



A New Guide to Young Adult Ministry

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Young Adult Revival Network

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This guide was written by three authors over a three year period. As such the contents may have different tones and writing styles, or cite once recent events, or may be formatted in peculiar ways.

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Chapter 0: Read This First

Hello and welcome to a New Guide to Young Adult Ministry.

Here at the Young Adult Revival Network, we're passionate about young adult ministry. It's our life, our *raison d'être*, why we wake up in the morning and why we do this work. You picked up this guide, so we know on some level that you like, love, respect, appreciate, or otherwise have an affinity for young adults and ministering to them. Perhaps you have a successful young adult program and are looking for what's next. More likely, you're here to start a ministry and are looking for first steps. Whatever your situation, our guide is here to give you the tools, ideas, and practices to help make your young adult ministry successful!

Before you dive into Chapter 1, we'd really, REALLY like you to read the rest of Chapter 0 first. Here, we lay out several foundational elements that will help you to navigate and use the rest of the guide effectively.

In Chapter 0, we will:

- Define “young adult ministry” and other essential terms
- Explore the importance of young adult ministry in 2023
- Present our *Theory of Change*
- State why young adult ministry needs to be financed
- Outline the structure of The Guide to Young Adult Ministry

This groundwork will set you, the reader, up to make the most sense of the remainder of the guide. Regardless of how you might choose to apply this guide to your ministry, we bless you as you go forward to create a vibrant young adult ministry, wherever you might be.

What is a Young Adult Ministry, Group, or/and Program?

Here is our best definition of Young Adult Ministry/ Young Adult Group/ Young Adult Program: **An intentional, structured set of activities exclusively for young adults within a faith community.**

Let's break this down

An intentional - The Young Adult Ministry must have a purpose that its members are present to and in alignment with. A group of people hanging out is not a ministry.

Structured - The systems and tools that enable the ministry to operate. Don't overthink this, we are talking about stuff like group chats, spreadsheets, and posters on bulletin boards.

Set of Activities - You have to be doing something! Just casually talking to people after Sunday Service does not make a ministry

Exclusively for young adults - Sorry young-at-heart people, but this guide is about programs for actual young adults, which we define below.

Within a faith community - This guide is being written for the Unitarian Universalist religion.

Terminology

YAM/YAG/YAPs, it's all the same thing to us

Throughout this guide we will use the term Young Adult Ministry, Young Adult Group, and Young Adult Program interchangeably. Yes, they are all technically different, but in practice are used the same throughout Unitarian Universalism. Regardless of what phrase we use, remember the definition we have set above.

Also, we are going to use the terms young adult, young adult ministry, young adult groups, and young adult programs a lot in this guide, so let's save time right now and make clear we are using these abbreviations.

YA - Young Adult

YAM - Young Adult Ministry

YAG - Young Adult Group

YAP - Young Adult Program

Finally, we will be using the terms congregation, organization, and community interchangeably. We intend to imply some formally organized group of UUs.

UUA: The Unitarian Universalist Association, the national organization for UU congregations in the United States of America.

CUC: The Canadian Unitarian Council, the national organization for Unitarian congregations in Canada.

Ministry: A faith-based program. Anything a congregation or faith organization does is a ministry, such as worship, small groups, and Sunday school.

Community: a group of people with a common interest

Community of Communities: We want to emphasize that Unitarian Universalist congregations or organizations are a “Community of Communities.” Within any UU community are small communities, be they parents, retirees, young adults, BIPOC folks, trans people, etc. In addition, people themselves are part of multiple communities; they can be UU, an employee, a relative, a mentor, a mentee, a bibliophile, a poet, an activist, etc. There are many identities congregants hold, and there are many groups they participate in. The best we can do is enable them to have fulfilling, powerful UU identities that they carry with them wherever they go in life.

We’re Here to Intentionally Make Friends

Joe Chapot - One thing I nurtured in anyone who participated in my young adult program at UUSF was that our main job was to make friends. The reason anyone comes to a faith community is because they are looking to develop new connections with people, aka make new friends. Thus it is imperative for the established young adults to intentionally reach out and offer friendship. Otherwise, the young adult group is doomed to become a clique.

Why does young adult ministry matter?

Let's have a frank talk about why this work is important.

We are going to assume you, the reader, are a Unitarian Universalist. Most likely you love being a Unitarian Universalist; and almost certainly, you have issues with the movement. So many in our faith feel unseen and treated like outsiders. Yet no matter what, there is something inside you, a flame that our faith has sparked, sustained and/or grown that drives you, that helps you navigate this complex modern world. There was a time when you were new to UUism, and since then you probably chose to call yourself UU because you loved what you saw, loved how it made you feel and wanted to claim this identity.

Making a young adult ministry is your chance to give a young adult that experience. This is your chance to be the people who started another person's journey and make a fundamental, like altering change to who they are. Your authors know folx who will say straight that if it were not for UU young adult ministry, they would be dead. Your authors know folx who found their voice in young adult ministry. You authors know ministers, DREs, lay and professional UU leaders who cut their teeth doing young adult ministry. Your authors know people who became UU because of young adult ministry. Young adult ministry is like a lighthouse in the dark, guiding young souls who want to do right in the world but are looking for a ground on which to stand and a set of principles to live

by. Our religion has what they want, we just need to get it to them in a way that works.

We want to emphasize that **our society has changed drastically since 2000**. Remember, the smartphone is just over 15 years old and wasn't ubiquitous until 10 years ago (at the time of writing.) We live in a world where everyone has access to the total amount of human knowledge and the ability to instantly communicate with anyone in any place on the planet, all at their fingertips. **THE WORLD IS DIFFERENT.**

We now live in a world where distance does not matter like it used to. The way faith communities and religions operated in the past worked for a world where geography determined nearly everything about a person's life. Now one's location plays an important, but not all-encompassing role, in a person's life. **Again. THE WORLD IS DIFFERENT,** and young adult ministry is your congregation's chance to try new things, be innovative, and deliver the same loving message in ways that meet people where they are now.

If nothing else, our religion needs young adults or else it will die. People are leaving every religion in droves, especially in the West. If we do not become a religion that young adults want to be part of, then our future is doomed. Without a constant stream of new young people becoming Unitarian Universalists, our faith will get sucked into a vicious cycle that will confine us to the dustbin of history.

But don't fret! At the time of writing, Unitarian Universalism is fighting tooth and nail to modernize, to integrate, to become a beloved, multicultural community of communities. If we are successful at these efforts and successful at welcoming young adults, then our future will be ever so bright. Unitarian Universalism has all the potential in the world, let us help you unlock it.

- - - Definition of Young Adults

Young Adults/YA: People ages 18 to 30s.

Young adulthood starts at the age of majority, which is 18 in most countries. While young adulthood has this legally defined start date, it has no defined ending. At some point, a person doesn't feel like—nor is treated like—a young adult, and in our experience, it happens when a person is between the ages of 30 to 39. Further, congregations will attract different kinds of young adult populations. A congregation in a college town is likely to attract people who are late teenagers and early 20-somethings, whereas a congregation in an expensive urban core is likely to attract working adults in their late 20s and 30s.

Emerging Adults: People ages 18 to 24.

This is a distinct phase of adulthood. First, puberty doesn't stop at 18; one of your authors was physically growing at the age of 22. Second, this is a group that is most likely learning how to operate as an independent person in society. All humans have to learn basic adult stuff like feeding themselves, managing money, living without parents, finding and keeping a

full-time job, and many more such things. At the time of writing the UUA has focused its efforts on ministering to Emerging Adults because it believes (and we agree) that this age group is more vulnerable and needs more support than your average 25+ year-old.

Youth: People ages 10-17

Too often people, especially older adults, will use the terms “young adult” and “youth” interchangeably. In Unitarian Universalism, youth are defined as people who are middle- and high-school-aged. Youth are people who do not (in almost all cases) have legal autonomy. We love youth, but this work is about serving young adults, and adults, no matter their age, should all be treated the same. Every adult has different needs, but every adult (again, in most cases) has legal autonomy. It is ageist to assume that a young adult is in any way, shape, or form less than a non-young adult. And yet so many in our faith do this in overt, covert, and unthinking ways. This phenomenon offends your authors. Do not tolerate it in your community. Do not let someone get away with saying “You're all youth to me.” Call out the offense and call in the offender.

- - - Our Theory of Change

What is a “Theory of Change.” A theory of change is a description of why a particular way of working will be effective, showing how change happens in the short, medium and long term to achieve the intended impact. It can be represented in a visual diagram, as a narrative, or both.

(source - <https://www.theoryofchange.org/what-is-theory-of-change/>)

All good guides have a thesis, a fundamental idea around which the guide is oriented, from which all actions, logic, and recommendations flow. Without a theory of change, a guide like ours would likely end up recommending contradictory, impractical, or ineffective actions that diminish, negate, or achieve the opposite effects we desire.

