intention of prioritizing is to focus on the changes or strategies that require the most thought and planning and would have a significant impact on youth ministry in the district.

Tell participants that now they get to split up into four groups – programming, training, resources, and infrastructure – based on the area they are most interested in. The groups should be approximately even and should include a balance of youth and adults, so if necessary you can ask people to redistribute themselves. Give each group markers and three sheets of newsprint – one for each priority they identify.

Each group should choose one recorder (to write on newsprint for everyone to see) and one person responsible for copying their ideas onto Report Form 3.

The purpose of these small groups is to dig deeper into their chosen area – all of which are key parts of the district’s ministry with youth and congregations – and to develop recommendations for change.

Grouping

2 minutes

Encourage participants to take a couple minutes to group any related needs/changes that could serve as one more comprehensive strategy.

Prioritize

10 minutes

Explain that groups will now focus in on three needs or changes that would have the most significant impact on youth ministry if enacted. Encourage them to think outside the box and not dismiss creative or innovative ideas that could result in significant changes. Participants will use the process of multivoting, in which each person has three votes. Have participants mark their votes on the newsprint with markers or use a show of hands. Have the groups come to consensus on the top three.

Record these top three on newsprint and Report Form 3.

Expand and Define

10 minutes

Ask the group to more clearly define each of the three needs or changes by coming up with a sentence or two about what each change will accomplish. Have them record these statements on newsprint and Report Form 3.

Next Steps

20 minutes

Ask them to identify up to three steps that will have to be taken to address each need or make each change. This should include naming those who they think should be responsible to see that this happens. Record these on newsprint and Report Form 3.

Report Back

20 minutes

Bring the groups back together to share their top three needs or changes and proposed next steps. Remind each group that they have five minutes to present.

**\*\*Facilitators should collect the report forms and transcribe them into the summary report of the gathering.\*\***

**Wrapping Up and Task Force Selection**

**5 minutes**

Thank the group for their thoughtful work on these four key aspects of support for and ministry with youth.

Now introduce the task force of youth and adults that the district has chosen to follow through on the ideas generated at this gathering. This group, chosen prior to the district gathering, will include the district leaders who are key to implementation.

Explain that this group will process the ideas generated today and make recommendations for change. This committee will also take into consideration the recommendations that result from the Summit on Ministry To and With Youth (July 2007).

Extend an invitation to two more participants who are interested in joining the district's task force. Ask for volunteers, while keeping in mind the balance of youth and adults on the task force. Remember that it is also important to have significant representation from people who are active in local youth ministries, so that the recommendations made will be most effective.

## 5. Youth Empowerment

5-15 minutes

Explain that one of the goals of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth is to develop a universal or Association-wide understanding of the term *youth empowerment*. We are not asking them to define it at the district gathering, but we want to hear their thoughts on it. These thoughts will serve as valuable input into the Summit on Ministry To and With Youth in July 2007, which will develop a statement on youth empowerment for Unitarian Universalist youth ministry.

If participants ask for an explanation of empowerment, you can use the following:  
“**Empowerment** refers to increasing the political, social or economic strength of individuals. It often involves the empowered developing confidence in their own capacities.” (from Wikipedia.com)

### Option #1

10-15 minutes

Break participants into small groups, with a balance of youth and adults in each. Present the working definition of youth empowerment developed by the Task Force.

#### *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.

Give the small groups **five minutes** to answer the following questions, recording their discussion on newsprint:

- What do you like about this definition?
- What is missing from this definition?

Before the small groups report back, pose the following questions:

- What role did youth have in these discussions of youth empowerment?
- Did these discussions model youth empowerment?

Ask each small group to report briefly on their discussion. If time allows, you could ask youth to share stories of when they have felt empowered in Unitarian Universalist communities.

### Option #2

**5 minutes**

Hand out one note card to each participant. Ask them to reflect on the working definition presented and what youth empowerment means to them, and to write any comments on the note card.

**\*\*Return the notes/note cards from this conversation with the report.\*\***

## **6. Evaluation**

**10 minutes**

Pass out an evaluation form to each participant. These evaluations will be very helpful to the district, the facilitators, and the Task Force on Youth Ministry in their efforts to make the Consultation as effective as possible. Give participants from five to ten minutes to fill them out, and collect them onsite.

