



Evolve ▶ Support ▶ Serve **3**
ngu


unity®
Worldwide Ministries

www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org



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Table of Contents

Welcome	4
What is NGU?	5
What is an NGU group?	5
Regions	6
Leadership, Mentorship and the Age Question	7
Why NGU?	8
NGU ³ —Why cubed?	8
Getting Started	10
What kind of group are you creating?	10
Build the group	10
College based NGU	13
Sustainability	15
Leadership development	16
Resources	18
Leadership code of ethics	19
Sacred circle	20
Emerging gathering	22
Top ten ways to make your church intergenerational	28
Unity Basics fact pages	31
Sacred safety	38
Discernment process	40
NGU registration	41

Welcome

If you are reading this, you are taking the first step in creating a place for young adults in your community. In the following pages you will find resources to help you fulfill this goal. While much research and gathering of experience has been done, this is a living program. As we learn together, the future versions of NGU³ will continue to evolve and be more in depth.

There is no magic formula for NGU. No one can truthfully tell you “just do this” and you will instantly have the perfect group for your young adults. Since NGU is designed as a place of spiritual development for individuals, it will take on the style and fulfill the needs of the people involved. Every group has a different flavor, and what works for one may have been the worst thing another tried. Remembering this is important for two reasons, the first is to remember to not give up if what you are doing isn’t working. You can just adjust and try again. The second is this information contains ideas, gained from experience and research. The team that created this has had different NGU experiences, from those who grew up in Unity to relatively new Unity students and everything in between. Hopefully, you will find many ideas in these materials that will resonate with your church community that you can put to use.

A note on this publication:

We decided to publish this in electronic format because it is greener to email or make a CD than to have a quantity printed and sitting in a warehouse. Please make copies and print what you need, (double sided on recycled paper if you can.) We encourage you to be mindful of the environment when doing so.

What is NGU?

NGU is the next generation of Unity, and in many ways, is the now generation as well. NGU is for the young adults who want to be involved in church, but feel going to a Sunday service doesn't fulfill all their spiritual needs. For some it's as simple as not being able to attend on Sunday mornings because of work. For others, the closeness of community experienced during YOU is a high priority. While for others, NGU serves (especially those new to town) as a group of friends who have similar values.

NGU is not just a young adult group at a church. NGU can be on campus, online, or regional events.

NGU is the Next Generation of Unity, ages 18-35ish
NGUer is a member of NGU
YOU is the Youth of Unity, ages 14-18



NGU has evolved to where it is now through the passion of dedicated NGUers seeing a need and filling it. Are you one of the dedicated leaders to take it to the next level?

What is a NGU group?

NGU is intended for, but not limited to, young adults. (Young adults is defined as persons chronologically ages 18-35 ish.) There are a variety of ways a NGU group can manifest, the following are the most common.

The young adults who participate may be

- Previous YOUTers
- Raising families
- Raised with Unity teachings
- Looking for non-traditional, spiritual community
- New to Unity after the age of 18
- YOU Junior Sponsors

Meetings can be:

- A class/group in a church
- An on-campus (college/university) meeting
- City-wide, state-wide
- Campus Ministry
- A church
- A worship service/experience
- Facilitated on the Internet
- A text message

Meetings may be organized with a focus on:

- Spiritual education/experience
- Social interaction
- Support
- Spiritual parenting

Meetings may be led/facilitated by:

- A young adult/team
- Minister/spiritual leader/licensed Unity teacher
- Regional consultant/team
- Adult (not Young Adult age)

Please note that all NGU groups must be connected to a church or credentialed leader, in an advisory capacity at the minimum.

What is a Local Connection?

A local connection is one of the names for an NGU group, usually a group that meets at a church.

Regions

More than half of the regions currently have regional consultants for young adults. To find your consultant and region, go to www.unity.org/REC. Your regional consultant can offer support in starting your group. You will also want to be on his/her contact list to receive information about upcoming retreats. You are not limited to attending retreats in your region, people from all regions are welcome at all regional events.

For more contact information please go to www.unity.org/ngu


Leadership, Mentorship and the Age Question

Often there are questions about the age range of NGU. Over time it has become clear that, in general, the 18-35ish range works. Having a variety of age ranges, as well as variety in backgrounds, makes the group more diverse.

We often find that the youngest people in the group, those in their early 20's, are mainly in a place of receivership. They are often very busy with school, work, and life's demands. While they will come to NGU meetings, they often do not have time to commit to the organizational aspects of the group.

Those in their mid and later 20's are usually gaining more stability in their lives and may have more time to commit to organizing a NGU group. As they are committing at a deeper level, there might also be a desire to become more involved and committed to the church community, possibly as a prayer chaplain or board member.

NGUers in their early 30's often become strong leaders of the group, they can be intentionally training others in the group for leadership while stepping into greater involvement in the church and region.



