



A Process Guide For Stakeholder Conversations On Ministry To and With Youth

A Resource from the
Unitarian Universalist Association
Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth

June 2006
Updated August 2006

This project is funded in part by the Fund for Unitarian Universalism.

A Letter from the Task Force

Dear Stakeholders,

There are many individuals and groups in Unitarian Universalism that are stakeholders in youth ministry. We define a stakeholder as someone who should have a voice in the creation of a stronger youth ministry because 1) They are or will be affected by the outcome, 2) They should be invested in the outcome, and 3) Their support is necessary for this revisioning to be effective.

The Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth identified eight core stakeholder groups – the Liberal Religious Educators Association (LREDA), the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA), Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU), Youth Advisor Network, Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM), Interweave, the Canadian Unitarian Council, and UUA District Staff. We will work closely with these groups to tailor the conversation to their needs and structures.

This is not to say that there aren't *many* other groups who have a stake in the process and whose input would be valuable, which is why we have created this process guide to help you organize self-facilitated conversations on youth ministry. The Task Force identified a long list of stakeholders, which you can find at <http://www.uua.org/TRUS/youth/stakeholders.html>. We invite any and all Unitarian Universalist organizations and groups to reflect on their role in youth ministry and to offer input into this revisioning process.

We ask that stakeholders hold their conversations between September 2006 and April 2007, with all feedback returned to the task force by **May 1, 2007**.

If you have questions please contact Beth Dana, UUA Youth Ministry Associate, at 617-948-4352 or bdana@uua.org.

We look forward to hearing from you about your hopes, plans, and needs to better serve youth in our Association.

In Faith,

The Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth

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Ian Moore, YRUU Representative

Tom Rylett, Canadian Youth Representative

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About Stakeholder Gatherings

Youth ministry stakeholder gatherings are an opportunity for a variety of groups and communities in our Association to dialogue about their role in youth ministry, their hopes, and what they need in order to better serve and support Unitarian Universalist youth.

The logistics of the stakeholder conversations on youth ministry will vary greatly depending on the type and structure of the group.

- **Committees:** Set aside one meeting or a few hours to have a structured discussion about youth ministry.
- **National/Continental Groups or Networks:** Schedule time at the annual meeting/conference to have the discussion. If the group has chapters or regional groups, encourage each of them to have a conversation about youth ministry, which could culminate in the annual meeting/conference.
- **Online Communities:** Some groups may not meet regularly in person, but instead communicate primarily or exclusively over the Internet. These groups could organize an online forum discussion, an e-mail listserv discussion, or a series of open conference calls in order to gather the input of its constituency.
- **Staff Groups:** Staff groups could schedule a retreat to focus specifically on youth ministry.

In addition to having the stakeholder conversation, groups could also offer training and learning opportunities related to youth ministry and youth empowerment.

Be creative! You are free to organize the conversation in whatever way works best for your group.

Facilitation

Preferred Model

Since the Spring of 2006, congregations and districts have been holding conversations on youth ministry facilitated by a youth and adult co-facilitator team. Sharing facilitation between youth and adults is one of the best ways to promote youth empowerment. It also encourages growth, leadership, and skill building in both facilitators. This is the preferred model for stakeholder conversations, though we recognize that some groups (for example, religious professional organizations) do not have any youth members.

What about professional groups or groups that currently have mostly adults in them?

Facilitators should be chosen with intention. If the group is made up entirely of adults, try to find two people with differing experiences – for example, one person who was involved in Unitarian Universalism as a youth themselves and one who has been an adult supporter of youth. Avoid placing a lone youth facilitator in a tokenizing* position, facilitating a group of adults. This will not be productive to the conversation and puts the youth in a difficult situation. If a group, made up entirely or primarily of adults, would like to dialogue with and build relationships with youth, they should invite an existing community or group of youth rather than one or two individuals.

***Tokenism** refers to a policy or practice of limited inclusion of members of a [marginalized] group, usually creating a false appearance of inclusive practices, intentional or not (from Wikipedia.com).

Intentionally Intergenerational

Stakeholder conversations should be as intergenerational as possible. They should provide space for adults to listen to youth as well as opportunity for dialogue between youth and adults about how to better support the group's youth constituency. It is important to

- Intentionally invite youth members of the group to participate
AND
- Remind adults that this conversation serves to benefit the entire group.

Other Roles

In addition to a facilitator team, the group should solicit a volunteer to be the official recorder. This person will record discussions on newsprint and transfer the outcomes of the conversation onto the Report Forms. They will also be responsible for making copies of the Report Forms – one for the group to keep and one to send to the Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth (See Reporting to the Task Force).