## **7. Closing**

**10 minutes**

Conclude the district gathering with a large group ritual. This is a good time to give the attendees a charge, such as the following:

Bring these ideas back to your congregation and remain in communication with the district's task force. Know that you all have important wisdom, gifts, and leadership to share with this community. Our district has many strengths. Let's share these with the rest of the Unitarian Universalist movement, at the same time embracing our challenges and treating them as opportunities for creative solutions and innovation. Let's work together to create a youth ministry that transforms us all, both youth and adults.

Light the chalice, present a reading or quotation, and provide space for sharing. You might ask participants to go around the circle and share one particularly meaningful insight or idea that they will bring back to their congregation.

Encourage whoever is doing the closing to choose something that is personally meaningful. If needed, you could suggest one of the following (from *Singing the Living Tradition*, the UU hymnal):

Song #368 Now Let Us Sing

Song #124 Be That Guide

Reading #560

Reading #693

## Sample Schedule for a Day-Long Gathering (from TJD)

**Friday, 7:30 – 9:00 pm**

**Opening** (Nancy Combs-Morgan, Program Consultant of TJD)

**Welcome and Introductions** (Sara)

**Where Do We Come From? Who Are We? Game** (Tandi) *see attached*

**Song: Where Do We Come From?** (Nancy)

**Name Game** (Tandi)

**Youth Ministry: A Common Understanding** (Tandi)

**Youth Empowerment** (Sara)

**What to Expect Tomorrow** (Sara)

**Closing Circle: “Tomorrow, we’ll build a vision and I’ll bring.... <each fills their contribution here.>”** (Tandi)

**Saturday, 9:30 am – 12:10 pm**

**Opening & Go Around with names and role** (Nancy)

**Chalice Lighting and Prayer/ Meditation** (Sara and Tandi) *see attached*

**Name Game, “I Like Churches That.. I Come to Church Because...” game** (Tandi)

**Survey Results** (Sara)

**Lunch Break**

**Congregational Conversations Results** (Tandi)

**Identifying Needs and Next Steps, Option #2** (Sara, then Tandi)

**Closing, Raising of DYSC** (Nancy)

**Evaluation**

## Prayer for Youth Consultation

*Tandi Rogers Koerger*

plain text = voice one; underlined text = voice two; both underlined and bold = both voices, italicized text = assembled community with coaching

Spirit of Life known by many names and worshipped in a rainbow of ways reflecting the power of Love, Creation, and Community,

We give thanks this day for the opportunity to be together, to laugh, *to learn*, to play, and **to build a vision**. May this time bind us and set us free.

We call in the Unitarian youth and the Universalist youth who led the way to the 1961 merger and creation of our saving faith, Unitarian Universalism. And the Community said Come In. Come In.

We call in the youth of the Liberal Religious Youth who loved enough to let go and make way for the Young Religious Unitarian Universalist. Come In.

We call in the youth of the Continental Youth Council who said, “There must be a better way. Let us dream the way.” *Come In.*

We call in the dedicated Youth Consultation Task Force who has worked long, exhausting hours to make this happen. Come In.

We call in the congregations, who bone-dry, beg for the quenching energy, vision, and vibrancy of youth, but just can't find a way. *Come In.*

We call in the isolated youth who know in their hearts they are flaming Unitarian Universalist but cannot find their religious community. Come In.

We call in the congregations where Youth Ministry is alive and well and spilling out into their wider communities with transformation and hope. *Come In.*

Who else shall we call in? Call out the invitation. (People add their own.) *Come In.* (after each contribution.)

We call in the future of **Youth Ministry**, of which we are on the cusp, the wave, the dawn. We can hear you in our silent, wise **voice within**. Come in and come out. *Come In and Come Out.*

**We welcome you who have** come from far and near to give voice to your dreamings and cravings. **Welcome.**

Spirit of Life and Love, **be with us today**. Give us the vision to dream beyond ourselves. Give us the humility to see our short-comings as a place to begin and grow. Send us the compassion to create a safe place for us to explore **possibilities**. Give us the confidence **to ask** for what we need and want. **Give us the courage to begin to build.**

And the people said, we will make it so. *We will make it so.*  
Blessed be! *Blessed Be. Amen! Amen*

