



This presentation is available online as a PowerPoint presentation and as a Acrobat .pdf file. Created by Beth Dana <bdana@uaa.org>, UUA Youth Ministry Associate, for CU2C2 members. Based on results received so far by the Consultation on Ministry to and with Youth Task Force.



Results of the Youth Ministry Survey

Notes on the Survey

The survey findings described here should be understood within the context of “those who responded to the survey” rather than “all UU youth.”

Who Took the Survey?

Survey Respondent Demographics

1,399 surveys were analyzed.

Age: 1,285 respondents reported their age. The average age of survey respondents was 15 years old overall.

Junior High Youth (12-14): 37% overall
High School Youth (15-17): 59% overall
Older Youth (18-20): 4% overall

Identities: The majority of respondents identify as female (58%). The vast majority of respondents are also white (84%) and heterosexual (81%).

How Are Youth Respondents Involved in Unitarian Universalism?

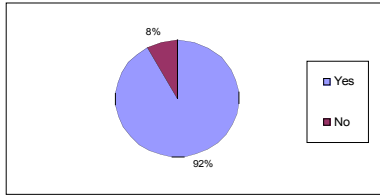
Do you currently attend religious education or worship services at a UU congregation?

87% of all respondents say “Yes.”

Do other members of your family go to a UU congregation?

About 90% of respondents say that their family attends a UU congregation.

Does your congregation have a youth group?



92% of all respondents' congregations have a youth group.

Besides a congregation, with what UU organizations are you affiliated?

Choices:

- *Canadian Unitarian Council
- *DRUUMM
- *Church of the Larger Fellowship
- *Continental UU Young Adult Network
- *Interweave
- *Latino/a UU Networking Association
- *UU Camp and Conference Centers
- *UU Women's Federation
- *White Allies
- *Other
- *I don't know what these organizations are

71% of respondents have not heard of the organizations listed.

Respondents are most likely to be involved in:

- UU camps and conference centers (14%, 167 total)
- "other" organizations (16%)

Active Involvement

% Involved	Overall	Camp/Conference Participants
Youth Group	79% attend regularly	91% attend regularly
District/Regional Programs	45%	69%
Continental Programs	9%	17%

Respondents involved in UU camps and conference centers are proportionately more active in all levels of youth ministry.

Positive Experiences

Respondents involved in UU camps and conference centers report overwhelmingly positive experiences with youth ministry, especially in the following areas:

% Agree	My experiences in the program make me a better person.	The program gives me opportunities to develop and practice leadership skills.
Youth Group	68% overall	67% overall
	81% Camp/Conf	79% Camp/Conf
District/Regional	78% overall	74% overall
	88% Camp/Conf	84% Camp/Conf
Continental	80% overall	71% overall
	88% Camp/Conf	74% Camp/Conf

Length of Time as UU

The majority of respondents are not new to Unitarian Universalism.

This is especially true among respondents involved in UU camps and conference centers – 61% have been UUs for more than 10 years.

Reflection Questions

What is the best way to motivate youth (including junior high youth) to become actively involved in youth ministry and the UU movement at-large?

Two Key Areas

There are two key areas in which survey responses were significant:

Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Welcoming All Youth

Meeting the Spiritual Needs of Youth

A high percentage of respondents say their congregations provide opportunities to:

- Learn new things
- Get involved in their communities
- Develop leadership skills

They also feel welcome and respected in their congregations.

On all levels of youth ministry and across all ages and identities, a large percentage of respondents report that their spiritual needs are not being met.

Congregation is my spiritual home: 53% agree

Youth group meets my spiritual needs: 53% agree

District programs meet my spiritual needs: 70% agree

Continental programs meet my spiritual needs: 63% agree

Describe your spiritual beliefs and how involvement in your UU congregation has helped shape those spiritual beliefs.

The responses to this question reflect a diverse UU youth community.

Older respondents were more likely to share a detailed description of their spiritual beliefs, while younger respondents were sometimes unsure.

Many respondents mentioned the influence and value of their congregation's Coming of Age program.

