

The Role of Religious Professionals in the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth

What is the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth?

The Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth will revision, revitalize and support our Association's ministry to and with youth. It will solicit the input and commitment of the widest possible spectrum of stakeholders in Unitarian Universalist youth ministry. Conversations within congregations, districts, and stakeholder organizations will focus on what they can do to support youth ministry at their level, and what the Association can do to support youth ministry as a whole. In this way, the process will build from the ideas and needs of youth and adults at the grassroots level.

Why are religious professionals important in the Consultation?

Religious professionals have a key role to play in supporting the spiritual, emotional and social development of youth. The Consultation is an opportunity to have your unique needs and visions for youth ministry listened to and discussed on all levels of the Association. Religious educators, ministers, youth advisors, congregational leadership, and district leadership all play a role in supporting youth ministry and building strong youth programming. Because religious educators work so closely with congregational youth programs, you are also essential in outreach efforts to involve as many youth as possible.

Religious professionals can engage in the process in multiple ways:

✓ Survey

In January and February 2006 a survey will be made available to youth. The goal is to capture the experience of youth with varying levels of involvement – YRUU (district and continental), local congregations, and youth who have chosen not to engage in youth ministry after junior high. Religious professionals are key at reaching out to youth in all three of these categories and encouraging them to voice their experiences through the survey process. If possible, please send lists of youth with contact information to the Youth Office so that they can make the survey available to your youth.

✓ Congregations

Your congregation will receive a process guide in January 2006 advising you on how to organize a congregational conversation about your youth ministry. We encourage you to help coordinate these intergenerational conversations in your congregation during April and May 2006, and to actively participate in them as well.

✓ Districts

The outcome of the survey and congregational conversations will guide and focus the district conversations, which will happen during the 2006-2007 church year. These conversations will address both district level youth programming as well as how the district level can better serve local congregations. These gatherings will be facilitated by youth and adult members of the Taskforce on Ministry to and with Youth.

✓ Stakeholder Organizations

The Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association and Liberal Religious Educators Association have been identified as core stakeholders in youth ministry. Between May 2006 and May 2007 every core stakeholder group will have a meeting about their youth ministry. By engaging in dialogue with other religious professionals you may determine how best to support youth ministry throughout congregations and districts.

Questions or Feedback? – Contact Beth Dana, UUA Youth Ministry Associate at (617) 948-4352 or Jesse Jaeger, UUA Youth Programs Director at (617) 948-4359. For more information go to: www.uua.org/trus/youth.