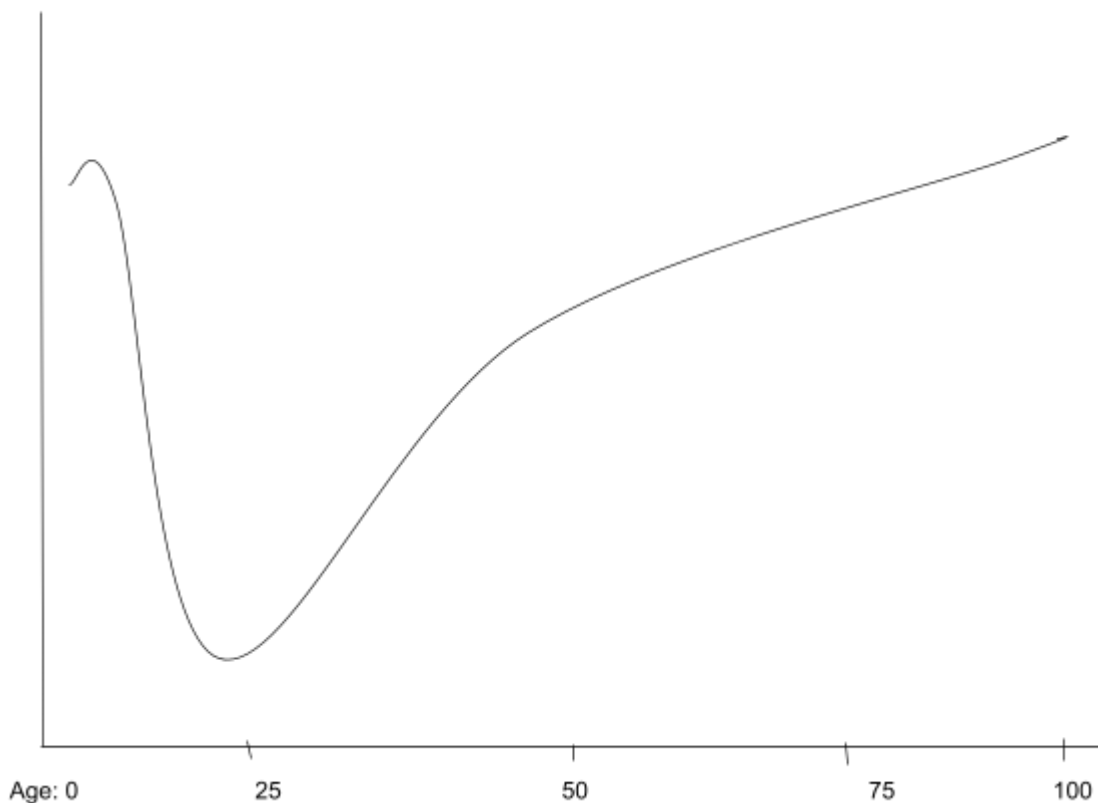
Here is the Young Adult Revival Network's *Theory of Change*:

A long-term investment in creating a young adult community yields significant results that grow over time.

Let's break this down

A Long-term: The reality at most UU congregations is they have very small young adult populations. There is usually a **dearth** of people ages 18-30s, while children, middle aged, and elder groups are better represented. We call this the **Young Adult Ditch**, which you can see in the graphic on the next page.

of members at a UU Congregation



This situation cannot be fixed in a day, month, or year. All our evidence and experience has taught us that the only way to fill this ditch is with a long-term effort. We find that a **five year commitment** is usually enough time to transform a community into one that young adults want to be part of.

Investment: Everything we have seen, learned, and heard about successful young adult ministries is that they have both financial and staff resources committed to them. See box for more information.

YOU. MUST. SPEND. MONEY!

We're gonna say this straight - YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY CANNOT VOLUNTEER ITSELF INTO EXISTENCE. If it did, our religion wouldn't have a young adult problem. Almost nothing in our guide will work without committing to fund this work. You must invest money on your young adult ministry if you want it to have any chance of succeeding in the long run. It's that simple, there are no exceptions, and we're not sorry for being this blunt.

For Example - There was a UU congregation that had an active young adult group from 2008-2011. Then it died. It died not because of controversy or problems. It died because the core group all moved away within a year, and since there was no staff person to continue the work, the congregation didn't have a young adult group for years afterwards. Now just imagine how many young adults didn't stay in that community because they had no way to connect with their peers.

Our Recommended Basic Budget - Spend \$6000 a year to hire someone at 5 hours a week, \$20 an hour for 50 weeks (with two weeks unpaid vacation,) and give them a \$1000 budget.

Creating a young adult community: Remember that UU congregations are communities of communities and right now the vast majority of them have **anemic** young adult communities. This guide will show you how to create a great young adult ministry, but **the ultimate goal of this work is to grow the community of young adults within your**

congregation. An effective young adult program causes a young adult community to arise. Community building is like growing plants; you can't make it happen directly; all you can do is foster a healthy environment for it to grow in. We will go into depth on this idea in another chapter, but never forget that it's the people that matter, not the program.

Yields significant results that grow over time.

In our experience investing in young adult ministry yields significant benefits for a congregation which increase as time goes on. The unique skills, life experiences, and talents young adults bring add to a community's capacity. Over time, as more young adults become part of your community, it becomes easier and easier to welcome new YAs, creating a virtuous cycle of growth.

And guess what, YOUNG ADULTS BECOME DUES PAYING MEMBERS!!!! Young adults find a ministry and community they resonate with, and soon they start giving money. In the long run, they will give more over as they get older and earn more income. Eventually, the initial investment you make in your young adult ministry is paid back and starts to be a positive source of revenue as more young adults become members. Making money is not the point, but the upfront cost is not sunk, it is an investment, one that is proven to produce returns.

In Summary: To fill the young adult ditch, your community needs to make a multi-year commitment to fund a young adult ministry so that your community becomes a place where

people of any age, and any life stage, can find a home within your walls.

- - - **How the guide is structured**

This Guide is currently broken into two parts

1. Section 1 is about starting the young adult ministry. It is a guide to creating, from nothing, a whole new program for young adults in your congregation.
2. Section 2 details different types of programs your young adult ministry can do. There are many things within each section you can explore.

Throughout our guide, you will often find that we have broken down the work into three parts: How, Why, and More.

How: Our goal is to focus this guide on the practical ways you can create and grow a young adult ministry. In the How section, we will lay out in clear, plain language the steps to take. When we can, we will use bullet points and numbering to define the order of actions. Of course, some steps will be more complicated than others and we will do our best to elaborate.

Why: The main reason for this style is that we expect many people who look at this guide to already have an intrinsic understanding of why we advocate for UU young adult ministry and our particular methods. Most of what we say to do will be familiar on some level since it's what our faith is

already doing (e.g. we're pretty sure you can guess why a young adult worship is a good idea.) That said, we also know there are plenty of people who may not know why, like to study and think about why, and sometimes we will be advocating for actions that may be unfamiliar or peculiar, so we know we should explain ourselves regularly.

More: This guide is not meant to be the end-all-be-all for Young Adult Ministry. When available, we will list books, websites, videos, workshops, and many more resources beyond this guide that you can and should check out. Additionally, some chapters are very short because there is already another resource for that program idea that is better than anything we can come up with!

We do not need to reinvent the wheel

In this guide you will quickly notice that some chapters are long, whereas others are short. That is because we don't need to double up on the work others have already done. For example, our chapter on Communication is long and detailed because it explains approaches to communication work that are new and not well documented nor articulated elsewhere. In contrast, our chapter on Small Groups is short because there are tons of amazing resources already available, including an entire small group program designed just for young adults to pick up and start running with no experience. We simply make it known and then point you to the necessary places for your use. Consider such situations as having the YARN stamp of approval!



- - -

Whatever actions you take, whatever investments you make, thank you. We love young adult ministry and we love when folx make it happen. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of young adults. Now it's time to roll up our sleeves and start this work.

LETS GOOOOOOOO!

Chapter 1: How to Start A YAM Part 1 - Assessing the Situation and First Actions

Before we make ministry we need to assess the situation. Knowing what resources you have access to is essential; one doesn't go on vacation without packing something, and one usually makes a list of what to pack. Second, there is also a need to discover where your current young adult community is at. You may be serving their needs perfectly right now! Finally, we also want to assess how the wider community currently relates towards and treats young adults. The actions you take will be different depending on if your congregation has a supportive, indifferent, or hostile relationship towards young adults. And if your community doesn't have any young adults right now, we'll talk about that too. Doing all of these preparations will allow you to determine the best course of action.

Assession the Situation

- - - How - - -

Taking Inventory

Depending on who you, the reader, are, you can sit down by yourself or with a team of folx and attempt to answer all these questions. Take an initial pass and see how much you can answer right now. Then, move on to First Actions, but come back and make more passes as you acquire more data.

- 1. Census.** The goal is to find out how many young adults are currently part of your community, be they members,

friends, or newbies. There are a couple ways to go about this work:

- a. If your community has a member database, then ask the right staff to produce a list of every member ages 18 to 39. You can also ask about active non-members and recent visitors, but you will want to limit the visitor data to the last year, because a young adult who showed up once several years ago is not relevant to your census.
- b. You will likely need to do a manual count of non-member young adults. To do that you can:
 - i. Attend up a few Sundays and see how many young adults there are.
 - ii. Attend popular programs and events, see if any young adults attend.
 - iii. Speak with leaders and staff about the young adults they know and/or participate in a ministry they manage.
- c. You can do a proper survey with a questionnaire. Here are some questions you can ask:
 - i. Their age (see box)
 - ii. Their relationship status
 - iii. Are they parents of children? How old are those kids?
 - iv. Are they members of the congregation?
 - v. Do they have a leadership role in the community?
- d. Are there young adults who participate in your congregation remotely? Make sure to count them!

- e. When compiling your census, we recommend also recording young adult's email and phone numbers. You will need to contact them eventually

It's Okay to Ask for Age
We do not believe it's rude to ask someone their age in the context of creating a young adult ministry. In fact, we find that non-young adults usually appreciate being mistaken for being younger than they are!

2. Ministries

- a. How many young adults serve/participate on
 - i. The Choir
 - ii. Worship Team
 - iii. A ministry committee
 - iv. Board and Board Committees
 - v. How many of your RE teachers are young adults?
 - vi. Serve in leadership positions anywhere else?
- b. Does your congregation currently have a young adult ministry?
- c. Is this ministry funded?
 - i. If so, how and how much?
 - ii. Is there a staff person who coordinates the YAM?
 - iii. Is there a budget for this ministry outside of staff time?
- d. Are there specific events or activities for young adults in your church?
- e. Are there specific events, ministries, or activities that young adults show up to, participate in, and/or lead?
- f. Does your congregation provide child care for certain events and activities?

3. Assumptions and Previously Held Beliefs

- a. Do the current leaders of your congregation believe it is important to bring in young adults, especially those without children?

- b. Do your current leaders believe or assume that young adults:
- i. Are flighty, as in not reliable to stick around long?
 - ii. Will attend worship if you play certain music?
 - iii. Are just not interested in religion?
 - iv. Don't live in the area your congregation serves?
 - v. Means/implies people of color?
 - vi. Don't like traditional styles of UU worship?
 - vii. Means people who are college bound or in college or interested in college?
 - viii. Are too focused on their jobs?
 - ix. Are inherently good at technology?
 - x. Means youth (people ages 10-17, aka not adults)
 - xi. That appealing to young adults will diminish another part of your community? (i.e. zero sum thinking)
 - xii. Need young adults to volunteer and join a committee?