The Process

Preparation

- Post a large diagram of the Force Field (See Report Form 2).
- Post the brainstorming questions listed under Section 1 of the process (Describe the Group's Current and Ideal Role in Youth Ministry).
- Gather all supplies and handouts.
- Prepare newsprint worksheets –
 - Sheet #1: Force Field Diagram
 - Sheet #2: Strategies (blank sheet for brainstorming)
 - Sheet #3: Strategies and Resources (number 1, 2, 3; leaving space under each to list resources)

Supplies

- Newsprint
- Markers
- One index card per participant
- Survey and congregational conversation presentation resources (available in Fall 2006)
- One copy of each report form
- Chalice
- Opening and closing readings or songs

Total Time: 2-3 hours

Note: The times listed next to each section are approximations, and may vary by group.

Opening

2 minutes

Begin the gathering by lighting a chalice and offering some opening words. Possible themes might include: youth, intergenerational community, change, or visioning.

Introductions

5-15 minutes

Even if group members know each other well, introductions are a good way to bring everyone's voice into the room from the start. Go around and have each person share their name, where they're from, how they're involved in the stakeholder group, and their hopes for this stakeholder conversation.

Background

10 minutes

Do not assume that everyone in the group has an understanding of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth and the context of this stakeholder conversation. Explain where your group's conversation fits in the larger process.

Below is a sample script, which you are welcome to adapt or expand.

This conversation about our role in and hopes for Unitarian Universalist youth ministry is part of a larger process taking place throughout the Unitarian Universalist Association--the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth. The consultation began in the Fall of 2005 with the formation of a task force of youth and adults, who were charged by the UUA Board of Trustees with implementing a series of dialogues throughout the Association about how to better serve and minister with youth.

The desired outcomes of the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth are

- More than just a one-size-fits-all youth ministry – a youth ministry that is robust, flexible, and diverse
- Denominational youth work that focuses on serving local congregations
- Mutually respectful and empowering relationships between youth and adults
- Anti-racism and anti-oppression work infused within every part of youth ministry, with a recognition that there is not one “right” way of doing the work – providing a forum for youth identity development and institutional change
- A youth ministry that meets the spiritual needs of youth and increases the spiritual depth of our congregations
- Effective communication within, between, and among all areas of the Association.

In January/February 2006 the Task Force conducted a survey of UU youth, ages 12-20, with all types of involvement in Unitarian Universalist communities. They received over 1,300 responses.

Then in Spring 2006 congregations throughout the Association held conversations about their youth ministry. These conversations were an opportunity to initiate change within their congregation and to offer feedback to the task force.

During the 2006-2007 church year, every UUA district and a variety of stakeholder groups will contribute their input to the process, building upon the information gathered thus far from youth and congregations. The process will culminate in a representative Summit on Ministry To and With Youth in July 2007, which will make recommendations for institutional change and set the course for implementation.

Covenant

10-15 minutes

A covenant is an agreement and a promise that is created and supported by the entire group. It describes how members of the group will be and interact with each other in a way that fosters productivity, safety, and love.

If your group already has a covenant or mission, this is a good time to review it. Ask group members if they would like to add anything specific to this conversation.

If your group does not have an existing covenant or mission, take 10-15 minutes to explain what a covenant is and to brainstorm one for this conversation. Encourage everyone to contribute.

Once the brainstorm session has ended, ask if there are any concerns or last minute additions and bring the group to agreement.

Review Survey and Congregational Conversation Reports **30 minutes**

Reports of the survey and congregational conversation results will be available online (<http://www.uua.org/trus/youth>) in the early Fall of 2006. In addition to comprehensive reports, there will also be more concise resources to use in workshops, stakeholder conversations, and other group settings. These resources will be available in Word, PDF, and Power Point formats.

When reviewing the results of this first stage of the consultation process, reflect on the following questions:

- What can we learn from these reports?
- What does this mean for our group?
- What does this suggest about ways that we can play a role in youth ministry?

Force Field Analysis **90 minutes**

Description

The force field analysis is a creative group process for thinking about change. The force field diagram is designed to be a visual representation of how successes and challenges can contradict each other. If we can figure out how to overcome our challenges with creative strategies, we will move forward toward our ideal.