Reflection Questions

How can Unitarian Universalist youth ministry help youth in their congregations and districts/regions to determine their spiritual needs, articulate their faith, feel spiritually fulfilled, and live out their faith in the world?

What is the camp/conference center's role in the spiritual development of youth?

Welcoming All Youth

GLBTQQ Youth

Respondents who identify as gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning are very active in Unitarian Universalism and hold many leadership positions.

Compared to the proportion of heterosexual respondents involved in the following, these respondents are more likely to be:

- Involved in congregational activities
- Involved with other UU organizations
- Involved in local, district, and continental youth programs
- Leaders in congregational and continental youth programs

Gender and Leadership

The following table shows the percentage of male, female and transgender/genderqueer/other gender respondents involved in youth program leadership:

	Male	Female	Transgender/Genderqueer/Other
Total Respondents	525	762	23
Local Leaders	25%	31%	46%
District Leaders	31%	26%	58%
Continental Leaders	23%	16%	75%

Even though transgender, genderqueer and other gender respondents hold proportionately more leadership positions than males/females, they do not rate their experience as positively...

Gender Identity in Youth Groups

Compared to the proportion of male/female respondents, respondents who identify as transgender, genderqueer, or "other" genders consistently rate their youth group experience lower.

For example:

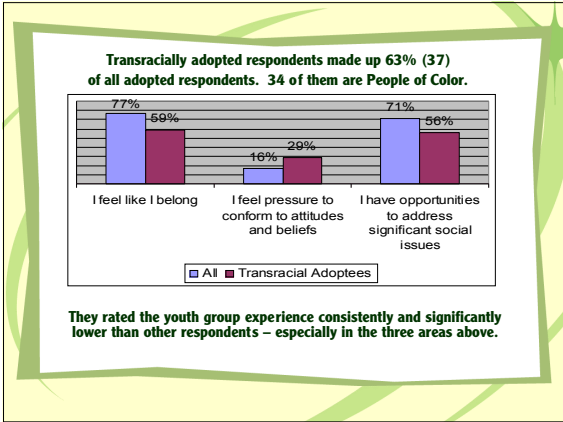
Statements About Youth Group % Agree	Transgender, Genderqueer, Other	Male	Female
The group is welcoming and friendly	50%	87%	85%
The group respects and values my opinions/experiences	48%	83%	83%
The group gives me opportunities to address significant social issues like racism and oppression	24%	75%	70%

Race and Youth Ministry

% "Yes"	Respondents of Color	White Respondents
Participate in youth group regularly (more than 4x/year)	75-90% (depending on specific racial identity)	79%
Participate in district youth programs	45-56% (depending on specific racial identity)	44%
Participate in continental youth programs	9-25% (depending on specific racial identity)	8%

* Respondents of color are more represented at the district/continental levels, and hold proportionately more leadership positions in continental programs.

* Even though respondents of color make up a larger proportion of continental participants than at other levels of youth programs, Black youth in particular are less likely to feel that they belong in the continental community or that their spiritual needs are being met.



Reflection Question

As a predominately white and heterosexual denomination how can our congregations, districts/regions, and camps/conferences support the healthy racial, gender, and sexual identity development of youth?



Results from Congregational Conversations



The Basics

- Number of conversation report forms analyzed: 74
- Of those 74, there were...
 - 2 cluster conversations
 - 10 large congregations
 - 48 mid-size congregations
 - 14 small congregations
 - 17 districts and 1 Canadian region represented!
- 97% have a youth group.
- 82% of the congregations have a youth advisor, but only 24 of those positions are paid.
- Only 15% are Welcoming Congregations.

The results focus on five themes. . .

- Intergenerational Community Relations
- Mission, Vision and Priorities
- Curriculum, Resources, and Transitional Age Youth
- Leadership Development and Opportunities for Practice
- Serving the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Intergenerational Community Relations

Where do youth feel welcome, safe, and included?

- Youth group (many congregations mentioned the social aspect and strong bonds built in youth groups)
- District youth organization (only 3 congregations mentioned this as a positive aspect of their youth ministry)
- Family
- Congregation

16% of congregations noted that congregation members were welcoming and supportive of youth, but few congregations mentioned *specific* factors in the success of welcoming youth.