- - - Why - - -

Let's go through each section and explore why we use these questions

Census: The goal is to get the most complete picture of the young adult population at your congregation. Essentially, wherever there is something your church does, are their young adults there? While membership is an easy and important

factor, it's essential to think beyond that, so we try to be as thorough as we can.

How many young adults?

Joe Chapot - When I worked as the Young Adult Coordinator at UU San Francisco, people would often ask me how many are in the young adult group. I would explain that we have about 20 young adult members and another 20 young adults who attend church. Then I would detail how many of those people are not part of the group but active elsewhere, serving as worship associates, on the board, in the choir, etc. Finally I would explain that it's good it's this way, because our goal was to make all facets of the congregation welcoming to young adults, and we succeeded!

Ministries: Now that we know what the young adult population is at your congregation, we now need to assess what they are doing. After all, they aren't mannequins in the window, these are human beings who are showing up and participating somehow. When doing this section, you may find that young adults are really active in one part of the congregation. Perhaps they attend a regular protest or justice making event. Most probably attend Sunday Service and not much else. That said, every UU congregation is different, so check those ministries for young adults!

Assumptions and Previously Held Beliefs: This is the hardest part of the survey as you can't just ask these questions and expect a straight answer; the human need to look good is

powerful. That said, depending on who is completing the inventory, you may already know the answers to this section based on previous conversations and experiences. And to be clear, your authors have encountered every single one of those assumptions in our work. None are true, young adults are, surprise, infinitely complex creatures!

- - - More - - -:

The CUC has created resources congregations can use to self-assess how welcoming they are to young adults.

[https://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/YA-Congregational-Self-Assessment -Results-and-Next-Steps.pdf](https://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/YA-Congregational-Self-Assessment-Results-and-Next-Steps.pdf)

<https://cuc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/YA-Congregational-Self-Assessment-PDF.pdf>

First Actions

- - - How - - -

There is Already a Young Adult Ministry

If there is already an active young adult group, program, or ministry, then skip Chapter 2,3,4 and go straight to Section 2 to explore different things your YAM can do!

There Are Young Adults

If your community already has several young adults who are members or participate/attend regularly in some facet of your congregation, then move on to Chapter 2.

There Are No Young Adults

If there are no young adults in your congregation then we recommend someone (aka, you the reader) do the following:

- Start attending every Sunday Service. If you see a young adult, introduce yourself to them. Get to know them after service. If they continue to attend service, ask if you can exchange contact information with them. Try to reach out to them once a week.
- Continue doing the above until multiple young adults are attending Sunday Service every week. Then move on to Chapter 2.
- While doing this, you should speak with your congregation's minister(s) about being paid to do this work. Ask them to hire you just to come on Sundays and connect with young adults.

The Community Doesn't Want Young Adults

If the congregation you doesn't want or is hostile to young adults, then consider the following

- Speak with the minister. If the minister wants young adults then you may be able to work with them to change the culture.
- If the minister is also indifferent or hostile to young adults, then you should not participate in that community.
- If you dare, write a letter explaining why you will not attend that church, that the church is failing to live up to The 8 Principles, and that church is doomed (see Chapter 0.) Send that letter to the Minister, Board, the UUA, and YARN.
- Lastly, find a regional and national level UU community to participate in. There are many great communities available from the UUA, its regional groups, the CUC, the many UU camps and conferences, the Church of the Larger Fellowship, and, of course, YARN!

- - - Why - - -

There is Already a Young Adult Ministry

We are so happy your community has something going on and wants to explore new program ideas!

There Are Young Adults - You need at least a few people to start a young adult group. Since you already have some, you can move to Chapter 2.

There Are No Young Adults - You need at least a few people to start a young adult group. Since Sunday Service is the core

thing all UU congregation's do, it's the thing young adults are almost certainly going to show up to first. Your job is to act like a Katamari Damacy, which can be roughly translated from Japanese into "sticky ball." Like a snowball rolling down a hill, you want to connect yourself to any young adult who shows up.



But please don't bombard them. They are trying a new faith community, which is a very daring, risky, and vulnerable thing to do. You want to meet them where they are. Be the friendly, familiar face that is interested in who they are as a person, not who they could be for your congregation. The more you do this, the more people will likely become regulars in your community. Once you have a few young adults showing up most Sundays, then you can move on to Chapter 2!

Also, we believe a volunteer cannot be reasonably expected to show up every Sunday for months on end. Life happens, life changes. In contrast, a paid person has the financial incentive

and contractual obligation to work it out to make it every Sunday on an ongoing basis.

The Community Doesn't Want Young Adults - It's a tragic reality that there are UU congregations that have no interest in young adults. These congregations usually have no interest in any new people. Unless the minister is serious about changing the congregation's culture, we do not recommend you spend your precious time and energy on such a community. The best you can do is call out the situation. Make the wider UU community aware that the congregation is caught in a vicious cycle of decay and that without an intervention, it will fail. Only do this if you are comfortable confronting this terrible situation, but make YARN aware. We will show up to fight alongside you because the future of UUism, and the world, is at stake.

Chapter 2: How to Start a YAM Part 2: Your First Meeting and Covenant

Once you have a list of young adults, you can now invite them to start a young adult ministry. The goal of the first meeting is to bring people together, inquire about forming this new ministry, and take the first actions to realize this new program. We have designed a meeting template we strongly recommend you use. By the end of this phase of work you will have created, from scratch, your new young adult ministry! Finally, once your program has been active for a few months, then we recommend you organize a meeting to write a covenant.

Your First Meeting

- - - How - - -

Step 1: Plan the Meeting

Pick a Sunday 2-4 weeks out. Using the list of young adults you made in Section 1, start contacting people. It is important to have a live conversation with them, that means in-person, phone, or video call (ZOOM, FaceTime, etc.) Contact every young adult. Give them a call. Follow up with a text message.

When talking to someone, be straight and honest. Here is a sample script you can use:

“Hello. We’re working to assess the needs and wants of our young adult community and we would love to have your input. Currently we are planning a meeting on Sunday (Month, Day) and would love to have you attend. We will have lunch available

while we engage in a guided conversation about what us young adults want at our congregation. Would you like to attend?

NOW STOP TALKING AND LET THEM THINK!

- Hopefully they say yes!
- If someone wants to attend but cannot make it in-person, offer a way for them to call into the meeting.
- If someone wants to attend but can't make it at all, then schedule a 1-1 conversation after the meeting so you can invite them to what you create. If they can't schedule something at this time, at least note that they wanted to attend, and follow up at some point after the meeting.

Make note of who said yes to attending and their dietary needs. Send them reminders once a week before the event, then call/text them within 5 days of the event to re-confirm their attendance, and finally send a reminder day-of.

Finally, prepare food and drink ahead of time. Use a food ordering phone app or local catering service and have them deliver food within 1 hour of the start time of the meeting. Speak with your minister's about the funds necessary to do this.

Step 2: Run the Meeting

Welcome people as they arrive. Offer them food and drink. Once everyone is seated and has some nourishment, start the meeting. Below is a meeting agenda that is designed to get people to think about their lives, their faith, vision of a young

adult ministry that speaks to them, and then plan the first activities your ministry will do.

My First YA Group Meeting - 60-90 minutes

Italics mean say these words

Materials - Poster Paper, Easel, Markers, Pens, Paper, Lunch, Drinks

Preparation - On one sheet of Poster Paper, write down The Questions from Activity - First of Five.

- Chalice Lighting:
 - Use your congregation's regular chalice lighting phrase or use YARN's
 - YARN Chalice Words - *We light this chalice for the power of community, the spirit of youth, and the fire of commitment. We light this symbol of our faith as we gather together*
- Welcome Words
 - *Thank you for joining us today. We are so excited to have a conversation with you all about how our faith community can better meet your needs as young adults. Now let's go around and do some introductions.*
- Introductions
 - Name
 - Pronouns
 - Age/ Generation Identity

- (note: very important as Gen Z is now becoming young adults.)
 - Fun Question (e.g. If you were a fruit, what would you be, and why?)
- Activity: Paired Introductions
 - Part 1: Have participants pair off and discuss the following questions for 5 minutes: “What is your faith story, i.e. did you attend another church or religious service before UUism? When did you learn about UUism? What makes you want to be in this UU community now?”
 - Part 2: Regather and have the pairs tell each-other stories to the group.
- Reading about Ritual
 - *Now we are related to one another, let's talk about one of the essential elements of a faith community - ritual.*
 - A World of Rituals by Joe Chapot
 - Ritual is many things*
 - It's a regular practice*
 - It's a constant way of doing something*
 - It's a religious ceremony*
 - It's an order of operations*
 - It often makes sense to those doing it*
 - And may seem otherworldly on the outside*
 -
 - It's as simple as making breakfast*
 - And as complex as summoning a demon*

*Its as homely as making the bed
And as grand as swearing in a leader*

*We all perform rituals
We all have certain things we do in the morning,
in the afternoon, and at night.
And rituals are all around us
The buses run on schedules
The plants are watered every morning
The coffee shop opens at 6
And closes at 2*

*That meeting we have every week
The colors we love
The way you open doors
Ritual is everywhere
Ritual is now
What are your rituals?
They probably aren't that different from mine*

- Activity: Rituals
 - *Rituals - Definition: a series of actions or type of behavior regularly and invariably followed by someone.*
 - *What rituals come to mind? What do you do daily, weekly, monthly? Some rituals to consider - brushing your teeth, bathing, where you eat, how you take your coffee or tea, how do you relax, do you visit certain websites or use specific apps every day?*

Take a moment to think about or write down your rituals.