A force field analysis:

- clarifies what is going well (the driving forces)
- identifies the challenges preventing the group from reaching its ideal (the restraining forces)
- helps the group prioritize which forces are most powerful and which forces the group could make the biggest impact on
- identifies strategies to eliminate or reduce the restraining forces.

Encourage participants to think outside the box about ways that they can engage in youth ministry, and ways that youth can be meaningfully involved in the group. If participants start to get bogged down by procedural details, refocus them to this purpose.

Explain to the group that they should do this exercise in the context of their stakeholder group. When thinking about strategies and resources, they are looking at what actions they, as a group, can take and what resources they need.

Introduce this exercise with a brief (5 minute) overview, explaining the steps of the process described below. Display the force field diagram you have prepared on newsprint and answer participants' questions. Then facilitate the process by giving instructions, section by section as you move along.

Process

1. Describe the Group's Current and Ideal Role in Youth Ministry 30 minutes

Propose the following questions about the group's **current** role, and discuss for approximately 10 minutes:

- a. What is our group's current role in youth ministry?
- b. Does the group have youth members?
- c. What is our group's youth constituency? OR What kinds of youth do we serve?
- d. To what extent are youth involved in the group's decision making?
- e. How is the group accountable to youth?
- f. How does the group support and minister with youth from diverse backgrounds, particularly youth with marginalized/oppressed identities (e.g. Youth of Color, GLBTQQ youth, youth with disabilities, etc.)?

Now propose the following questions about the group's **ideal** role:

- a. What could our role be in youth ministry?
- b. In what ways would youth be involved?
- c. What kinds of youth could we be reaching and ministering with?
- d. In what ways could our group support and minister with youth from diverse backgrounds, particularly youth with marginalized/oppressed identities (e.g. Youth of Color, GLBTQQ youth, youth with disabilities, etc.)?
- e. What wisdom and leadership can youth bring to this group?
- f. What do adults have to contribute to this group's ministry with youth?

Art Activity

20 minutes

One creative way to encourage the group to think about their ideal role in youth ministry is to do an art activity. Have the group break off into pairs (intergenerational, if possible) to describe how they envision the group's ideal role in youth ministry. Pass out paper and art supplies (markers, crayons, and other materials if desired). While one person talks, the other will express their partner's thoughts visually, using pictures and/or words. After three minutes, announce that it's time for the pairs to switch roles.

After each person has a visual representation of what they imagine to be the group's ideal role in youth ministry, ask people to explain briefly, to the whole group, what they envisioned.

2. Brainstorm Driving Forces

10 minutes

Pose the following questions to the group:

- a. What opportunities are available for youth? For people of other ages?
- b. What responsibilities do youth have? What responsibilities do people of other ages have?

Ask the group to brainstorm, listing driving forces or things that are currently going well in their ministry with youth. List their responses in the appropriate column on the newsprint chart.

Note: These responses must be transferred to Report Form 2 later.

3. **Challenges and Barriers: Restraining Forces** **20 minutes**

Brainstorm

10 minutes

Pose the following questions to the group:

For intergenerational groups: What restraining forces are preventing youth and adults from working together in this group? What restraining forces are preventing youth from exercising their creativity and power in the group?

For groups of only adults or only youth: What restraining forces are preventing your group from reaching your ideal role in youth ministry, as defined earlier?

Ask the group to brainstorm, focusing on some of these challenges, barriers, and restraining forces. List them on newsprint for the whole group to see.

Narrow Down

5 minutes

Explain that in moving toward a goal (your group's ideal role in youth ministry), reducing or eliminating restraining forces is generally more effective than strengthening driving forces. Read the following quote from *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change* by William Bridges:

“As historian Arnold J. Toynbee demonstrated in his book *A Study of History*, the great civilizations have risen to power not because of their advantages, but because they treated their disadvantages as *challenges* to which they discovered creative *responses*. Toynbee shows, for example, that ancient Athens rose to dominance in the classical world after its soil was depleted. Instead of being destroyed by what was a huge setback for an agricultural country, the Athenians treated their problems as a challenge to find a new way to participate actively in the economy of their day. Their creative response was to turn to the cultivation of olives, which draw on a deeper water table than do field crops. The Athenians rebuilt their economy around the export of olive oil – which further challenged them to build a merchant marine to transport the oil, a pottery industry to build the amphoras to contain the oil during shipment, and a mining industry to create the coin to pay for all the peripheral transactions of such a trade.” (William Bridges, *Managing Transitions: Making the Most of Change*, page 113)

Encourage the group to concentrate on the restraining forces, in order to move toward creative solutions to their challenges.