One NGUer writes: "I have found that taking SEE classes at my church and working toward credentialing has inspired other young adults I know to do the same."

The other blessing of a wide age-range, along with a strong leadership structure, is the opportunity for members of the group to mentor each other. The "traditional" order (college, marriage, buying a house, having children) is no longer the norm. As NGUers walk through these life milestones together, they have a group with various experiences and perspectives to offer support.

Why NGU?

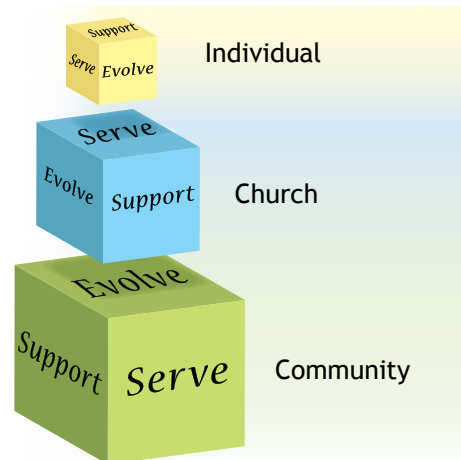
It's possible that you already have many young adults in your church community who are fully engaged and inspired. If this is true, you may not need this resource. However, if you are wondering where the 20 to 40 year olds are in your community, or why they don't stick around, or when they're coming back... then NGU³ is for you.

Church leaders from most denominations reveal that there seems to be a lack of young adults in their congregations. You can go to Amazon.com and search young adult ministries and find as many books about how to do young adult ministry as why the 20 and 30 somethings are not in church. There have been many studies done about why young adults seem to leave church after high school, and why they may or may not come back.



A few years ago I was visiting a Unity church in a major metropolitan area and asked one of the administrators what programs they had for young adults. The administrator looked at me and said “all of our high schoolers go away to college.” I was dumbfounded. In this city, with over 40 institutes of higher learning, what about programs for all of the young adults moving to this city for college, not to mention for post-college jobs?

NGU³ Intention



NGU³: evolve, support, serve

Why cubed?


We chose to call this NGU cubed because of the multi-dimensional way it is applied. The intention is to help evolve, support and serve the individual, the church and community.

This is not just about creating a vibrant NGU group, but about creating a culture that invites young adults into leadership, meaningful involvement in the church, and their own spiritual path. It's about the church benefiting from the depth of an “all generation” congregation. It's about young adults, the church, and the community finding ways to serve each other that results in healthy relationships and growth.

Belonging is an important part of being human. We all want to feel like there is a place where we are known. Maybe your community has that one volunteer who has been coming and fulfilling a task for 20 years. They feel they belong. It is part of who they are. How do we create this belonging, this ownership in our younger generations? To quote Joseph R. Myers in *Organic Community* “It is not the product of community that we are looking for. It is the process of belonging that we long for.” (p.125)

There are many benefits of having an active NGU group in your community, that an individual couldn't do alone. Some of these include creating sacred rituals and experiences, learning from each other, as well as formal and informal mentoring. In community there is the chance to build leadership skills in a safe environment, as well as take on service projects.

For more on making your church young adult friendly, see “Top 10 ways to make your church intergenerational” in the resource section.



“People would like the opportunity for their ideas, gifts, and personality to shape the group. They are interested in developing groups that make sense to them.”

—*Organic Community*, p. 60

Getting started

Our attention is constantly pulled in many directions in today's world. The ability to manifest a group of young adults that can connect on a similar level as they journey through life is very sacred. Use these tools to help your group grow and become more connected to your community.

What kind of group are you creating?

Many using NGU3 are planning on creating a group at their church, however, there are additional options including starting a campus ministry or a young adult focused service. (See "What is a NGU Group?" for a more detailed list.) These steps apply mainly to NGU study-type groups, but may be useful for other types as well. There is further guidance on campus ministry following this section, and tips on alternative service formats is included in the resources section. During your prayer time, be open to the question about what type of group would best serve your area.

Start with prayer

Whether you are an NGUer, a minister, a board member, or other interested party, first spend time in prayer. Be open to envisioning your group and discovering its intention.



Silent Unity:

1-800-NOW-PRAY, www.silentunity.org

Regional contact list www.unity.org/REC

Find others to pray with you, these people may include ministers, chaplains, regional NGU contacts and Silent Unity.

Build the group

Once you are firmly rooted in prayer, start building the group. The following steps are provided for you to use in whatever way works best for your situation.



Leadership team consists of a group of 3-5 NGUers, depending on the size of the Local Connection.

Create a NGU Leadership Team

This team may share equally in responsibilities, or have specific duties. For instance, one person runs the meetings, takes care of the emails and connects with people; one looks for, organizes and facilitates service projects; and one organizes

and facilitates social activities. One leader should have the specific responsibility of being the point person for communication with the church. While it is everyone's job to communicate; it is more effective to have a designated point person.