- Give people 2 minutes to write down their rituals.
 - Now have people share, and allow people to share multiple times.
 - Record people's answers on the Poster Paper
- Activity: Fist of Five
 - *So we have talked about why we came to this community, and about rituals. Now we will explore what rituals we can do together as UU young adults.*
 - *Fist of Five - The group leader will now read aloud a series of ideas. For each one, hold up a number using your hand, with Five being most interested and 0 being least interested.*
 - Tally up the number for each question on the Poster Paper
 - The Questions:
 - *Attending Sunday Worship Service*
 - *Going out to eat as a group*
 - *Going out to have fun, like seeing music or going to a museum*
 - *Getting involved in a local justice program*
 - *Protesting/Rally on a regular basis*
 - *Supporting a marginalized group by showing up to their protest/rally*
 - *Doing election work with UU the Vote*
 - *Do a small group program (you may need to explain this)*
 - *Attend an intimate worship*

- *Attend a workshop or education class*

- Activity: The Big Question

- Based on the most popular results of the Fist of Five exercise, you can now propose the first activities to take as a young adult group/program/ministry.

- *We gathered here today to see how we better serve our young adults. Based on the results, the group wants to do X. Does that sound like a good idea?*

- Give people a chance to talk about it. Guide the conversation so that the group picks at least one program element to do.

- Planning What's Next

- With the program idea picked, now is the time to schedule when you will do it.
- Schedule the event within 4 weeks of this meeting.
- DO NOT LEAVE THE MEETING WITHOUT YOUR NEXT GATHERING SCHEDULED

- Staying in communication with Each Other

- The last thing to do before closing out is to set up a group chat.
 - Use a text messaging platform like Signal, WhatsApp, or Telegram.
 - Do not use Slack or Discord
 - For more information see Chapter - Communications

- Closing
 - Thank everyone for attending.
 - Ask folx what is one thing they are taking away from this meeting.
 - Closing Words - Prayer for a New Young Adult Ministry by Joe Chapot
 - *Though we go our separate ways today, our new bonds are fragile and untested, it is the hope of new friendship, new community, and new love that binds us. Let us carry that flame with us until our next meeting, next gathering, next moment we are in community. We don't know where this journey will take us, but we chose to go on it together. Amen.*
 - Extinguish the Chalice

- - - **Why** - - -

Planning

Timing - There is no time like the present to start a young adult group, so get moving! You want to give people at least two weeks notice so they have time to get the meeting on their calendars and adjust their schedules. Anything more than four weeks and the event is too far out; people's lives change fast in our modern world.

The Ask - There is a whole world of science that goes into how to powerfully ask people to do something. Being plain, direct, and honest goes a long way to making your invitation work. You also have to be coming from a place of non-attachment. A

“no” is not a personal attack, it's just a “not now.” Embodying this fact is a life long practice.

Food - In our experience offering a meal always increases turnout. Humans love to break bread and bond over food. It's also easier to plan on full stomachs. Plus since we're doing it after Sunday service, it's most likely lunch-time!

In-person/Online/Hybrid Meetings - While the COVID Pandemic and associated quarantines showed the world the value of online meetings, all the research shows that humans interact better in-person. Technology constrains our ability to communicate. For example, body language is a huge part of communication, but is lost when not meeting in-person. We encourage you to emphasize in-person attendance and make online participation an option of last resort. Don't even advertise the option, only offer it if someone says they absolutely cannot make it in-person but say they will attend remotely.

Your First Meeting

The entire meeting is designed to break ice, build bonds, get people thinking about their life as people in a faith community, determine what program ideas enliven them the most, and then make the young adult program.

Activity: Paired Introductions - It's one thing to introduce yourself, it's something else to introduce another person. By introducing each other, it forces people to pay attention to the

other person. Plus it gives shy people a chance to have a 1-1 conversation and not talk about themselves in front of a group.

Activity: Rituals - One way to look at a faith is as a specialized collection of rituals designed to promote human welfare.

Consider the Jewish practice of kosher; it's a set of rules for food handling that were invented in a long-ago time in a world without refrigeration. It worked practically then, and today is considered a ritualistic diet. So having people explore all the rituals around them and in their lives will set up the group to make a new ritual.

Activity: Fist of Five - This style of question asking is a simple and effective way to judge how interested people are in various types of programs your group can do. It easily shows what program types people are most interested in.

Activity: The Big Question - THE ENTIRE PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING. This is the moment you have been working towards. Everything leading up to now, the inventory, the planning, the meeting itself, is all designed to give you and your people the best chance to start a whole new ministry. From nothing, this is the moment of creation. As we said in Chapter 0, you can't assemble this from pieces. This is human to human work. Remember, everything we had you do up until now was gardening, checking the soil quality, mixing in additives, figuring out the right seeds to buy, and watering the ground. If you did all the work, the seeds will almost certainly sprout!

Planning What's Next - Now the plants can grow. The young adult group can now exist. But make sure they have something to look forward to! This isn't just to feel good, it's to do stuff! People thrive when they have a future to live into, so give them and yourself that by scheduling your next gathering right away.

Staying in communication with each other - See our Chapter on Communications for information about why group chats are an essential tool in this work.

Covenanting

- - - How - - -

Once your program has been running for a few months, we recommend organizing a Covenanting Workshop. We recommend using the [UUA's Writing a Covenant Workshop](#) material. Simply plan the meeting like you would any other event and use the UUA's material for the content of the event. Make sure to record the covenant and post it in places where people can read it.

- - - Why - - -

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal religion. At our core is an agreement about human relations. When a group takes the time to write a covenant, it's taking the time to make an agreement about how they are going to treat each other. This activity forms a powerful basis for growing as a group and resolving conflicts. We cannot recommend it strongly enough, and revisit it at least once a year as a community.

We do recommend you wait a couple months before doing it, so that your group can establish a sense of self. Covenanting is meta work, the in-between work, a glue that holds the big picture together. Thus we believe it's best to be doing ministry together before having a conversation about how you are going to be together while doing ministry.

- - - More - - -

[Bound in Covenant, an essay by Victoria Safford](#)

[A Covenant Invites Relationship By Lisa Ward](#)

[A Comprehensive Guide to Congregational Covenants](#)

[Covenant of Right Relations](#)

[Unlocking the Power of Covenant by the Commission On Appraisal](#)

Chapter 3: Communications

When it comes to communicating about your young adult group there are two sides to consider;

1 - Internal Communication, how does the young adult group stay connected and get informed about your group's happenings.

2 - External Communication, how do we tell potential future group members what we are doing, as well as inform that wider community about our works

Both are necessary and there is a lot of crossover. For example, if you are doing a Sunday Lunch Outing, you will want to invite and excite your current young adult group *and* advertise the event to people who are not in your group yet. In addition, how you communicate needs to be scaled as your ministry grows. Different modes of communication are effective for different sizes of groups, so **we strongly recommend doing the first three items**, but then pick and choose what types of communication you will do beyond that, as appropriate for your situation

Section 1 - Three Essential Components of YA Ministry Communication

You absolutely should do all of the following. Everything in this section is baseline work for good communication. Everything here is basically stuff people are already doing in your congregation; we just wrote it down.

First - Set-up a Group Chat

How - Pick a device agnostic platform such as Signal, WhatsApp, or Telegram. Use their group chat feature to start a new group chat with everyone who wants to be part of the young adult group. Make it a habit to invite people to the group. You can also print out a QR code people can scan to join the group chat and post it to your congregation's bulletin board. Make sure to always invite new people to join the chat. If you are the leader, commit to posting a couple times during the week to stimulate conversation.

Why - Despite all the changes in how we communicate, the text message will likely be with us for the long-run. It's the simplest and arguably most popular way to communicate. It's a direct communication tool; it's almost the equivalent of speaking in front of a group of people, and people are much more likely to respond to direct communications compared to indirect communication (email, social media, etc.) Also, if you encounter someone who doesn't use a smartphone, just trust them to get the info about your group in a way that works for them.

Next - Prepare Your First Ad Copy and Graphic

How - To write good ad copy, use the following four sentence structure;

- Sentence 1 - Name the event and directly invite people to attend
- Sentence 2 - Give basic details about the event

- Sentence 3 - Tell people what they will get out of the event
- Sentence 4 - Invite people to attend again.

Example - Sunday Lunch Outing (Communications Graphic A.jpg)

You are invited to join fellow young adults at our monthly lunch outing! We will gather after Sunday worship service, pick a place to eat, and then walk over there. This is a great opportunity to meet people in our community, whether you are brand new to UUism or a life-long member. We hope to see you on Sunday, August 6, it's gonna be fun!

You will also need a graphic. Use a program like Canva.com to make a simple square picture that has the following:

- The name of the event
- When it happens
- Who its for

A good graphic is simple and doesn't have too many words; "Less is More" in the world of graphic design. Check out YARN's graphics for inspiration. Finally, **use no more than two fonts and three font sizes.** Again, less is more.

Why - Direct communication is one of the most powerful tools any organizer and leader can use. Consider the following two sentences, which one sounds more inviting?

- Would you like to get coffee with me this week?
- I'm thinking of getting coffee this week, does that sound interesting to you?

The former is an actionable item, a clearly asked question that people can consider and respond to. The latter hedges on both the action itself and doesn't make clear that you are inviting them.

We understand that this style of communication can be difficult for people. Afterall, no one likes rejection. Being direct requires being vulnerable, you have to risk rejection. The antidote is to embody the fact that a "No" is not personal, it's merely a "not now." Embodying this takes a lifetime of practice, so no better time to start than now!

As for your graphic, in our modern era visuals are an essential part of communication. Not only are they appropriate for certain mediums of communication, but humans are more likely to read the text on the image than any text below an image. We no longer live in a world where a big block of text is the best way to communicate, so do not be tempted to do that. Again, less is more.

Finally - Publish Your Stuff!

How - Any event should be advertised at a minimum two weeks from its start time. Ideally your ad copy is posted four weeks out. Overnight or day-long events should be posted six weeks out.

First, post the ad copy to your group chat. Look at your inventory sheet and determine what forms of communication your congregation currently uses. Contact the people in charge

of those communications and ask them to run your program's ad.

You should be posting your events in the following places at a minimum:

- Order of Service
- Newsletter
- Bulletin board
- Website

Beyond that, try to get your posting on whatever social media platforms your congregation uses. Ideally, become an editor or admin of those social media channels so that you can directly post to yourself.

Why - As mentioned above, you need to advertise your event internally and externally. That means inviting the current group, and making non-group members aware of what you are doing. Everything we have described in this section is stuff other programs in your congregation are most likely doing already. UU communities have been doing this since, well, forever. The only thing that changed was the invention of digital communication, aka texting and the internet.