Intergenerational Community Relations

What factors are discouraging intergenerational community?

- Bias (adult biases about youth, youth biases about adults, general lack of respect and understanding)
- Structure and Systems (23% pointed out lack of structures to integrate youth into the community)
- Logistics (conflicting schedules, methods of communication)
- Programming and Events (lack of intergenerational events, low visibility of youth in the community)

Strategies developed: Youth-adult forums to discuss youth needs; Structural changes; Changes to communication methods; Increased and strengthened intergenerational events

Mission, Vision and Priorities

- Adult and youth commitment – 22% of congregations mentioned the commitment of youth and adults as a driving force of their youth ministry
- Most congregations (64) did not discuss mission or vision as a contributing factor in the success of their youth ministry.
- 23% of congregations did not feel that their congregation had a clear vision for what it wanted its youth ministry to be.

Strategies developed: Half of the congregations who said they lacked a vision decided to create a vision for their community's youth ministry. Another 11 decided to complete a visioning process in their congregation.

Curriculum, Resources and Transitional Age Youth

Curriculum:

Almost a third of congregations who responded stated that the overall "youth program" was strong. Despite this fact, 9 of the 24 congregations with strong programs decided to change their curriculum.

About 27% of congregations decided to change their curriculum for youth based on their conversation.

Curriculum, Resources and Transitional Age Youth

Resources:

- **Volunteers –**
41% felt that adult volunteers contribute to their youth ministry's success. Half of those congregations decided to recruit more adult volunteers and 20% decided to hire staff to support youth ministry.
- 2. **Money –**
43% of responding congregations decided to fundraise or allocate more money toward youth ministry. Although seventeen congregations reported funding levels as contributing to their youth ministry's success, 10 of the 17 decided to fundraise or allocate more money toward youth ministry.

Curriculum, Resources and Transitional Age Youth

Transitional Age Youth:

- **Coming of Age and Our Whole Lives –** 11 congregations cited COA and 11 congregations cited OWL as driving their youth ministry.
- 2. **Middle School Youth –** 12 congregations decided to develop their ministry with middle school aged youth.
- 3. **Older Youth –** While the findings of the Youth Ministry Survey would lead one to expect congregations would comment on their ministry with older youth, only 5 congregations mentioned that college-aged or bridge youth were underserved by their youth ministry.

Leadership Development and Opportunities for Practice

Does youth leadership contribute to the success of the congregation's youth ministry?

- 5 congregations mentioned youth empowerment as a driving force
- 9 congregations mentioned the connection between youth and social justice
- 22% of responding congregations said youth leaders contributed to the success of their youth ministry
- 5 congregations reported having a youth member or representative on the congregation's Board

13 congregations mentioned that there are no structured leadership opportunities for youth in their congregation.

Leadership Development and Opportunities for Practice

Strategies:

- 19% of responding congregations decided to provide training or workshops for youth leadership development.
- Over a quarter of responding congregations decided to include youth on committees.
- 13 congregations decided to include a youth on their Board.

Serving the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Very few congregations mentioned spirituality or worship as a driving force in their youth ministry.

A few congregations mentioned that the Unitarian Universalist seven principles promoted an ideal youth ministry in their congregation.

19% of congregations mentioned that their community loves and cares about their youth.

Serving the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Worship Services:

- 13 congregations mentioned that their worship services do not engage youth in their community. 67% of these congregations were mid-size.

Strategies developed:

- 16% of congregations decided to encourage youth to attend more often.

- Almost 20% decided to change worship services in order to meet youth's needs.

- Over a third decided to include youth in the organization and planning of worship services.

Serving the Spiritual Needs of Youth

Ministerial/Pastoral Support:

- 6 congregations said that their minister had a lot of interaction with the youth in their congregation, and 3 said there was very little interaction.

- 10 congregations decided to increase youth-minister interaction.

- 4 congregations decided to hire a youth minister or include youth ministry in the job description for a minister.

Reflection Questions

As UU camps and conferences serving youth and families in our denomination, do you face similar issues in your efforts to provide a strong and vibrant youth ministry?

What would you like to change about the way you do youth ministry?