Ask the group to identify which of the brainstormed restraining forces they are most capable of changing and which are beyond their control. As you look at the list of restraining forces, ask, “What can our group do to reduce or eliminate this?”

Go through the list one by one, crossing off forces that could not be addressed by the group (are beyond the group’s control). This will allow them to focus on the issues that they have varying degrees of power to do something about.

Prioritize 5 minutes

Explain that the group will now work on the forces left on the list. Of those forces, ask them to identify five that they, as a group, could have the most impact on if thoughtfully addressed. Give each person five votes. Have participants mark their votes on the newsprint with markers, or use a show of hands. If there are similar forces, each with at least a couple votes, the group can choose to cluster them. Bring the group to consensus on the top five.

Note: These responses must be transferred to Report Form 2 later.

4. Strategies **15 minutes**

Brainstorm 10 minutes

Pose the following question to the group: How can this group create space for youth to develop and exercise their faith, creativity, and power in responsible, accountable, and supported ways?

On a clean sheet of newsprint, brainstorm strategies that would have an impact on the restraining forces identified by the group.

Prioritize 5 minutes

When the brainstorming is complete, the group will identify the top five strategies that they believe the group can adopt in order to move toward its ideal role in youth ministry. Give each person five votes. Have participants mark their votes on the newsprint with markers or use a show of hands. Bring the group to consensus on the top five.

Note: The top five strategies should be recorded on Report Form 3.

5. Identify Resources **10 minutes**

Pose the following question to the group: What resources do we need in order to enact our five strategies, with the goal of building a strong group that actively engages and supports youth ministry?

Resources might include money, information, communication, staff time, volunteer time, training, print resources, guidelines, or anything that will address a particular restraining force. For each resource, decide whether it is something the group can provide from within its membership or whether it's something the group needs from another source. List the resources (and their source) on newsprint.

Note: Resources should be recorded on Report Form 3.

Reflection and Closing

10 minutes

This is a time for the group to reflect on the conversation they have just participated in and to conclude the gathering. Pass out one index card per participant, and ask them to think about and write something they learned today and something they can commit to do as a result of this conversation. After a few minutes of reflection, ask participants to share a word or phrase from what they have written.

Close with a reading, song, or other ritual.

Reporting to the Task Force

Please record the outcomes of your conversation on the report forms provided in the back of this process guide. Your input will be a valuable part of the consultation process and will inform the decision making of the Summit on Ministry To and With Youth in July 2007. The results from all gatherings will be available on the Consultation web site – <http://www.uua.org/TRUS/youth>.

The recorder will be responsible for making two copies of the report forms – one for the group to keep and follow-through on, and the other to mail to the Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth.

The following materials should be mailed to the Task Force shortly after your stakeholder conversation:

- Report Form 1: Stakeholder Information
- Report Form 2: Force Field Analysis
- Report Form 3: Strategies and Resources
- Participant Evaluations

If there is anything else you would like the Task Force to know, please feel free to send additional materials (including photos!).

Return all materials by **May 1, 2007** to:
Task Force on Ministry To and With Youth
Attn: Beth Dana
25 Beacon Street
Boston, MA 02108

**Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth
Stakeholder Information**

Full name of group: _____

Contact person name: _____

Address (group office or contact person): _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Date of stakeholder conversation: _____

Length of conversation: _____

Attendance:

Total number of attendees: _____

Number of youth attendees: _____

Number of adult attendees: _____

What are the requirements for being a member of your group?

Does your group have youth members? Yes No

If yes, answer the following three questions:

1. Do you have adult staff/leaders who work with your youth members? Yes No

Please describe their responsibilities:

2. Does your group have a youth caucus or subcommittee? Yes No

3. Do youth hold leadership positions in your group?

Yes No

How did your group first hear about the Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth?

