

Making Space in the Center: Creating Multigenerational Community



Imperative of the Work



Why Put Multigenerational at the Center?

The World is Changing

- More Diverse
- More people identifying as unaffiliated, spiritual but not religious, don't see a need for communal structures
- Want embodied sense of spirituality with a faith that makes sense
- Family structures are changing with delay of marriage and having children; living longer

Cost of Losing Our Youth

- Gulf between the experience in our religious education programs and the adult worship experience
- We focus on the needs of those adults coming into our congregations often to the exclusion of the youth and young adults that are there
- Only 12.5% of our adult members identify as lifelong UU's as opposed to nearly half of mainline congregations

"The Problem of Retention in Unitarian Universalism" By Rev. Christana Wille McKnight
(UU Growth Blog, 2010)



We are Called to this Work



- We have good news to share and we could share it with our children and youth with an expectation that they will **want** to stay
- We Can – Congregations are one of the last places to find multiple generations together in one place

We are Called to this Work



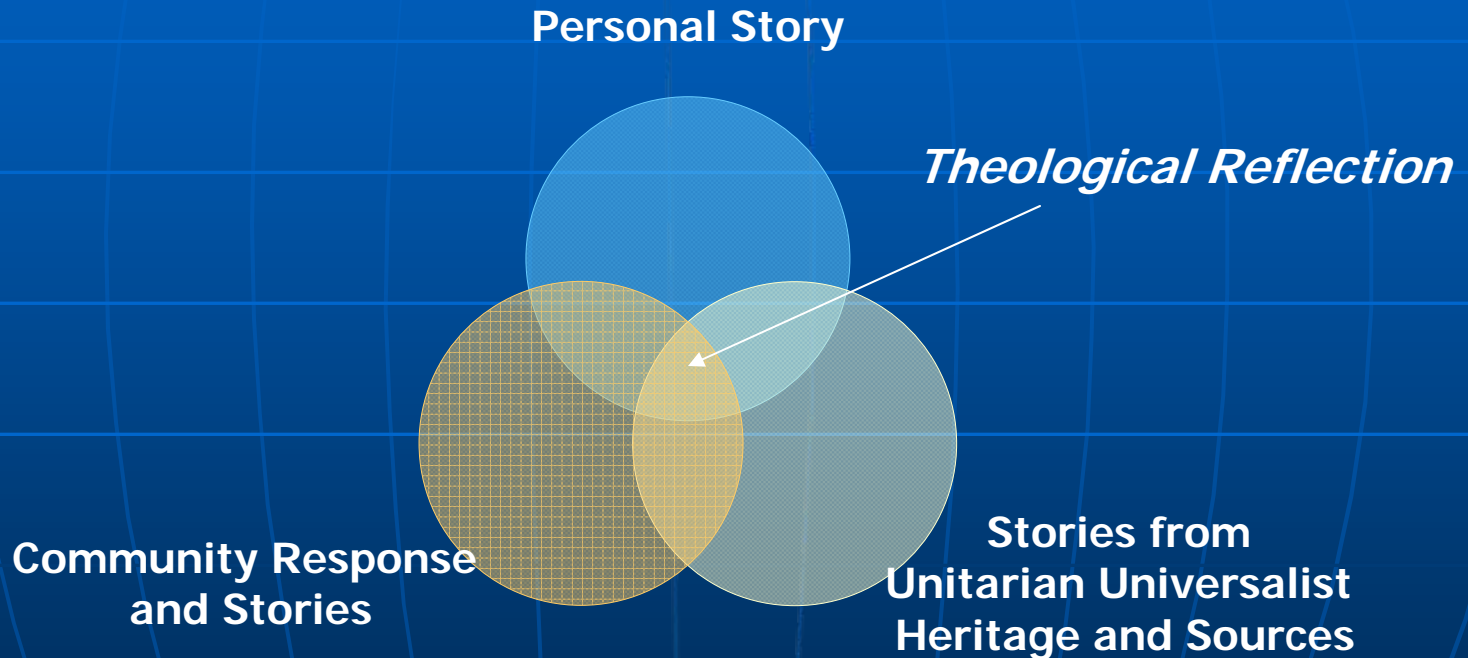
- There are twice as many people who identify as UU than are in our congregations – why?
- Channing implored us that the task of religious community *"is to awaken the soul, to excite and cherish the spiritual life."*

Multigenerational Listening Circle

People of all
ages exploring
a question of
meaning,
values, and
faith together



Theological Reflection Model



Liminal Space

- A state of being in between or on the border of what is established and known
- Not safe or predictable
- Ambiguity, openness, indeterminacy
- Where growth and learning abound
- Good place for people of faith to be

Engaging in theological Reflection across generations

- ❑ Danger and risk
- ❑ Creativity and possibility
- ❑ A way to make meaning together
- ❑ A way to grow souls
- ❑ A way to *create* liminal space rather than wait for it to come to you

One thing at a time!

- Keep it simple!
- Make use of opportunities that come your way naturally



Start with a vision



Dealing with roadblocks



One thing at a time!

Do one thing at a time- and then lift up the one thing you did



Build on success



We are all challenged by
the “**how**” of
multigenerational
ministry.

**How are we going to
do it?**



“As we face more and more options, we become overloaded. Choice no longer liberates, it debilitates.”

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard
By: Chip Heath and Dan Heath, New York: Broadway, 2010.

Who is at the table?



1. What is the age range of those who could potentially be served by this?

2. What is the location:
Physical/facility or online /website?

3. What resources are needed?

4. How much will it cost?

5. How many volunteers would you need?

6. How would you identify the volunteers and prepare them?

7. What are the roadblocks?

“Big problems are rarely solved with commensurately big solutions. Instead, they are most often solved by a sequence of small solutions, sometimes over weeks, sometimes over decades.”

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard By: Chip Heath and Dan Heath



BABY STEPS

Take baby steps along the way and in the end you will have reached your goal

Remember the benefits



Family Time

Benefit:

Congregations
one of the last
places left
where families
can spend time
together



Service as a Family Value

Benefit:

Multigenerational
service work
enshrines service
as a family value



Multigenerational is Multicultural

Benefit:

- Become more aware of diversity w/i congregation
- Become border crossers, multivocal





RESOURCES

Resource list and PowerPoint presentation available online at www.uua.org/religiouseducation/multigenerational/index.shtml

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Thank you for your participation!

Share your success stories with us!

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