Section 2 - Scaling Communication and Other Strategies

The above is baseline communication work. Once your group is growing, there are many options available to help your people talk to each other in secure and safe spaces. Consider

each option's Pros and Cons as your young adult community scales.

Create a Webpage

How: Work with your congregation's website manager to build a new webpage. The page should include the following at a minimum

- Name of Program
- A way to contact someone about the program
- An about section describing what your group does and a direct invitation to any young adult to join your program activities
- Any links to join the group chat or follow on social media channels
- A few photos of people in your group doing stuff, smiling, and being happy.

Why: In the world of the chicken and the egg, we believe it's best to get the group going before creating a web page, which is basically a digital bulletin board. Once things are up and running for your people, then members of the group can work together on preparing the materials for the web page. A good and simple web page can do a whole lot to make people feel safe enough to check out your community.

Using Social Media effectively

How: No matter the platform you choose, treat social media like a one-way form of communication. Post your ad copy and

graphics, but do not expect a major level of engagement in your post.

Why: Facebook no longer dominates social media the way it did from the late 2000s to late 2010s. We now live in a very fragmented media environment. For example, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, TikTok, SnapChat, X each have over 500 million users. Outside of the USA, text-messaging services like WhatsApp, WeChat, Facebook Messenger, and Telegram are used as social media platforms unto themselves (they are so much more than group chats.)

Because of this, you can't expect everyone who will be part of your young adult community to actively regularly use one common platform. It just doesn't happen anymore. One simply cannot expect everyone to see, let alone respond, to your posts on social media. Thus we treat it like a one-way channel; you are speaking into the void with very little, if any, feedback. Only communities in the thousands start to get enough engagement to treat social media like a two-way conversation, but even that isn't perfect since the conversation is generated by the channel's most engaged users, who may not be representative of the community as a whole.

Ultimately, this is why the group chat is so essential; it will be the one place everyone in your young adult group will likely consent to using and engaging with regularly. Group chats just work until you reach a certain size.

Discord, Slack and Other Channel-based Messaging

How: Once your community reaches a size of a few dozen people, consider setting yourself up on a channel-based messaging platform. We recommend using Discord. Set up a few channels with different topics for people to congregate around. We also recommend using a bot to set up a daily posting, something to stimulate conversation.

Why - We recommend Discord over Slack because the latter is designed for business while the former is designed for communities (originally video game enthusiasts but since expanded to any type of community.) Slack's design and ethos just feels more business-like, which is constraining when it comes to building a faith community. It's a subtle thing, but we feel strongly about this.

It's also important to not create a Discord until you have 50+ people in your group chat. It's just overkill for anything smaller. Discords thrive when there is regular engagement, and you are just not likely to get that with less than 50. Even YARN didn't start a Discord until we had a few hundred people in our network.

Newsletter

How - If you have a reliable content maker, or a paid staff person, then you should make a newsletter. We recommend using a newsletter distribution platform such as Constant Contact, iContact, or MailChimp. If your congregation is

already using one of these platforms, then request use of the service for a young adult focused newsletter. Send the newsletter at least a minimum twice a month, or weekly if your congregation regularly has a lot going on.

For a format, check out YARN's newsletter. We recommend using this structure

- Opening Graphic - Something faithful, loving, affirming, etc.
- Table of Contents
- Section - Young Adult exclusive content
- Section - Young Adult friendly programs
- Section - anything else worth mentioning
- End with a Meme aka give people a reason to scroll all the way down

Why - Newsletters are fantastic, but they only really work if they are reliably released and regularly contain new content. In our experience this is best accomplished by someone who is paid to complete this work who can prioritize the time and effort needed to achieve this. We find that a newsletter's readership drops dramatically if it doesn't come out at regular intervals, and if the content is not fresh and well presented. Nothing less than 100% effort makes a newsletter worth doing.

Extra Strategies and Tips

Timing is Everything

Time your social media posts correctly. Ideally they should go out in the morning (9am-ish), this gives them a full day to show

up in people's news feeds. Most social media platforms have scheduling features you can use to set up posts ahead of time. Post about your event once a week. When the event is within 7 days, post about it a couple times, including that day of the event.

Young Adults are Better at Social Media

Although this is becoming less true over time, the plain fact is that younger people are better at using social media. Unless your congregation has a communication director who gets it (or is a young adult themselves) you, the young adult, will almost certainly be better at it. Thus we encourage you to ask for permission to manage your congregation's social media. See if you can get the login credential (username/password) to access your congregations Facebook, Instagram, or Bluesky accounts, or if someone can make you an editor or administrator of a social media page.

Finally, if your congregation doesn't do any social media, START IT! In our experience, when an organization isn't on social media, then people are left with the impression that the group is either very, *very* old fashioned or is trying to hide its existence.

Chapter 4: Social Events

The most important, and easiest, element of all young adult programs, social events are the kind of thing any young adult group can do. We will assume you already know the basic practice of getting together with friends to have fun. That said, there are many actions and choices you can take that will make your social event inclusive and enjoyable for all participants. Don't lose sight, though; we're just describing, in detail, how to organize a group of friends to go do something fun.

- - - Inclusion

UUism is all about how we relate to each other, which makes including everyone a #1 priority. Here are a number of practices for making your social event inclusive

- Make it 18+, not 21+. Not all locations allow adults ages 18, 19, & 20 to enter. So avoid bars and similar venues when planning your events.
- We strongly recommend events should be sober; not everyone likes to socially drink alcohol or consume cannabis, and you may have people in recovery in your community. In addition, we have found that substances impair judgment and increase the chance of people having negative experiences in UU communities.
- Always offer some kind of financial support. Cost should not be a barrier to participation in UU communities. For smaller expenses, such as a lunch outing, see if the group or an individual can buy a meal for someone in need. For

larger expenses, like a camping trip, work with your congregation to secure scholarship funds.

- Be mindful of where the event is located and make sure everyone can easily get there. Consider offering to organize ride-sharing, or recommending a transit option.
- Plan events 2-4 weeks in advance so people have time to adjust their calendars. That said, you will almost never, ever find a time that works for everyone.

- - - The 1 Social Event Every YA Group Should Do

The Sunday Lunch Outing is the one social event we recommend every young adult group/program do.

- First pick one Sunday to do this event every month (e.g. First Sundays.)
- The event takes place after Sunday worship. Give people about 10-15 minutes to attend Coffee Hour before departing.
- A leader should gather the young adults after service, pick a place to eat, and head out.
- You can even have a regular place to eat at, cutting down on decision time.
- Do it every month so it becomes a regular part of your ministry. People will start to look forward to the Sunday Lunch Outing after just a couple months!

- - - How to Come Up with Social Events

There are many different kinds of social events you can organize. Here are several ideas and some tips

- Potlucks - Great for holidays. We recommend hosting at your congregation, as newbies may not be comfortable going to someone's house.
- Movies, Plays, etc. - Simple gathering, but the downside is people can't talk to each other during the show. To counter this, organize a meal together before or after the show.
- Live Music - There is a great range of music shows, from some guy at a cafe to a 3-Hour Taylor Swift concert. Low-key, outdoor music shows let people talk to each other during the performance.
- Museums and Art Galleries - Excellent learning opportunities, just encourage people to stick together in groups.
- Hikes and other outdoor adventures - Great when the weather cooperates, but be mindful of those with physical disabilities.
- Arcades, Gaming Cafes, Trivia Nights, etc - Very popular, try to play games that allow for all attendees to participate in; don't play a four player game when you have five people!
- Karaoke - Who doesn't love singing! Again, make sure the venue is 18+, not 21+.
- And so many more: Event TV watching, live sports, workshops, arts and crafts, skillshare, PowerPoint Parties, food trucks festivals, tasting menus, and more!

How to Find Events

Consider these resources when trying to find an event

- Meetup.com
- EventBrite
- TicketMaster
- FindMuseum.org
- GoogleMaps
- Ask Your Friends and Family

Why Do Social Events

Social events allow people to develop connections with each other in unstructured environments. Compared to the other programs in this guide, social events are casual in nature. They are meant to be fun, and when people have fun, they bond. Social gatherings allow people to mingle, meet each other, negotiate social dynamics, and make decisions outside the formalities of an organized faith.

Overnight Events

Overnight events are fantastic community building opportunities. That said, **they are best for young adult groups that are beyond the starting stages of their creation.** These types of events are great capstone or

end-of-year programs, something the group can work towards as you practice other types of activities in this guide.

You can plan an overnight at a camping ground, a retreat center, or consider using your congregation's building. A sleepover at the church is one of the easiest things you can organize. The main value your group will get out of the experience, no matter where it is, is that it takes everyone working together to make it happen. That's what makes overnight events such powerful bonding experiences.

As is our practice we aren't going to detail how to plan one of these events. That information is readily available with a simple google search. Use the event, though, to do UU stuff. Do a campfire worship, plan a silent meditation in the woods, educate the group about the site, learn who its original inhabitants were and what can be done to support them today. **AND HAVE FUN!**

Chapter 5: Young Adults and Worship

Creating Sunday Worship Services with Unitarian Universalist Young Adults in Mind

An Introduction to Sunday Services

A Sunday service is central to most congregations' programming and community, and is likely the main way that young adults experience your congregation. Several projects were undertaken in the 2010s to assess the state of young adults in Unitarian Universalism, including the 2017 "Canadian Unitarian Universalist Young Adult Survey Report," which we used to inform our writing in this chapter.

(Editor's Note: A new survey of the state of the young adult ministry in Canada was released in August 2024 and is available on the CUC website.)

According to the reports, weekly worship services are the most frequent way young adults participate in their faith communities, in addition to connecting with Unitarian Universalists through social media, connecting with UUs socially outside of church contexts, and attending other events within congregations (including social justice events, small group gatherings, and evening worship services).

If worship services are the most significant way young adults participate in community, congregations must pay attention to their worship services and recognize how they can serve young adults.

When considering how your worship services are serving young adults in the community, here are some things to consider.

Have you been in conversation with young adult members who are currently attending? If so:

- Are there elements of the worship service that they love? If so, which?
- Are there elements of the worship service that they would change? If so, which, and how?

