

# Workshop 1 The Web of Youth Ministry

## Introduction

“There is, finally, only one thing required of us: that is, to take life whole, the sunlight and shadows together; to live the life that is given us with courage and humor and truth.

We have such a little moment out of the vastness of time for all our wondering and loving.

Therefore let there be no half-heartedness; rather, let the soul be ardent in its pain, in its yearning, in its praise.

Then shall peace enfold our days, and glory shall not fade from our lives.”

– Kendyl R Gibbons

This session describes the elements that comprise a balanced youth ministry using the model of the Web of Youth Ministry.

## Goals

This session will:

- Introduce the components of the Web of Youth Ministry
- Explore the many forms that youth ministry takes in and beyond congregations
- Address how to create a balanced youth ministry that is appropriate to the size of the congregation and youth developmental needs and interests.

## Learning Objectives

Participants will:

- Have a broader understanding of the components of youth ministry
- Apply the web of youth ministry to their own setting and consider what changes they might like to work towards.

## Workshop-at-a-Glance

### ACTIVITY

### MINUTES

Opening

10

Activity 1: The Web of Youth Ministry	10
Activity 2: Actions and Ideas	30
Closing	10

## Spiritual Preparation

Familiarize yourself with the eight components of the Web of Youth Ministry so you can discuss them easily. Reflect on what components are strongest in your congregation's youth ministry and what components could be strengthened.

## Opening (10 minutes)

### Materials for Activity

- Chalice, candle, lighter or LED/battery-operated candle
- Newsprint and markers
- Chalice lighting words: [As Surely as We Belong to the Universe](#) by Margaret A. Keip  
*As surely as we belong to the universe  
we belong together.  
We join here to transcend the isolated self,  
to reconnect,  
to know ourselves to be at home,  
here on earth, under the stars,  
linked with each other*
- Check in question:  
*Beyond youth group, what is your favorite part of your church community?*

### Preparation for Activity

- Post the chalice lighting words on newsprint and post
- Post the check in question in the designated place

### Description of Activity

Welcome first-time participants. Invite participants and facilitators to go around the circle and say their names and briefly answer the check in question (in 3 or 4 sentences). Remind

participants that check in is not a time for cross talk - clarifying questions can be asked if necessary. After everyone who wants to has had a chance to check in, ask for a volunteer to light the chalice.

## Including All Participants

Let participants know they have the right to pass or pass for now. For participants who have trouble being concise you can ask them “how would you sum up your experience in one sentence?” For participants who have trouble refraining from cross talk remind them of the group covenant and to be respectful of their peers’ time to share and the leaders’ time to facilitate.

## Activity 1: The Web of Youth Ministry (10 minutes)

### Materials for Activity

- Handout 1, Web of Youth Ministry

### Preparation for Activity

- Make copies of handout for all participants.

### Description of Activity

In this activity participants learn about the Web of Youth Ministry and explore the components.

Tell participants that there are six components to a balanced youth group and ask them if they can name them. They should list: Leadership, Social Justice, Community Building, Worship, Learning, and Youth / Adult Relations. Tell participants that youth group is but one way congregations can support their young people and create a whole web of youth ministry to support them.

Say something like:

*The Web of Youth Ministry is a multifaceted and spirit-filled model for our ministry with youth, an expansion and reframing of the older balanced youth program model. It expands the model to include new areas such as pastoral care and identity formation, and reframes youth ministry in more explicitly religious and faith development language. This model acknowledges that youth ministry extends beyond the traditional youth group*

*setting, and that congregations should offer multiple pathways for youth to participate in and benefit from the ministry of our congregations.*

Distribute Handout 1, Web of Youth Ministry and ask participants to take turns reading the components of the Web of Youth Ministry. Provide definitions or clarification of terms as needed.

Tell the group that this workshop is the beginning of a leadership journey and that the group will be developing leadership skills in each of the areas of the Web of Youth Ministry.

## **Activity 2: Activities and Actions (30 minutes)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint (at least 8 sheets) and markers
- Chime and time keeping device

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Write the name of one component of the Web of Youth Ministry at the top each of the eight sheets of newsprint. Under the title draw a line vertically down the middle of the sheet. In one column at the top write “things we currently do” and in the other column write “things we could do.” Post the sheets around the meeting space.

