

Adult Faith Formation

Spark Handbook



Session Three Handouts

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Handout 3.1a: Congregational Mission and Adult Faith Formation

Prework

Respond to the following questions prior to Session Three.

- To what does your congregation devote resources — volunteer time, staff time, messaging and/or money?

Locate your Congregation's Mission Statement

The mission statement is sometimes on a Governance page on your website. You may use an Adult Faith Formation Team Mission statement if the former is not available.

- How does this mission align with what your congregation devotes resources—volunteer time, staff time, and/or money?
- How does this mission reflect the congregational community? The culture of the larger community? Where is it aligned and where are there gaps?
- Ideally, how does Adult Faith Formation carry out the congregation's mission? Be specific in terms of offerings as well as general overview.

Prework: The Mission Statement is where you are headed, not where you are. If your congregation's mission statement can work as direction for your Adult Faith Formation, use it. If you have a specific Adult Faith Formation Mission statement, you may prefer to use that one. **Write the mission you use here.**

Handout 3.1b: Guiding Questions to Discern Mission

Use your answers to the questions in the previous exercise for your group discussion on other participant's mission statements.

This in-session exercise begins with each person sharing their mission statement aloud with the group

- I can see where you are going here on the vision, tell me where you are stuck?
- What ways do you organize the offerings now...does attendance or leadership for those offerings help you clarify the vision a bit?
- I am reading it this way.....describe that....is that what you mean?
- Tell me what implementing this vision looks like specifically in terms of offering?

Before checking out, invite everyone to consider whether they have any follow-up questions about what they heard.

3.2 What Will You Call It?

The definition of Adult Religious Education, Adult Spiritual Development, Adult Learning or Adult Faith Formation are more alike across religious faith traditions than one might suspect. And yet, there appears to be no definitive agreement of what must be taught in Unitarian Universalism, with the UUA website offering:

Adult religious education is a set of planned activities that enable people who share similar religious values, sense of spirituality, or a similar faith stance to work together for spiritual awakening and faith development—religious growth. [Some adults] may be looking for spiritual growth and a sense of connection, not only with other people, but with the mystery of being alive. They may be eager to figure out how they can help to bring more love and justice into the world.¹

This explanation of adult religious education is participant centered, and allows for variance across congregations. As you choose your program title, recognize that it will convey theological underpinnings as well as positive and negative connotations that you, or people in your congregation might have when read. You might include feelings, descriptors, expectations as well as implicit or explicit theological references or foundations. You might want to research the titles and descriptions from religious backgrounds that are common in your community as you do this work.

	Negative	Positive
Adult Religious Education		
Adult Spiritual Development		
Adult Learning		
Adult Faith Formation		
Lifelong Faith Formation		
Other:		

¹ <https://www.uua.org/re/adults/starting>

Other:		
Other:		

Note the choices you are leaning towards and note how you will work through the possible negative connotations you identified.

Handout 3.3a Your Adult Faith Formation Action Plan and Presentation

How to Prepare Your Adult Faith Formation Action Plan and Presentation

Complete Your Congregational Rubric

You will do this primarily on your own time, though there is some in-session opportunity to add to it. As we learn about a new characteristic that makes for good adult religious education, review your past offerings you have listed, and any new ones you are planning, and check the box if it applies; i.e. Yes, it is a huddle class (i.e. aimed at white folks or a particular demographic) and it is transformative (i.e. lots of dissonant learning). The completed rubric will “reveal” what is missing, what you may have too much of, and who is not attending. It will help you mix-it up to form a more “whole” Adult Faith Formation ministry.

Post a Project on Shared Collaborative Slides

Each participant will post their congregational Adult Faith Formation program in some visual form to expand on their presentation – it can be a mock website, handout, congregational email, newsletter article. Find some examples on the [Google Sample Slides](#). Include your Action Plan on the [Shared Collaborative Slides](#) for peer and facilitator review. Contact facilitators if you need assistance. Your project should utilize the rubric developed throughout

the module which audits offerings/programs for desired learning characteristics and future possible additions

Presentation to Newcomers

Imagine you have been asked to present a short, very short synopsis of your congregation's adult faith formation ministry to a Newcomer class. You will be there with someone from the choir and social justice ministry. This particular class has a few new families and some younger, non-white congregants along with a handful of middle-aged folx. Some ideas of sharing your Action Plan to Newcomers could utilize some of these suggestions:

- Provide a compelling overall philosophy and purpose, tying into the congregational mission. "What meaning-making engagement can I grow with here?"
- Use a visual or read something intriguing about connecting with others (remember most newcomers are looking to make meaning through relationships)
- You might also direct them to a website or provide a listing of offerings, such as the project portion of the Final Project. NOTE: You will not speak to the slides or whatever visual you provide as there won't be enough time.
- The facilitators and co-learners will be silent stand-ins for the Newcomers.
- Your presentation should be no longer than 4 minutes allowing the "Newcomers" one question for you to answer.

Respond in the Online Forum

Also include in the online post-discussion forum question about your project.

- a piece of advice/problem solving that you received from other project group members
- a specific challenge you had to overcome; and a specific addition to your plan that excites you.

Handout 3.3b: New Additions and Possible Challenges

Prework

Answer the following questions here and when you collaborate in your project groups in-session.

1. What is one new planned addition and why is it especially important?

2. What is one challenge that you think will need to be addressed before implementation and how might it be addressed?

Present your Congregational Rubric to your Project Group. Share the responses to the questions above and ask the following. Take notes since this specific help you receive from your group will be included in your final presentation.

1. What is missing?

2. What challenges remain?

Handout 3.4: Space Between the Logs Reflection

Prework: Watch this video [A People So Bold video](#) by Dr. Mark Hicks which begins at 00:53 and ends at 04:04. You will also need colored pencils or markers.

Respond Through Drawing and Words

In class, after watching the video that includes the “Space Between the Logs,” using colored pencils or markers and paper, draw for eight (8) minutes to respond graphically to what you heard Dr. Hicks offer. Set a timer to make sure you draw for the entire 8 minutes. If you finish early, continue to reflect on your drawing until the timer rings.

Then consider answers to the questions below, about your congregation *prior to the pandemic* (if you were there). Or as it is now as the pandemic protocols ease.

- Where, in your Adult Faith Formation role, do you notice that congregational engagements are too tightly packed together?

- Where are learning opportunities packed too tightly? Why?