Listening to the suggestions of young adults who attend worship in your community – and then working to incorporate these ideas – is vital to serving their spiritual needs.

Through interviews and through conversations with Young Adults on a national level, three areas of focus have emerged as being of particular importance in worship for young adults. After speaking to the members you're already serving, we'd suggest that you start by considering the following:

- Consistency and quality of worship offerings
- New worship elements and styles
- Creating relatable worship content

We will go through each of these focus areas explaining the concepts and offering ideas of how to implement them, why they are important and where you can get more information.

Consistency and quality

Consistency in worship service is an important aspect for any newcomer or new member. Substandard and inconsistent services will detract young adults, whether or not the content of services is in line with their values and interests.

How

- Consistency and quality can be prioritized in many elements of worship, including the presenters, music, online production, and printed materials.
- Creating consistency within an order of service or powerpoint presentation may seem like unnecessary work, but the efforts put into these steps convey confidence, organization, and professionalism.
- While offering a variety of worship services is considered a plus in many UU Communities, some speakers or sermons remain at a surface level and lack spiritual depth. Alternatively, they may be overly academic, which tends to be less appealing to young adults (especially those who are students and already engaged in academic and heady conversations) and looking for a spiritual community.

Why

Inconsistency can give the impression that the congregation is disorganized, or that there is a lack of culture or purpose.

Young adults are bombarded with content that is professional looking, clean, well executed and organized, be it lectures from professors, social media influencers, or content from the entertainment industry. Though the content from these sources

might not have the messages young adults are looking for, they are presented with quality and consistency, and this is an important aspect to take into consideration when planning worship services. Do not take this advice to mean that worship services need to be Broadway ready, and everything has to be perfectly rehearsed, having consistency does not mean that something needs to be rote or mechanical. In fact, there is significant data that shows vibrancy and palpable energy are necessary in Sunday services. It does mean that there is attention to details and purpose.

More

Consider asking yourself the following questions regarding the consistency of your worship services as you decide to restructure them to invite and include Young Adults:

1. Is there purpose and vision behind the type of service and topics chosen, or are you just getting someone to “fill the pulpit”?
2. Is there consistency week-to-week that would help newcomers settle in and get to know congregational practices and Unitarian Universalism?
3. Focus on one aspect of worship (the music, the power points, the rituals [examples: joys and sorrows or songs that are sung every sunday]) and make sure it is high quality. Then, ask the following questions:
 - a. How could the existing rituals be maintained and improved, without making the service feel formulaic or rote?
 - b. Would having song leaders help improve music

quality, or could you use recorded music for some aspects of the service?

New worship elements and styles

Many elements of worship that are prominent in youth and young adult led or organized services are not often present in congregational services. These elements include a wide variety of music, interactive pieces, and having multiple speakers or presenters. Services offered by youth and young adults are much more visceral, embodied, emotional, and co-created as compared to the intellectual and thoughtful services that are often led from our pulpits on Sunday mornings.

Ritualistic aspects are also a significant piece of young adult led worship, and can often hold the central aspect of the service, rather than a sermon. The most significant, or overarching difference in worship styles would be the idea of performative services versus collaborative worship. In recognition of the principle of free and responsible search for truth and meaning, many young adult worship services leave a lot of space for the community to come together and share, over a common idea, or through a common ritual (joys and sorrows, fire communion, zipper songs where everyone has the opportunity to choose a verse, etc.) In Sunday services, there are small pieces of interaction and collaboration, however much of the focus is on listening to the presenter, or minister, the service is much more of a performance, rather than something that is co-created.

How

- Put energy and focus on the ritualistic aspects of your services. Spend more time singing together, or offer a larger time slot for candles of joy and sorrow. Youth and Young adult worship services regularly focus on aspects of the community coming together to share, and less about listening to one person share.
- Creating space for vulnerability is another aspect of young adult worship. Whether this is an opportunity of silent reflection, where individuals are asked to be vulnerable to themselves, or written on paper, or encouraged to share either in small groups or to the collective, exploring our vulnerability is a significant aspect for YA worship.
- This could also look like providing opportunities for individuals to reflect and share what they most appreciated during the service, perhaps offer reflection questions that can be used for coffee hour conversations.
- Participation is another important aspect, and while many congregations have worship associates and additional individuals participate in service, not just ministers, ask young adults to participate. Offer readings that they can give, or ask them to write reflections based on the service theme.

Why

- If the young adults in your community were raised in the Unitarian Universalist faith, they likely do not have much experience with the 'hymn sandwich' style of worship, this is where a sermon is the central aspect, with hymns,

and reading on either side. Most youth and YA services focus more on being together, and exploring with one another what they believe. There will be music, there will be a chalice lighting, and there will be a message. But the pattern is never concrete, and things happen much more organically.

- In youth and young adult culture, worship is a participatory event, something that requires everyone present to help create. In congregational Sunday services, worship is something that is consumed, although there are moments of participation (such as singing, or candles of joy and sorrow) everything else is offered to the congregant, not something created with the community.

More

Start with small changes:

- Make an existing worship element more engaging and dynamic (i.e. sing a new hymn, use songs from youth and young adult worship, or try songs in a round, at many youth or young adult events there might not be hymnals, so music happens in a call and response pattern, or relies on well known pieces).
- Try out new elements one at a time so that the congregation can adapt to the change, and so you can assess what works and what doesn't. Perhaps your community does not have spoken joys and sorrows, perhaps invite people to share. Make it clear that this is a sacred moment, where we are called to witness one another's intimate joys and sorrows, and ask people to

withhold announcements or concerns for the wider world. Offer a prayer, or a moment of silence afterwards.

- Consider using a wider variety of sources for music, hymns, readings and speakers, with attention to cultural appropriation and attribution.
- Co-creating a worship service means that everyone who is present is participating. Perhaps there is a ritual of writing something down on paper to be burned, or put in a special spot to be held by others for a while. Pieces of writing or poetry can be divided into different sections, which are handed out and read by many voices. Stories for all ages could be acted out as readers theater, there are many different ways to encourage all people present to have an active participatory role in the service. This is much of the reason why services happen in a circle, rather than facing the front of the room, to recognize that everyone has something to contribute to this sacred gathering.
- Use music and periods of silence to create a more meditative atmosphere - ask people to enter the sanctuary, or service hall in silence, create spaciousness within the transitions from one piece to the next, allowing people to process, or digest the offerings.
- Stick to what feels authentic to your congregation, and what is possible to maintain over time with current levels of staff and volunteers.
- Assess whether an additional worship service is right for your congregation, there is another section that discusses this possibility.

* A note about consistency and new elements

It might seem counterintuitive to discuss consistency within worship and in the next section talk about new elements and styles. In our minds consistency has more to do with the execution of the service, and less to do with the elements. If you are going to add in new worship elements, make sure you only do as much as you are able to execute well. Adding in a new ritual is excellent, but if you don't give it the same attention and sacred space as you do to other aspects of worship, it is going to fall flat.

Relatable content:

Young adults want worship that is relevant to their lives—to their experiences as well as to the turmoil and transitions that they are living with. Topics that focus on growth and change, purpose and passions, identity, roots and family, transitions, justice and hope are all great places to start.

Young Adults want a place where they can explore relationships, connect their values with their work, and ground themselves in community. They want a place where the best ideals of humanity are put forth as a challenge for all of society—justice, accountability, democracy, and equality.

How:

- Every person you speak to in a UU community is going to have a different opinion on what they would like for content within a worship service. And content is important to everyone who is present. But there is an overarching area of content that speaks to young adults. Spirituality

and spiritual practices, values and ethics, topics that help them to identify who and how they want to be in the world.

- Young Adult life is usually full of transitions, between graduation and post graduate education, moving out of family homes, starting a job, starting careers, starting relationships, there are many times in a young adult's life when they will be focused on 'becoming'.

Why:

- While many topics are universally appealing, certain topics will resonate more with certain age groups. A service about growing old just won't have the same appeal to young adults as a service about the challenges of navigating adulthood.

More:

Some questions to ask when creating worship:

1. Is there purpose and vision behind the type of service and topics chosen?
2. Do you feel the topics and content have relevance and appeal for young adults?

Creating Alternative Worship Styles

Perhaps your community has decided to create space for different styles of worship services, in addition to the services that are organized on Sunday mornings, or you have decided to change a number of your Sunday services into a different

worshipful experience. Now what?

There are many resources available that explain different styles of worship, the UUA released a book from the Lifespan Faith Engagement Office in 2020 called *Worship for Young Adults: A Practical Guide for Creating Contemporary Service*. This 70 page manual has great advice on starting from scratch, how to invite, do outreach, and inclusion, and structure and flow of actual services. They also have 3 case studies that offer examples from very different communities and perspectives. *Becoming: A spiritual Guide for Navigating Adulthood* and *Becoming Together: A Small Group Ministry Manual* are two additional resources that offer really pertinent content for Young Adult worship.

Quotes:

The following quotes are from the CUC 2017 Young Adult Report, but are not attributed.

“I look for profound and transcendent experiences in worship, like when we sing together, when people share from their hearts, when deep truths are spoken; being with others that are struggling to make sense of this strange and wonderful life; a place that I can be myself, bring my whole self, be vulnerable, and offer caring and love to others.”

“For me, the community needs to be really intentional. I feel lost when I go into a Sunday morning worship and people are here to be fed, but not to engage. I want to be apart of a community that is intentional in their actions

together, whether this is small group ministry, or small worships or smaller events I hope to see everyone being fully and completely present during their time together.”

“More and more, I find myself looking for the sense of spiritual community I had at youth worships years ago. It feels like there is nothing in the adult world that functions as that deep, ritualistic communal experiences in the way that youth worships functioned. I know I’m not alone in this and many other YAs I know feel they aren’t getting this, but I don’t really know what to do about it.”

“I can enjoy traditional worship as long as the speaker is eloquent and interesting, and the people participating in service don’t take me out of it through announcements, awkward transitions.”

