



**Pacific Southwest District
Consultation on Youth Ministry
Summary Report**

April 28, 2007

Riverside, CA

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The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth District Information

Full name of district: Pacific Southwest District

Date of district youth ministry gathering: 28 April 2007

Type of gathering: District Assembly

Length of Gathering: Total time of 3 hours 45 minutes (three 1¼ hour workshops)

Participation:

Total number of participants: 65

Number of youth participants: 30

Number of adult participants: 35

Number of congregations represented: 22 (out of 50)

Included: High School youth, Junior High youth, youth not connected to YRUU, ministers, DREs, youth advisors, congregational Board members, PSWD Board members, RE teachers, RE committee members, choir directors, parents, lay leaders

Does the district have a Youth-Adult Committee / Youth Steering Committee/ the equivalent? Yes, the YRUU Board. The YRUU Board includes the following positions: Chair, Newsletter Editor, Youth Council Rep, PSWD Board Rep, Clerk/Treasurer, Communications Engineer, Social Action Coordinator, Spirituality Coordinator, 2 Adults At-Large

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

Do youth serve on any other district committees? Yes, the District Assembly Planning Team.

What staff support exists for youth ministry in the district? Director of Lifespan Programs (Tera Little). A volunteer team Youth Ministry Consultants – youth and adults who are trained to lead day-long trainings in church clusters.

Does the district offer trainings? Starting in fiscal year 08 the district will be much more intentional about offering Chrysalis Trainings. A lot of energy and time currently goes into the Senior High Camp (two offered each year). The district occasionally offers Ministry With Youth Renaissance Modules (every 2-3 years in rotation) and Our Whole Lives trainings.

Please share with us exciting aspects or programs of your district's youth ministry.

Tera Little says: We are holding our own Summit on Senior High Camp May 18-19, 2007 with two amazing facilitators, Megan Dowdell and Betty Jeanne Rueters-Ward. My plan is that we will be able to utilize all the information generated at the District Gathering as some foundational work for the Summit. I am really excited and hopeful about the future of youth ministry in our district.

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

Spiritual Development

How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out our faith in the world?

- Youth leadership
- Parental involvement
- Membership and attendance at youth group and church
- Social action involving parents and youth
- Help kids identify what spirituality means to them – give them a language/vocabulary
- More involvement in church activities and the community (x3)
- Ability to be at District Assembly and UUA General Assembly
- More mini-cons or opportunities to be together
- More doing/living instead of talking – a balance (x2)
- Interesting activities
- Safe sharing space
- Putting together youths' interest with support from adults, e.g., transportation, funds, facilitating
- Ask youth what they consider spiritual (Can an atheist be spiritual? Yes), articulate what spirituality is (x2)
- Opportunity for rituals
- Intergenerational services (x2)
- Make services more enjoyable
- Needs: community among the youth; more discussions on spirituality and information on spirituality
- Intentional about meeting the various spiritual needs, intentional programming (x2)
- Youth service: planning and carrying out
- Coming of Age
- Committed adult/youth leadership
- Trainings on spirituality – more often
- Education of the benefits of providing training
- Accentuate the positive

How do congregations and the district currently contribute to the spiritual development of youth?

Community

- No youth group/YES youth group
- Food
- Mix fun with serious

- Doing more together
- Some congregations are trying to get more involved with youth – rebuilding their youth program. We're having a wake-up – will take more congregational support!!
- Share joys and concerns
- By providing an opportunity to meet, create community
- Intergenerational connection (disconnect in some congregations though)
- Once a month intergenerational service
- Coffee hour
- Opportunities to interact with younger people
- Social interaction
- Providing a critical mass

Focus on Spirituality, Learning

- Chalice lighting
- Studying evolution
- Opportunity for ritual
- Coming of Age
- Need more intentional spirituality

Camps/Conferences

- District Assembly
- Senior high camp
- Junior high camp
- Family camps
- Youth camps – spiritually-fed to some degree, especially by small group discussions, inspired sometimes re: social justice
- Camps -> worship every day
- Cons
- Mini cons
- Camps and cons only
- Under funded scholarships
- Workshops and assemblies are intergenerational

Leadership and Inclusion

- Honor youth ideas, experiences, questions – respect
- Can youth join congregations as members
- Opportunities to lead services
- Adults recognizing the youth community
- Youth leadership
- Youth/YRUU Sunday
- Youth on Boards and Committees

How could congregations and the district contribute to the spiritual development of youth?