### **Description of Activity**

In this activity participants brainstorm specific activities or actions that fit within each component of the Web of Youth Ministry.

Have participants form small groups (2-3 people) and explain that they will engage in a “walking brainstorm” to generate lists of activities or actions that fit within each component in the Web. Tell them to write down the things the congregation is currently doing in one column as well as things that could be done in the other column. Ask each group to move to one of the eight sheets of newsprint and when the chime sounds, spend about 3 minutes writing down their ideas. Sound the chime every 3 minutes and have groups move to the next sheet of newsprint until all groups have visited each sheet. Feel free to shorten the time as needed.

Gather the group back together. Pointing to the lists, ask for observations from the group with questions such as:

*Why does \_\_\_\_\_ have less activities compared to \_\_\_\_\_ ?*

*What can we do to better incorporate it in programming?*

*Why is \_\_\_\_\_ such a big component for this group?*

*Do you notice any trends, either on your own sheet or with what we have up here?*

*Why do you think that might be?*

*Is our programming balanced?*

Ask for a volunteer/s to take a photo of each list and share with the group. Save the newsprint sheets for use in other sessions.

## **Including All Participants**

Make certain that all participants are able to reach and write on the newsprint and that there are no obstacles to moving around the room.

## **Closing (10 minutes)**

### **Materials for Activity**

- Newsprint and markers, computer and projector, or Singing the Living Tradition hymnals (enough for two or three people to share one)
- Take it Home sheet
- Handout 2 Project or Program Proposal
- Love Will Guide Us YouTube video: <https://youtu.be/ZWrgMtB27Js>

### **Preparation for Activity**

- Inform the congregation's leadership team that the Taking It Home activity includes an option for submitting a proposal to implement an idea generated in this session.
- Practice the song #131 Love Will Guide Us
- Write the lyrics to the song on newsprint or a Power Point slide or set out hymnals for participants.
- Make copies of Taking It Home and Handout 2 Project or Program Proposal for each participant.

### **Description of Activity**

Each session ends by distributing a handout to each participant called Taking it Home which is a review of the session and an invitation to participants to practice the things they've learned

throughout the week. Invite participants to gather in a circle. Thank everyone for their contributions to the group. Pass out Taking It Home and Handout 2 Project or Program Proposal and explain that at the end of each session the co-facilitators will pass out a Taking It Home handout. Explain that these handouts contain ideas for ways they can continue to explore workshop topics with family and friends. Inform participants that these are not mandatory assignments but that knowledge has more value when it is put into practice.

Review the handout and explain that one of the options this time is to create a proposal to implement an idea they generated in the Activities and Actions activity. Go over the questions in the handout with the participants. For item number seven where they are asked to write a list of steps starting with the end goal and working backwards, give an example like this using the newsprint for a visual aid:

*If your end goal is to implement a quarterly evening multigenerational worship, start with writing that at the top of your list. To successfully do this, you would need to advertise it to your community, so write that underneath your goal. To successfully advertise, you'd need to create fliers. To create fliers, you'd need to pick a time and date, theme and speakers. To solidify all that information you would need to work with a team to create the liturgy. And so on.*

Ask if there are any questions about the handout.

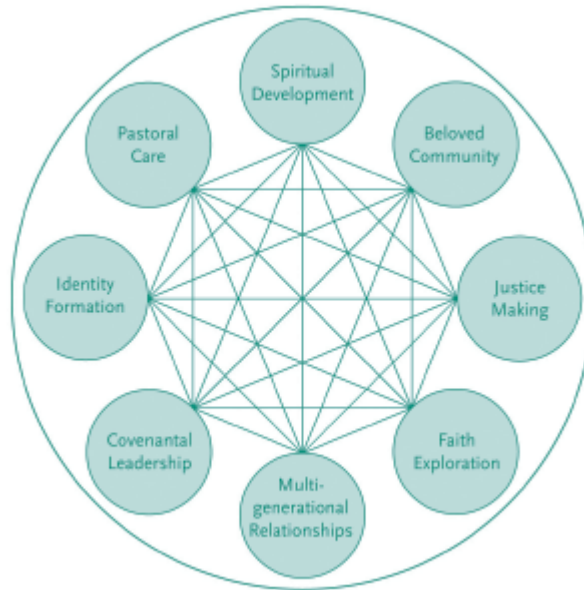
You can offer that the group can continue a discussion about this session at a later date or in a closed Facebook group if your group has one. End the workshop by inviting the group to sing #131 in Singing the Living Tradition, Love will Guide Us. The group can sing a cappella or along with the video.