## After the Gathering: Facilitator Responsibilities

1. Rest up and take care of yourself! Affirm each other for all of the energy you have put into the gathering.
2. Read over the evaluation forms. Then mail the hard copies of these forms and any other hard copy materials to:  
Task Force on Youth Ministry  
ATTN: Beth Dana  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108
3. Type up all handwritten notes on newsprint/note cards/report forms.
4. Respond to the “Facilitator Afterthoughts” questions within one week of the gathering. Responses can be e-mailed to [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org) or completed online.
5. Compile the following materials into a typed report and send to [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org).
  - Outline/schedule of the gathering
  - Report Form 2/Notes on strengths and growing edges
  - Report Form 3: Identifying Needs and Changes
  - Summary of the participant evaluations – most helpful parts, least helpful parts, comments on the process
  - Youth ministry definition feedback
  - Youth empowerment definition feedback
  - Any recommendations *you* have for the district based on your experience facilitating the gathering and getting to know the district
  - Any additional materials that you believe would be helpful to include in the report
6. Send photos by mail or e-mail (preferred) to [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org) or the address above.

Once Beth Dana receives all of these materials, she will send complete reports (including scanned copies of the evaluation forms) to the facilitators and district leaders.

## After the Gathering: District Responsibilities

1. Complete Report Form 1 – on paper or typed – and send it to [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org) or

Task Force on Youth Ministry  
ATTN: Beth Dana  
25 Beacon Street  
Boston, MA 02108

2. Send photos of the gathering by mail or e-mail (preferred) to [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org) or the address above.
3. Send the names and roles of the District Task Force members to Beth Dana at [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org).
4. Convene the District Task Force. Please establish a liaison to the UUA's Task Force from within this group, and send their name/contact info to Beth Dana at [BDana@uua.org](mailto:BDana@uua.org).
5. Spread the word about the outcomes and recommendations of the gathering! Engage others in the conversation and in the change process.

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

Full name of district: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of district youth ministry gathering: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Type of gathering: \_\_\_ At a district annual conference \_\_\_ At a stand-alone event \_\_\_ At a youth con \_\_\_

Length of gathering: \_\_\_\_\_

Participation:

Total number of participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of youth participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of adult participants: \_\_\_\_\_

Does your district have a Youth-Adult Committee/Youth Steering Committee/the equivalent?

Yes    No

If yes, what is it called? \_\_\_\_\_

What positions/roles does it include?

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

Do youth serve on any other district committees?                      Yes    No

If yes, which one(s)? \_\_\_\_\_

Does your district have a youth coordinator/minister?                      Yes    No

What other staff support, if any, exists for youth ministry in the district?

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?

Please share with us any exciting aspects or programs of your district's youth ministry. Use the other side of this paper and attach additional sheets if necessary.



**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	Growing Edges



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

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Infrastructure Need/Change #1: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Infrastructure Need/Change #2: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Infrastructure Need/Change #3: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

## RESOURCES

Resource Need/Change #1: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Resource Need/Change #2: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Resource Need/Change #3: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

## PROGRAMMING

Programming Need/Change #1: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Programming Need/Change #2: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Programming Need/Change #3: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

## TRAINING

Training Need/Change #1: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Training Need/Change #2: \_\_\_\_\_

---

What will this change accomplish?	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

Training Need/Change #3: \_\_\_\_\_

---

<b>What will this change accomplish?</b>	
<b>NEXT STEPS</b>	<b>WHO</b>
1.	
2.	
3.	

**District Youth Ministry Gathering  
Participant Evaluation**

1. What parts of the district youth ministry gathering did you find **most** useful?
2. What parts of the district youth ministry gathering did you find **least** useful?
3. What is your main hope for the future of youth ministry?
4. What gifts can you bring to strengthening youth ministry?
5. Do you feel like you were able to make an important contribution to this gathering and that your voice was heard?
6. Please comment on the process and facilitation.
7. Is there anything else you want us to know?

**Please tell us about yourself (optional):**

I am a (circle one):    Middle School Youth    Older Youth    Young Adult    Adult  
I currently am or have in the past been involved in district youth programs (circle one):    Yes    No  
I am or have been a leader (youth or adult) at the district level (circle one):    Yes    No



UNITARIAN  
UNIVERSALIST  
ASSOCIATION OF  
CONGREGATIONS