- Create traditions
- Get youth input
- Better financing for district events for youth
- Need youth ministers and district staff person to focus on youth and young adult ministry
- Focus on welcoming older youth
- More congregational young adult and campus ministry groups for younger adults (18-25ish)
- More money, money, money
- Paid youth advisors
- Bowling team, sports program
- Contemporary, interesting, engaging curricula for senior high
- Tie dye and candles
- Extend and expand the chalice lighting/sharing
- Send youth to training and conferences
- More trainings in different geographical areas
- Mini trainings instead of whole weekends due to youth schedule conflicts
- Funding for transportation
- Full ride scholarship for every congregation to send more youth to district and GA – integrated participation, bring back ideas to congregations
- More staffing at district and continental level (not enough currently, spread too thin)
- Key adults involved
- Advocate within the congregation
- Financial involvement of the congregation to support youth to go to programs
- PSWD focus on getting adults to work on breakthrough
- Work with clusters to do youth programs and support youth
- Need help in developing content materials and ideas
- Meaningful conversations
- Space for dialogue between families and youth
- Help on how to involve youth in congregational initiatives
- Vision and desired outcomes for youth ministry

Improving Congregational Involvement

- Congregations should address radical hospitality to youth
- Bottom-up involvement
- Mentor/buddy system at district events
- Professional paid youth advisors
- Youth being reflected in the budget
- Youth motivating other youth to be involved in camps/district events
- Communicating the message that youth can choose to go to worship service
- Field Trip! (include youth in the planning)

- Be physically welcoming

Growing Edges

- Welcoming
- Fun workshops (physical, arts and crafts, wink)
- Influencing youth
- Variety in worship
- Strong communication (cluster \leftrightarrow district)
- More ice breakers throughout (youth and adults)
- Authentic connection between congregations and district

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

Programming

Programming Need/Change #1: Increased interfaith development

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/define spirituality (individually), strengthen resistance to proselytizing • Having views challenged with other/opposing views • Thematic examinations of commonalities/differences among faiths 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Learning: develop curriculum	1. DREs, youth, youth advisors
2. Clarify, strengthen, develop UU identity individually and as a community	2. Ongoing discussion: youth group, covenant circle, congregation
3. Explore ethics/issue perspectives of other faiths, in some depth. Compare with UU perspectives and understandings.	3. Consult with leaders of other faiths (DREs), youth group discussions on a regular basis

Programming Need/Change #2: Youth to Young Adult Transitioning

What will this change accomplish? More youth participation in events –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide age-appropriate involvement and activities which will keep a currently undefined/neglected group interested and involved so they won't leave • Preserves continuity and resources by not losing members of this transitioning age group • Provides support to transitioning age group 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. College age (18-25is) programs and groups at congregational, district, and national levels	1. Adult Faith Development Director
2. Programs need to be staffed, funded, and designed	2. Reps from congregational committees and groups
3. Discuss options such as becoming a youth advisor	3. District and national reps

4. More communication between youth and young adults	
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Programming Need/Change #3: More involved in community

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Faith as part of everyday life • Increased visibility • Spending more time with diverse youth in another context/setting • Putting beliefs into action – becoming an activist 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Form relationships with people outside of YRUU	1. YRUU community and leaders
2. Diversify YRUU culture in order to open community to new members and ideas	2. Informal leaders
3. Have discussions and produce a list about what district YRUU community needs to keep youth interested and attending	3. Congregational and district YRUU groups
4. Increase awareness about district events on a congregational level – encourage youth group attendance	4. Youth advisors and district youth

Training

Training Need/Change #1: Chrysalis Trainings (1. awareness and promotion to multiple demographic groups, 2. financial support)

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More knowledgeable youth and adults • Experience • Increased program support 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Newsletter, advertising, list serves, websites	1. PSWD Director of Lifespan Programs, Newsletter Editor, DREs, Webmasters
2. Verbal announcement	2. Director of Lifespan Programs, Ministers
3. Distribute information packets (as per Super Camp Sunday)	
4. Fundraising to pay for training – Youth Sunday with collection to support training, Corporate Sponsorship	4. Youth Group

Training Need/Change #2: Youth Advisor Training (more frequently scheduled, more advance notice)

What will this change accomplish? More youth participation in events –	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More participating congregations • Confidence building for new advisors, more fresh ideas • Opportunities to network • Increase number of advisors 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Make knowledge more available in different ways – mailings, phone calls, newsletters (district and cluster)	1. Clusters/District
2. Schedule regular trainings (every six months)	2. District

Training Need/Change #3: Youth as Leaders (Trainings)

- More publicity
- More regular opportunities in specific areas (How to Dean a Con, Youth Chaplain, Youth Advisor, Anti-Racism, Working at a Camp, Worship, Critical Life Issues)
- Youth trainers
- Transportation, car pools

What will this change accomplish?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More trained people, especially youth – wider spread intelligence on ho to work this stuff • Create a greater sense of community within the district 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. ADULT SUPPORT!!!	1. Youth Advisors, Ministers
2. Identify resources (people, places, money), plan the trainings	2. Parents, DREs, District Staff, Youth (Junior and Senior High)
3. Publicity (list serve, newsletter, word of mouth)	3. Planning committee with representation from stakeholder groups

Resources

Resource Need/Change #1: Leadership: youth, adults and paid district staff.