## Leader Reflection and Planning

As adults working with youth in a Unitarian Universalist context, this workshop offered an opportunity to examine how your congregation incorporates the eight components of the web of youth ministry into its programming. What trends did you notice during the “walking brainstorm?” What ideas that the group came up with excited you? What did you as co-leaders learn from your co-facilitator?

## Handout 1 Web of Youth Ministry

A model for considering the balance in your youth programming, The Web of Youth Ministry presented below is adapted from the Renaissance Module Ministry with Youth.



### **Covenantal Leadership**

Youth leadership is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. Advisors encourage youth to take on more responsibility as they grow and develop. The goal is for youth to become empowered and effective leaders through intentional leadership development over time.

### **Multigenerational Relationships**

Multigenerational faith communities have programs that both meet the specific developmental needs of different age groups and bring people together across age groups. Dynamic youth ministry strives to connect youth with people of all ages through inviting them to help with religious education programs, building mentor relationships between youth and adults, forming multigenerational choirs, allowing youth to use their leadership gifts in worship services and workshops, celebrating life milestones such as Coming of Age and bridging into adulthood, and having fun outdoor retreats open to all families and ages.

### **Spiritual Development**

This is the intentional cultivation of spirituality through both individual and group spiritual practices. As spiritual beings, youth experience awe, gratitude, wonder, appreciation and “at-one-ness.” Youth ministry should encourage and offer opportunities for engagement in practices that nurture and enliven their spirits.

### **Beloved Community**

Being held in the arms of a beloved community is an essential part of being a religious person of any age. In youth ministry, beloved community has three dimensions: local, Unitarian Universalist, and interfaith. Youth should be grounded in a local community that creates deep, affirming, authentic and long-lasting relationships. Through camps and conferences, youth can connect with the wider Unitarian Universalist faith movement and see the diversity of experiences that exist within Unitarian Universalism. Interfaith community enriches youth ministry and celebrates differing religious perspectives found in the world.

### **Justice Making**

Youth practice answering our faith's calling to work for justice and to be in solidarity with others who also work for justice in many settings, including in our lives, our local communities, and the wider world. Service trips can help open youth's eyes to the realities confronting other people and inspire them to work for justice. Organizing a social justice project within the congregation can connect youth to the rest of the congregation and place youth as leaders in the social justice work of the community. Youth can also engage in advocacy and education around social justice issues that are important to them.

### **Pastoral Care**

Like people of all ages, youth have specific pastoral needs that are met in communities where people know how to listen deeply. Everyone works together to create a religious community that provides pastoral care with youth. This includes creating safe congregations, supporting youth who are in crisis, and celebrating their joys and accomplishments. Pastoral care with youth is also strengthened when ministers have a direct relationship with the youth in their congregations.

### **Faith Exploration**

Structured learning environments promote the free and responsible search for truth, meaning and purpose as a part of youth faith development. Faith exploration takes place when youth engage with workshops at camps and conferences, as well as through curricula that challenge youth to look deep and develop their faith. Because the Unitarian Universalist approach to religious education acknowledges that we are all both learners and teachers, when youth are asked to lead or facilitate education programs, it is a learning and leadership development opportunity.

### **Identity Formation**

Dynamic youth ministry supports youth in their journeys to figure out who they are as spiritual beings, relational beings, racial/ethnic and sexual beings, people of faith, justice makers, lifelong learners and leaders, as well as how they fit in multigenerational communities. Youth ministry helps youth develop a healthy identity in these areas and learn to live with integrity so that their Unitarian Universalist faith is inseparable from their identity as a whole person.



## Handout 2 Project or Program Proposal

On a separate sheet of paper, write your answers to the following questions:

1. Which idea generated from the Activities and Actions activity would you like to implement in your congregation? Which component(s) of the Web of Youth Ministry does this idea reflect?
2. What is the mission of your congregation? If you do not know the answer, you can look on your congregation's website or ask your parents/guardians, advisor, religious educator or minister. How does your idea fit with the mission of your congregation?
3. Write a short "elevator pitch" explaining why your congregation would benefit from implementing this idea.
4. Who are the "stakeholders" in this idea? A stakeholder is a person or group that will have interest in or concerns about the idea. Stakeholders can affect or be affected by the idea.
5. Who could be your partners to bring this idea to life?
6. How much money would it take to get this idea off the ground? How much money would it take to keep it going?
7. Starting with your end goal and going backwards, write a list of steps you would need to take to make this idea a reality.
8. Next to the steps in the list above write the dates of reasonable deadlines for completing each step. Start with the first step you will need to take (at the bottom of the list).