“YA worship that is often calling on deep emotions, and asking people to sit with their vulnerabilities is something that doesn’t happen in my life. I want to be able to gather with people of all ages and be asked to lift up my voice about grief, pain, witnessing harm. I want a space where I can be able to express the baggage that I carry into a group of people- knowing that they can hold that space for me, and I can listen to them put down their baggage... we so rarely sit with our suffering in that space that it would be to much of a shock to the community.”

Chapter 6: Small Groups

“Also known as “covenant groups” and “chalice circles,” Small Group Ministry is a vital part of many Unitarian Universalist congregations. Groups of... people meet regularly... to reflect on and discuss significant life topics. Small groups are great places to get to know other people and to get to know yourself. Over time, participants build deep connections with one another, with the congregation, and with the sacred.” - uua.org/small-group

We are so lucky in UUism to have many fantastic Small Group resources available already. This includes “Becoming Together,” an entire small group program and accompanying book designed for young adults. Check out that program and all the great resources available online.

- - -Becoming Together



Becoming Together is a full small group program ready and available for young adults. Its content was written by young adults and is focused on the many transitions and troubles of young adulthood. With the book and accompanying guide, the only real work you will need to do is organizing a time and place to regularly meet and do the program with your people. Whomever leads this program should take time to prepare by pre-reading the materials before each session.

[Learn more about Becoming Together](#)

[Becoming Together Program Guide](#)

[Becoming Together Book](#)

- - - Your Congregation's Small Group Program

Many, many UU congregations produce their own small group programs. We recommend taking time to reach out and meet with your local organizers, be they lay leaders or staff. They will be able to provide resources and guidance for starting your

own small group. You can also ask them about having a young adult's only group within their larger program (that said, we have noticed that congregations often prefer their small groups to have a mix of ages, but it never hurts to ask!)

- - - UU Small Group Ministry Network

[UUSGMN Website](#). If you need any more proof that Small Groups are a popular UU program, then look no further than the UU Small Group Ministry Network. This entire website is devoted to cataloging small group resources and fostering a community of small group program leaders. Their website is regularly updated and even has resources available that focus on big ticket items in our faith movement (at the time of writing, there are many Article 2 Commission related resources on the front page.)

- - - Even More Resources

- [WorshipWeb](#) - An ever growing collection of worship materials by/for UUs.
- [UUA Small Group Resources](#)
- [Heart to Heart: Fourteen Gatherings for Reflection and Sharing by Christine Robinson and Alicia Hawkins](#)
- [Voices from the Margins: An Anthology of Meditations by Jacqui James, Mark D. Morrison-Reed](#)
- [UU Wellspring](#)

Show up for justice.

YOUNG ADULTS & SOCIAL JUSTICE

Tanya Webster

Young Adults have had a strong legacy of social justice work as Unitarians, Universalists, and UUs. Today's young adults remain committed to justice, and YA groups will usually want to engage in action against oppression. Today's young adults have grown up in a world very different than their parents and grandparents, and today's justice is approached through a different lens than what's gone before.

For Gen-Zs and Millennials, life is vibrant and multicultural, with much overlap between home and work, projects and hobbies, friends and media, activism and spirituality. Starting to fade away for many young adults are cultural norms of dominant white culture, the willingness to buy into the "American dream," and even the days of well-meaning "charity or justice projects," where individuals and teams decided how and when they would help a group in need with a selected service or a project of their choice.

Instead, today's justice centers around relationships, accountability partners, and creating a world that offers a more just world for all. By becoming people who work to center justice in all we do, we can make the biggest impact and work together to reach for beloved community. Our liberation is bound up together in our interconnected web of life.

What calls you to action?

HOW TO FIND A JUSTICE INITIATIVE



What type of justice does your young adult group want to get involved with? Working together as UUs allows young adults to center their liberal religious values in their justice work. It is also key to amplifying the messages and impact of their work as Unitarian Universalists.

The following exercise will help you to decide how your group wants to participate. Note that you may not need to do all the steps each time, especially if an identified issue is already supported by the congregation. Use this discernment tool as helpful; it's not a must-do process. Feel free to come up with your own process instead. It's all about what works best for you!

Step 1. Choose a justice focus.

There are many great causes out there and many groups working for justice. How can your group decide where to put its efforts? Sometimes there is an obvious choice in your local area, a cause that requires a response, or an accountability partner the congregation already works with, but often, it's a decision left to your group. In this section, you will become familiar with UU justice priorities and brainstorm both what calls you & what is needed locally in your communities.

BECOMING FAMILIAR WITH UU JUSTICE

The UUA has identified four areas of UU justice priorities. These intersectional justice efforts are centered in UU values, and by working for the same desired outcome, UUs across the continent can amplify their voice and effect.

Tip: The goal is to be familiar with these areas and actions based on UU values, but there is no need to "choose one."





SIDE WITH LOVE

Note: I'll check in with Ranwa, Ashley, and Deeana when draft is more finalized

Here are some of the established UU justice initiatives you can connect with for training, coordination, and questions. These groups are listed here for information; Of course, you may also choose to work on your own or with other initiatives.

UU YA for Climate Justice

UU Young Adults for Climate Justice is a diverse network of UU activists aged 18 to 35 who support each other in engaging in direct action campaigns, leading worship services, educating ourselves and the wider UU world, mobilizing and organizing UUs for the work of climate justice, and more. uumfe.org/get-involved/uuyacj/

UU@UN Climate Action Teams

Climate Action Teams are groups within UU congregations passionate about climate justice and want to get involved and raise awareness for climate justice issues. uua.org/environment/climate/getinvolved/cat

Love Resists

Activating people of faith and conscience to resist the criminalization of our communities, by expanding sanctuary, companioning, and raising our voices against racism, xenophobia, bigotry, and injustice. uua.org/loversists

UU the Vote

Amplify the call for UU values and work to protect access to democracy. uuthevote.org

UU Service Committee (UUSC)

advance human rights at risk because of criminalization, displacement, and humanitarian crises to make sustainable social justice advancements uusc.org/initiatives/

UU College of Social Justice

Works to inspire and sustain effective and spiritually grounded activism for justice. uucsj.org/take-action/

UPLIFT Action

UU campaign organizing for LGBTQIA+, Gender, and Reproductive Justice sidewithlove.org/upliftaction

Faithful Consent Project / OWL

Faith and Justice leaders say it's time to talk about faithful consent, and to deeply examine how autonomy, safety, power, and intimacy intersect. Join us in creating a culture of consent. uua.org/action/create-culture-faithful-consent

Step 2. Brainstorm your options.

FIND OUT WHAT'S NEEDED - AND DOABLE.

Whenever possible, look for local connections and needs around an issue you're considering. There may also be specific online communities impacted by the issue. Implementing a national campaign as a local effort can help heal your community or land around you, strengthen local networks, and build relationships in the local community. That's a win for all.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT ON YOUR COMMUNITY?

Take some time to deep-dive into your local community and learn more about how it's impacted by justice issues. Good resources are news archives, the Internet, social media, community leaders, your local library, or the city resource desk.

You might want to create a one-pager for each option, or just make this step informal. Again, it depends on what your group prefers. If your group is big enough, you may want to break out into small groups, then share back.



HOW MUCH BANDWIDTH DO YOU HAVE?

Consider how much bandwidth your group has to manage a project. There are multiple project options depending on what you feel up to handling at the moment:

Plug in to a justice initiative already active in the larger community

This type of justice work is often easier to fit into busy schedules. It includes signing up for community service shifts or tasks, either solo or as group work. It taps into already existing projects in the local community or on a national platform. If you're too busy to coordinate a project but still want to stay active, the group might pick an activity each week and share at your next meeting about the experience. Another option might be signing up for food bank shifts.

Embrace a commitment to creating and growing a needed program

It can be a fulfilling experience to throw yourself into a cause dear to you. While organizing and leading such projects can be time-intensive, great things can be achieved. This type of justice work might provide a local service that's needed, such as tutoring. It could also include service trips.

Encourage a culture shift toward Beloved Community

Build and care for your community through service, education, statements, witnessing, and advocacy. This justice work is critical, yet easier to pick up and put down. It is still a powerful way to affect larger groups of UUs and others.

Undertake a service trip

Service trips can be a powerful way to serve, witness, and connect in an area experiencing disruption. The experience of a service trip can be life-changing for many.

Explore ideas for service trips:

- uucs.org/journeys/
- uucs.org/grow-racial-justice/
- https://www.uua.org/files/documents/yaya/srvc_trip_fundraising.pdf
- www.faithify.org/



HOW MUCH TIME DO YOU HAVE?

It's a good idea to figure out the scope of the work you can currently manage. As a group, pick how you can approach your plans, in this moment. The scope will change over time and can be revisited at regular intervals. The point here is to understand what your group can commit to do right now, in a sustainable way that does not drain other areas of your lives.

- **How much time can you give?** Do people have enough time to volunteer two hours or ten hours a week, monthly...?
- **When can your group members be available?** If everyone works, on weekends only or every afternoon? How can you plug into the work? Sometimes people are busy, sometimes less so.
- **How long can you work on the project?** For example; one month, one semester, until the goal is accomplished, or indefinitely?

Step 3. Take stock of skills and likes.

WHAT DO YOU BRING TO THE TABLE?

Different personality types and skillsets often prefer to get involved in different ways. Take a moment to inventory your group's skills and comfort levels. For example, some people are uncomfortable with phone banks or fundraising, while others love taking the lead. Contribute where you shine, but also remember to push your comfort zone and stay open to trying new things.

There are many ways to contribute, including these five areas described in the UUA Social Justice Empowerment Program Handbook (2011):



SERVE

This is the type of justice work most people think about when they hear about volunteer opportunities. Service helps provide relief for persons in distress, including food banks, clothing drives, gathering Guest at Our Table funds, crisis response, and so forth. It is a very necessary and worthwhile way to contribute, especially when it helps the local community around you.

EDUCATE

Educate others both inside and outside your congregation about the key facts and importance of an issue, in the context of liberal religious values. Which UU principles and shared values call us to act on this issue? How does this justice issue impact people, especially locally? What do the people affected by it need us to do to help them reach their goals?