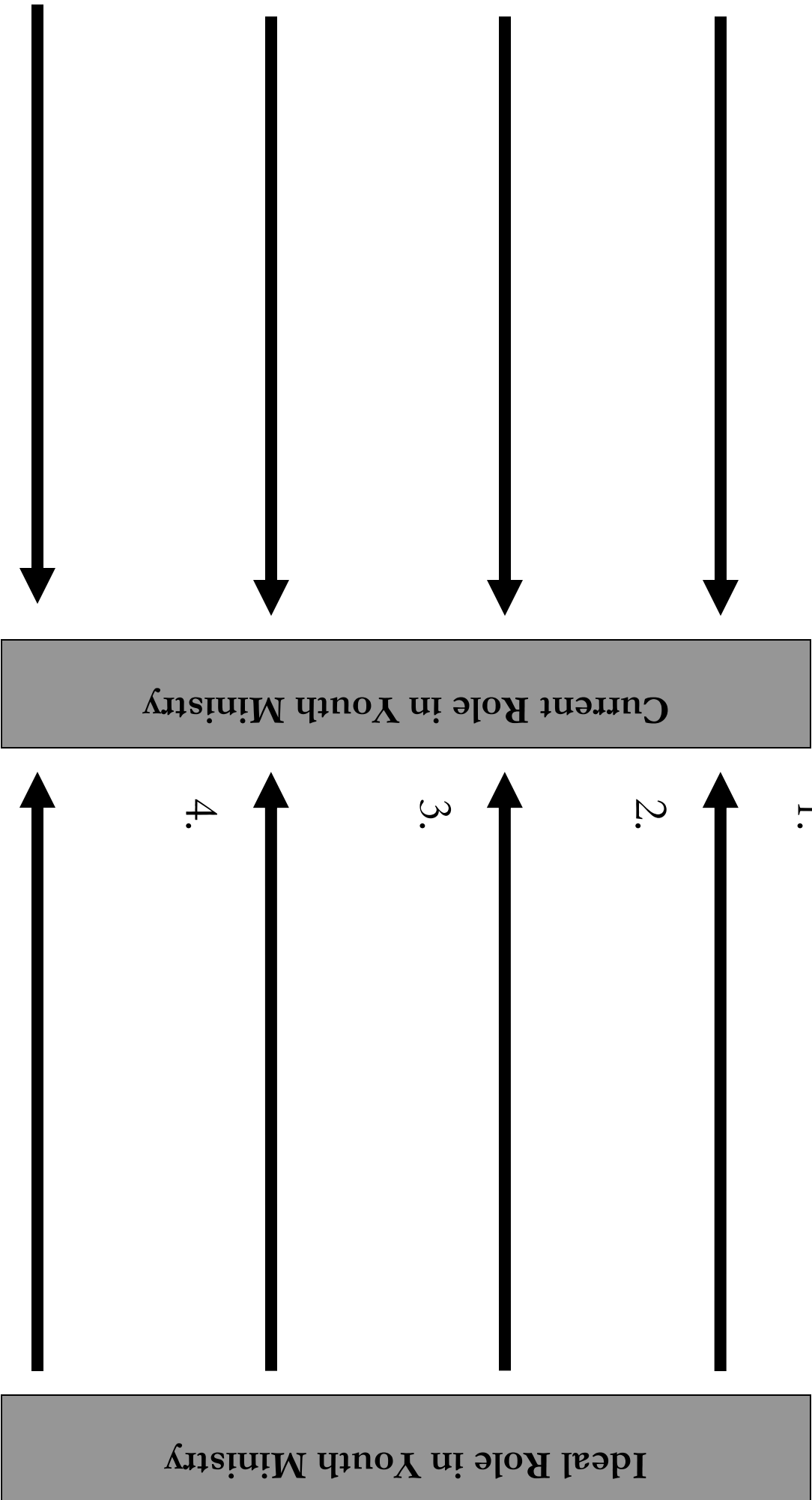
Any other comments about your group's youth ministry conversation?

**Thank you for taking the time to engage in this
very important conversation about your role in youth ministry!**

**Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth
Force Field Analysis**

Driving Forces

Restraining Forces



Group Name: _____

Report Form 3

Consultation on Ministry To and With Youth Strategies and Resources

List the top five strategies to address the barriers/restraining forces you identified. Then list resources needed to make each strategy work.

	Who can provide this resource?	
	Your group	Other (identify)
Strategy #1: _____		
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Strategy #2: _____		
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Strategy #3: _____		
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Strategy #4: _____		
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
Strategy #5: _____		
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

**Youth Ministry Stakeholder Conversations
Participant Evaluation**

Organization/Group Name: _____

I am a (circle one): Middle School Youth Older Youth Young Adult Adult

1. What parts of the youth ministry conversation did you find **most** useful?

2. What parts of the youth ministry conversation did you find **least** useful?

3. What is your main hope for the future of youth ministry?

4. What gifts can you bring to strengthening youth ministry?

5. Do you feel like you were able to make an important contribution to this conversation and that your voice was heard?

6. Please comment on the process and facilitation.

7. Is there anything else you want us to know?