Next, write an email or a script for a phone call to your advisor, religious educator or minister explaining your idea, how it fits with the mission of the congregation and a deadline you think is reasonable to implement the idea. Ask to set up a time to talk in person or over the phone with the leadership team (advisor, religious educator and/or minister) about a potential budget, timeline and partners for your idea.

## Taking It Home

“There is, finally, only one thing required of us: that is, to take life whole, the sunlight and shadows together; to live the life that is given us with courage and humor and truth.

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– [Kendyl R Gibbons](#)

### IN TODAY’S SESSION...

We learned about the six components to a balanced youth group and the eight components to the Web of Youth Ministry. We examined what our faith community is already doing within the Web of Youth Ministry and generated a list of possibilities to incorporate in the future.

**CARRY ON THE CONVERSATION:** Think about what area(s) of the Web of Youth Ministry excite you most and tell your advisor, minister and/or religious educator. **Have a conversation** with your parents about the Web of Youth Ministry and tell them what ideas the group generated excite you most.

**TAKE ACTION:** Using Handout 2 Project or Program Proposal, **write a proposal** to implement the project or program that excited you most from the list that the group generated. **Consider** who would need to be involved, how much time and money it would take to implement, a timeline for the steps that need to be taken and what the benefits would be for the congregation. **Ask** your minister, advisor or religious educator for a time to meet to discuss your proposal.

**ENGAGE IN SPIRITUAL PRACTICE:** Make a list of all the things you have to and choose to do in a typical week. This list could include: going to school, chores, hanging out with friends, volunteering, watching movies, etc. Then make a list of all the things that make your spirit come alive. This list could include: listening to or playing music, meditating, doing yoga, gardening, camping, running, reading or writing poetry, journaling, dancing, having deep conversations with friends, etc. Then combine your lists and make a pie chart of how much time you spend doing all your activities. Notice how much time you spend doing the things that make your spirit come alive compared to the things you have to and choose to do. If there is an imbalance, commit to prioritizing and making time to do more things that make your spirit come alive this week.

# Facilitator Feedback Form

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations.

You may choose to [complete this feedback form online](#).

Otherwise, please forward your feedback to:  
Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries  
[youth@uua.org](mailto:youth@uua.org)

OR

Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministries  
Ministries and Faith Development  
Unitarian Universalist Association  
24 Farnsworth Street  
Boston, MA 02210-1409

## Workshops You Field Tested: \*

- Workshop 1: Web of Youth Ministry
- Workshop 2: Living in Covenant
- Workshop 3: Meaning of Leadership Worship
- Workshop 4: Shared Leadership
- Workshop 5: Active Listening
- Workshop 6: Creating Inclusive Community
- Workshop 7: Leadership Styles
- Workshop 8: Building Multigenerational Connections
- Workshop 9: Conflict Resolution and Transformation

**Number of Participants: \*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Age Range: \*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Did you work with (a) co-facilitator(s)? \***

Yes       No

**Congregation: \*** \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall, what was your experience with this program?**

**What specifically did you find most helpful or useful about this program?**

**In what ways could this program be changed or improved (please be specific)?**

**Did you enrich the program with any resources that you would recommend to others?**

**What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your life going forward?**

**What impact, if any, do you think this program will have on your congregation going forward?**

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Email: \*** \_\_\_\_\_

# Participant Feedback Form

We welcome your critique of this program, as well as your suggestions. Thank you for your feedback! Your input improves programs for all of our congregations.

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## Workshops You Participated In: \*

- Workshop 1: Web of Youth Ministry
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- Workshop 7: Leadership Styles
- Workshop 8: Building Multigenerational Connections
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Your Age: \* \_\_\_\_\_

Congregation: \* \_\_\_\_\_

**Overall, what was your experience with this program?**

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**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Your Email: \*** \_\_\_\_\_