

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (FAITH FORMATION) STAFFING

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The purpose of this document is to help congregations determine appropriate religious education staffing levels. Given the diverse nature of religious education programming and congregational context, it is unrealistic to provide a precise “formula.” We hope that the information below enables you to have clarifying conversations and to make informed decisions about staffing levels.

This document is the first effort of its kind in a number of years. Feedback welcome. We expect to refine this guidance over time.

Factors to Consider

- Program size (number of people involved)
- Range of ages served (children, children and youth, lifespan)
- Nature of faith formation programming
- Job scope of the religious educator
- Number of worship services or other distinct RE programming times
- Level of volunteer and ministerial support

Every position is unique. There is no way to dictate precise staffing needs based on any individual factor. While we cannot take into account all of the factors above, we attempt to provide some general guidelines.

Relationship between Program Size and Hours

Some tasks are highly program size-dependent, e.g., volunteer recruitment. Other responsibilities take roughly the same amount of time, whether one is serving 5 children or 500 – for instance, writing a newsletter article or preparing to deliver a time for all ages (each of which takes in the range of 1.5 to 3 hours to do well).

Job Scope

Take a moment to consider where your position falls on the continuum below, relative to the three job scope levels outlined: Coordinator, Classic, and Comprehensive. (Nearly all positions are “hybrids.” The descriptions below are not intended to represent exact job descriptions.)

COORDINATOR: Administrative and Volunteer Support

A primarily administrative role supporting a religious education program for children and/or youth. Not a director-level position. Typically works independently on well-defined tasks and cooperatively with ministerial and lay leadership.

Responsibilities focused on:

- Volunteer recruitment and support (often with assistance from others)
- Communication with families
- Materials and space preparation
- Record-keeping
- Policy implementation
- Usually children or children/youth only
- Opportunities for local connection and development with peers

Coordinator positions might be most appropriate for:

- *smaller programs*
- *mid-size congregations/programs with strong program oversight from the minister and/or exceptional volunteer support*

CLASSIC Director of Religious Education

This is intended to represent a typical scope of work for a religious educator. Works autonomously with a moderate level of authority and expectations of collaboration with minister and other staff.

Overall accountability (which may involve delegation) for coordinator responsibilities listed above, plus attending to many or most of the following:

- Curriculum selection, planning, and adaptation
- Program policy development
- General administrative tasks, including budget monitoring and development
- Childcare coordination
- Worship involvement (regular time for all ages, multigen worship, and/or children's chapel)
- Community-building activities for all ages
- Separate programming for youth (OWL, youth group, Coming of Age) – direct oversight and/or delegation/supervision
- Occasional facilitation of parent and/or adult education courses
- Front-line staff support for families
- Communication with congregation (e.g., newsletter articles)
- Meaningful professional development
- Service to the wider UU RE community

A Classic Director of Religious Education position might be most appropriate for:

- *A small congregation with a strong commitment to vibrant religious education programming*
- *A mid-size congregation/program with a solid commitment to religious education*
- *A large congregation with strong ministerial support and/or exceptional volunteer support for a dependable RE program.*

COMPREHENSIVE Lifespan Faith Formation Ministry

A well-developed lifespan position that goes well beyond children's programming to provide overall leadership for all ages in the area of faith formation, including integration with multiple areas of church life. In collaborative relationship with staff team and operates with a high level of authority within the program area.

Attends to most of the above (Coordinator and Classic, delegating as appropriate), as well as many of the following:

- Strategic planning
- Leadership development
- Collaborative staff team planning and congregational management
- Overseeing adult faith formation and/or small group ministries
- Formal role in pastoral care for children and families
- Developing and implementing innovative programming models
- Social justice and/or interfaith activities involving all ages
- Regular worship presence and occasional preaching
- Advanced professional development
- Leadership in the wider RE and UU communities

A Comprehensive Lifespan Faith Formation Ministry position might be most appropriate for:

- *A small congregation with an exceptional commitment to vibrant and innovative religious education programming for all ages*
- *A mid-size congregation with a commitment to innovation and growth*
- *A large congregation/program with expectations of innovation and a well-integrated, highly-developed program*

Once you have determined where your religious educator position falls on the above continuum, look at the chart on the next page for guidance on appropriate hours relative to program size.

Staffing for Success

Consider the chart below a starting point, keeping in mind all of the factors listed at the top of this document.

Number of children/youth^^ involved*	COORDINATOR Hrs/week	CLASSIC Hrs/week	COMPREHENSIVE Hrs/week
Up to 30	12-15	22-25	30-35
30-60	15-20	25-30	35-40
60-100	20-30	30-40	40 + 10 Assistant**
100-150	30-40	40 + 10 Assistant**	40 + 20 Assistant**
150-200	Not recommended	40 + 20 Assistant**	40 + 30 Assistant**
Over 200	Not recommended	40 + 30 Assistant**	40 + 40 Assistant**, plus additional support staff

^^ The number of adults served is not explicitly taken into account in this chart. If the position is lifespan, be sure to consider the needs and expectations of adult programming responsibilities.

* “Involved” means overall participation over time. We recognize that formal enrollment practices and attendance patterns vary, and that some faith development initiatives fall outside of Sunday mornings. How many children/youth is the religious educator keeping track of and serving in some fashion? (Consider that inconsistent attendance and families absent for a period of time require extra planning and follow-ups.)

** Assistant – RE Assistant or strategic staffing, e.g., youth coordinator, clerical assistant.