WITNESS

The act of witnessing is a powerful tool as it adds more voices to those affected, amplifying the call for action. The group might take a public stance on the issue, such as holding or attending a protest or vigil, writing a letter to the editor/s, posting online, or try to go viral with hashtags, put-up flyers, or film a short selfie video "from the scene" of a rally that is a good soundbite talking about the "what and why" of the event. Tag local media channels with the post to encourage coverage of the event and issue.

ADVOCATE

Advocacy is perhaps the area with the longest impact. It works by impacting public policy and working for legislation to change how the system works. Advocacy might include rules for fair access to poles, voter registration drives, contacting your representatives to urge action on issues you feel need to be addressed. It might also include public policy priorities through budget reform, for example; Asking the city council to move funds towards social services from the police and public safety line items.

CONNECT

Creating community connections amplifies our messaging, volunteer base and shared outcome. Through networking with other community groups, you gain more exposure and community base, and vice versa. In addition to other UU groups, seek out local groups whose values and goals complement yours.

KEEP THE WIND IN BOTH EARS

My father sent me up from the root cellar to see about the wind. He was rechecking the winter's potatoes to remove all signs of rot and was planning on setting out nets for some fresh cod later on. Was there a steady breeze, he wanted to know. Yes, there was. "Now face it," he said, "so that the wind sings in both your ears. Then tell me where your nose points to. [...] it should turn our faces to whatever is coming down the winds of time and circumstance."

~ Canadian Universalist Angus MacLean, dean of the St. Laurence University's Theological School

YA Profile

LILY HARTZEL UU@UN DELEGATE TO COP27

(I can contact Lily to rework
this section as a brief profile)

UUFRC email invite for Jan 5, 2023:
You are all invited to hear some first-hand
experiences from member and local
graduate student Lily Hartzell as she recounts serving as a delegate from the
national Unitarian Universalist Association to the recent COP27 United Nations
Climate Conference in Egypt.



You'll hear her impressions as delegates from all over the world eventually
agreed to create a "loss and damage" fund to support the developing countries
most affected by climate disasters. Lily also attended the COP26 conference in
Glasgow last year. She will contrast the two meetings and analyze how this
year's delegates came together to create this major agreement.

Working on her MA in Climate Diplomacy from Tufts University, Lily brings a
young adult's perspective to solving the complex problems of climate change.
Bring your questions — and your friends! — for a stimulating discussion.

Recording of event: <https://youtu.be/3RqvhloOdx>

Photo: RWCpulse <https://www.rwcpulse.com/local-news/environment/local-delegate-to-share-experiences-from-un-climate-conference-at-free-event-6311964>

Step 4.

Make a Plan!

Now that you have chosen something to focus on and assessed your time and skills, its time for action. There is no proper plan template we can show you, but we can guess that it will involve planning events, meeting with people*, writing, making visuals, and more.

One thing that may help you focus is the UUA's Organizing Strategies:

GROUND: Provide political education and theological grounding that equips UUs to make meaning of current and historical contexts, identify their connection to and role in broader work for justice, and discern inroads for action and leadership

GROW: Support UUs in acting prophetically in the short term while building the capacity of their justice work for the long term, including nurturing the development of concrete skills and leadership

ACT: Facilitate opportunities for UUs to mobilize and leverage human, financial, and infrastructural resources in service of and in solidarity with local, national, and international movements for justice and liberation Stay informed and engage!

Today's Justice is about relationships, not donation.
We also want to emphasize that justice works in building relationships. Your effectiveness in justice work grows the more you are in relationship with others, especially the main beneficiaries of your work. Follow those who suffer from injustice, work with them, ask them how you can help. Most importantly, trust them.

YA Profile

UU YOUNG ADULTS TAKE ACTION TO STOP LINE 3



(This is copied from a UUSC blog post: uusc.org/uu-young-adults-take-action-to-stop-line-3/ I'll contact Ranwa for permission/ to rework this section as a brief profile)

Note: Also looking for some profiles of local ya efforts like food banks, etc.

By UUSC Staff on July 30, 2021

The Unitarian Universalist young adult community is fired up about our world on fire. Last month, the young adult delegation at the UUA General Assembly successfully brought forward a Responsive Resolution about “Creating a More Just Future Through Divesting from Pipelines and Investing in Young People”. Right now, a delegation of 20 UU young people and coalition partners is going to northern Minnesota to show up for the Anishinaabe water protector movement to Stop Line 3, following up on the group of UU and UU-adjacent faith leaders who showed up for the Treaty People Gathering in early June.

What is Line 3? It’s an extension of a fossil-fuel pipeline that—if completed—would stretch roughly 340 miles and move up to 760,000 barrels of tar sands oil per day. Not only would this project pose a threat to the Earth’s climate by doubling the amount of planet-heating fuels carried by the current Line 3; it also directly harms Indigenous sovereignty and treaty rights. The Anishinaabe people have protected rights to hunt, fish, gather medicine, and harvest wild rice on the lands the pipeline traverses. Further construction, and the real danger of a catastrophic spill, would gravely violate these rights.

For these reasons, Indigenous water protectors have put out a call for solidarity to shut down Line 3, and UU organizers are working to respond. The UU College of Social Justice and UUSC are collaborating with the UUA, UU Ministry for Earth, UU Young Adults for Climate Justice, and UU Justice Arizona to not only enable the young adult delegation to travel to Minnesota, but also to support them in whatever actions they take—be it from risking arrest to doing chores in the long-term camps.

And lest we forget...

Step 5:

DO YOUR PLAN

What else can we say? Do the work! And when you are done, reflect on it, rest, and reset, for the struggle is eternal.

Chapter 8: Education

A major part of UUism, and all faiths, is education. Learning our history, traditions, rituals, norms, and more is foundational to a religious life. Religion has played a central role in education since the earliest days of humanity. In the West, religion was at one point the only sources of education and the only place where written knowledge was held. The point is, learning is something faith communities do, and is something your young adult group can do.

There are numerous great resources out there for your group to get learned. From self-directed programs to live classrooms, one time workshops and month long courses, your young adult group will be rich with opportunities. In this short chapter we will detail several types of classes to consider and information on where to find them.

- - - Inclusion

UUism is all about how we relate to each other, which makes including everyone a #1 priority. Here are a number of practices for making your social event inclusive

- Always offer some kind of financial support. Cost should not be a barrier to participation in UU communities. For smaller expenses, such as a one time workshop, see if the group or an individual can pay for someone in need. For larger expenses, like a multi-part course, work with your congregation to secure scholarship funds.

- Be mindful of where the event is located and make sure everyone can easily get there. Consider offering to organize ride-sharing, or recommending a transit option.
- Make announcements about your education opportunities 2-4 weeks in advance so people have time to adjust their calendars. That said, you will almost never, ever find a time that works for everyone.
- Be aware that what you learn may impact people differently, or not be appropriate for certain members. For example, education about race matters will occur very differently for white people compared to BIPOC individuals.

- - - **Commit to Attend Every Session**

Everything we have ever learned about education programming is that **it works best when people attend every session**. This keeps all participants on the same page; the value of the material increases exponentially when all students are engaging the same material. So when planning an education program, ask everyone who signs up to commit to attend every session.

One trick may help - require people to pay a small fee. Studies show that if people have a financial investment in something, they are more likely to stay committed and attend to all its needs and requirements. People want to get the maximum benefit of their investment, so make them invest more than just their time. Something as simple as a \$5 to \$10 fee can make people more willing to attend every session of a class.

- - - **Classes produced by UUs**

Unfortunately there is no clearing house or single place where we can direct people to look for classes by, for, or about Unitarian Universalism. Instead here are a few places to check and people to ask.

- First, talk to your Minister or Director of Religious Education. They will likely know about education programs going on within the congregation and in the immediate area. They may even be interested in running a class just for your young adults!
- Head to the [UUA Calendar Page](#). There you can see all programs being organized at the national and regional level. Keep in mind that many of these programs are for training people who will then lead classrooms and are not the classes themselves.
- Check out UU religious schools as many offer online workshops and events that the public can attend. Look for their Public Events Calendar or similar resource.
 - [Starr King School for the Ministry](#) -
 - [Meadville Lombard Theological School](#)
 - [Harvard Divinity School](#)

- - - **Self Directed Education**

While finding classes produced by UUs is hard, finding materials to lead self-directed UU related programs isn't. The UUA has numerous resources, all organized and ready for people to use.

- Simply head to the UUA's [Adults Curricular Resources Page](#). There you will find programs including: Book and Film Discussion Guides, Social Justice Study, and Unitarian Universalist History Videos.
- You will also find the [Tapestry of Faith programs](#). Consisting of 15+ courses, these are really meaty programs that will deepen your group's knowledge and ability to be UU.
- We do encourage you to experiment with pre-written programs like Tapestry of Faith, as sometimes parts of the material may not be relevant and worth your group doing.

- - - Education Beyond UUism

Nearly every city and town has workshops, classes, and other educational opportunities available. Consider the following:

- Do a Google search to look at nearby opportunities
- Check out the website for museums, libraries, and parks. These public institutions often host workshops and other programs focused on educating the public.
- Check out your local colleges and universities to see what events and classes they offer to people who are not students.
- Look up nearby tours. Whether you are in a historic city or a small town, there is almost certainly at least one tour you can take to learn more about a given area.
- You can also teach each other! Look up what a PowerPoint Party is, or maybe your YA community has a teacher who loves to lecture.

Chapter 9: In Closing

Greetings from 2025. Dani, Tanya, and I (Joe) set out to write the best possible guide to young adult ministry we could. Yet we always knew that this guide was always meant to be a starting point, a Version 1.0. We knew we couldn't capture everything, that our own biases, limitations, and the change brought about by time would inevitably mean this document will need to be updated. We also knew first hand how annoying and frustrating it is to come across seemingly useful guides only to find them out of date.

So, now we ask that you send us your feedback! What didn't we include that you wanted to know more about? What resources should we be aware of that aren't listed in this work? What did we get wrong? What did you love the most? How can we make this guide better? You can send an email to yarn@uusf.org and put "YAM GUIDE" in the subject line.

Finally, thank you for reading. Our hope is that this guide has left you inspired, thrilled, and ready to start building community with young adults. Blessing upon your work. May the light of truth and the warmth of love guide you to heart and home, wherever that may be.