What will this change accomplish?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paid district staff- would focus on supporting and connecting congregational youth groups; form and support young adult campus ministries and groups • Youth- more youth leadership would lead to more district representation, encourage all youth to attend leadership training or bring leadership training to more accessible locations

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults – adult leadership will support and empower youth 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Hire paid district staff to focus on youth and young adults! Offer geographically accessible leadership trainings to youth Funding, scholarship/price per congregation, advertising – more appealing to youth. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> PSWD board Paid youth staff (or Tera)

Resource Need/Change #2: Money

<p>What will this change accomplish? More youth participation in events –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Larger staff = clearer direction = more consistency Pay to develop curriculum, more LDCs 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Raise money Better scholarships – money for participation Set up scholarship funds Hire staff Develop curriculum Schedule and hold LDCs 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Local, district, and national youth directed Youth initiated Congregation/dist. develop policy Boards at all levels Youth, directed by mentors Host churches and district

Resource Need/Change #3: Curricula

<p>What will this change accomplish?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Help youth build their own spiritual identity It'll provide youth organizers, teachers, DREs with more up-to-date curriculum Online access will make it more accessible to everyone It will give people with related roles a chance to exchange ideas and see what everyone else is up to 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Commitment from National Level that youth curriculum is a priority Pay and hire writers for new curricula Test out the curricula to see what works, ask youth, teachers, DREs Get it online and in print for congregations around the nation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Grass roots up to Bill Sinkford UUA Test groups across the country and in different sized congregations UUA

Infrastructure

Infrastructure Need/Change #1: Communication

What will this change accomplish? Uniformity of understanding – everyone on the same page – more open and honest youth/adult relations	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. More organized form of getting the word out (ex. online forum)	1. YRUU (community and board)
2. Better communication with adult advisors	2. Adult Board
3. Youth advisor summit (annually?)	3. Youth camps ministry team
4. Create a better way to connect our smaller communities (i.e. minister, youth camps, team, YRUU and keep them in touch!)	4. Ministers
5. Newsletter after cons to ALL PSWD Youth (i.e. CONtext in B.C.)	5. Youth Advisors

Infrastructure Need/Change #2: Strengthen youth leadership with PSWD and congregation

What will this accomplish? Stuff gets done! Adult/youth relations strengthened by shared leadership.	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. More training to develop leadership	Youth, advisors, ministers
2. Provide real-life opportunities to use skills	
3. Congregational and district level trainings	

Infrastructure Need/Change #3: Develop Adult Allies

What will this change accomplish? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make it easier to do youth events • Change congregational culture 	
NEXT STEPS	WHO
1. Training for DREs and ministers on how to recruit allies	1. Youth Adult Council
2. Worships, sermons, and other	2. Ministers
3. Experienced adults help other adults become involved	3. DREs
4. Apprenticeships with current youth allies and the new adults	4. Congregations
5. Youth-Adult search committee	
6. Monetary compensation for advisors	

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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- Somewhere we need to add: “within the context of the congregation’s mission/vision or outcomes”
 - Switch the order of the terms: anti-oppressive, anti-racist; not anti-racist, anti-oppressive

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Evaluation Summary

33 evaluations were filled out and turned in.

Most Useful.

- Needs/next steps section
- Small group work, group discussions and planning sessions
- The mixture of youth and adults
- The dialogue and exchange of ideas/opinions, input from youth
- Meeting people from other churches
- Energy break after lunch
- Experiencing the process of preparing for the summit
- Talking about stuff after YRUU
- Info from other youth leaders and youth on how to increase strength of our program

Least Useful.

- The results of the survey, statistics – uninteresting, not helpful
- Sharing what everyone did in the end
- I felt like we needed more time to process
- Game
- The circle
- Musical chairs
- Talking about training
- Nothing – loved it all!

Comments on process and facilitation

- Facilitators – great, kept things moving, excellent team, good energy and passion, kind, patient, organized, punctual, amazing, knowledgeable, entertaining
- It was great/excellent
- The sessions were well planned and well executed
- Really insightful and interesting
- Great ideas/plans of action – but will we follow through?
- I hate small groups, but this is okay
- Small groups were a good idea
- Good process and pace with almost enough time to give everything careful thought
- Very productive

“I come away with more knowledge and confidence of our church.”

The Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Process

Workshop #1:

Welcome and reading

Intro to Consultation

Covenant

Youth ministry/youth empowerment definitions

Power point of data and reflection questions, power shuffle activity

Reflection on Spirituality

Workshop #2:

Welcome and Reading

Quick Summary of what we did in last workshop

Covenant

Youth ministry/youth empowerment definitions

Finish Power Point of data and reflection questions

Strengths and growing edges of the district's youth ministry

Workshop #3

Energy break – “All my friends and neighbors”

Expand and Define Next Steps (small groups, then facilitators presented what everyone did)