History has shown that it is very helpful to have at least three people on the leadership team so that no one individual is shouldering all the responsibility which can lead to burn-out.

For more on creating a functional and organic structure for your group, read *Organic Community* by Joseph R. Myers

Create a Core Team/Advisory Board/Support Team

This could include board members, licensed teachers, ministers, and/or supporting church members who are willing to support the NGU team leaders. This team would meet occasionally to offer support, ideas and feedback. This team can help leaders navigate church culture and get connected to regional resources. As the group is getting started, the leaders will be blessed by the wisdom and support of this team.

Set a Group Intention

Have members of the group discuss their intentions for being there.

- Once your Local Connection has started meeting, explore together its reason for being.
- What is your intention as a group?
- What kind of activities do you wish do together?
- What are the church's reasons for wanting an NGU?

With guidance and prayer, the intentions will grow and evolve.

Some suggestions from other groups:

book club	spiritual growth	social time
volunteering	networking	meditation
prosperity/tithing	healing	transition
integrity/ethics	spiritual and religious history	prayer
affirmations and denials	spiritual support for young parents	unity principles
twelve powers	healthy relationships/partnerships	treasure mapping

Combine these and others to create your own purpose.

There are a variety of methods available for a full discernment process. One program developed by a Unity community is available in the Resources section of this guide.



Connect with the Region and Unity Worldwide Ministries

During the beginning stages, make contact with your regional representative. Look for a list of regional consultants and their contact information at www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/ngu-next-generation-unity. Your regional young adult consultant is a good person to support you in the creation of your group. (S)he may already know of others in your area who are interested in NGU or will be able to put you in contact with other functioning groups.

Your region may also have retreats. This is a great way to make connections with other NGUers in your area. Look for these events and plan to attend. Your church may be able to sponsor you.

If your region doesn't yet have a consultant, check in with Unity Worldwide Ministries' young adult staff, at ngu@unity.org. We will be able to assist you as well.

You may also want to sign up for the NGU yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/next-generation-of-unity/>. Just follow the directions to get signed up. This gives you ongoing information about what other NGUers are thinking and doing, and it's a great space for networking.

College-Based NGU

For college campuses there are two options:

- A mainly student-lead group; this is very similar to a NGU Local Connection at a church.
- A campus ministry, lead by a minister or licensed teacher that can have elements more similar to a church service blended in with the study group format.

For more information about campus ministry please refer to the campus ministry manual downloadable at www.unity.org/ngu.

Getting Started on Campus Local Connections

The intention of an on-campus Local Connection is to create the spiritual community you would like on campus.

The group needs to be connected to a church, a minister or licensed teacher.

The examples that are given in this section can be used on-campus as well as with a Local Connections group off-campus. These are just a few ideas from groups around the country:

- Go to a local coffee shop at a designated time each week and check-in on life and school.
- Pick a book and discuss it. This is a great way to get to know other members of your group. There are examples and resources in the resource section of this material.
- Schedule a service project and make a visible impact on your community. This could include making care packages and distributing them to homeless members of the community or helping out at a local shelter.
- Host a contemplative service with other campus faith groups. Play music, pray and share poetry around a specific subject such as peace.

Navigating Through College/University Administrations

When launching a campus Local Connection group you will need to understand that each campus is unique and has its own rules, regulations, and procedures. Follow those and be prepared to be patient.

Here are a few tips for getting started. We've learned many of these from our own experiences working on college and university campuses.

1. Meet with the campus student activities advisor. He/she will tell you if there are any additional requirements that aren't listed here.
2. You may need to find a campus staff member to advise your group.
3. You will need to find at least five students on your campus that will want to be officers of your Local Connection. (Officer is a term many campuses use, it does not mean you have to use a president, vice president, etc. structure to run your group.)
4. At least one of the five members of the Local Connections group will have to attend a registered student organization orientation.
5. Fill out a registration form. Many campuses now have an online application process.
6. Create a mission statement and group constitution for your Local Connection. Have a list of possible activities attached. Constitutions must include the following sections:
 - Name of organization
 - Purpose of organization
 - Affiliations with other groups (if applicable)
 - Membership requirements
 - Election procedures
 - Titles and duties of officers
 - Amendment procedures
 - Frequency of meetings
7. Many universities require a current constitution of any off-campus organization with which the student organization is formally affiliated. To find this information, visit www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/resource-library and search for "by-laws"

Sustainability

Once your group has started, it is important to be mindful of how you are going to keep it going. It is very common for a group to start, go well for a couple months, then fall apart, either from a decrease in attendance, members' busy schedules, or leadership burn-out.

Many of the things you can do to keep the momentum going are included in the “Getting Started” section. Having a leadership team, support from church leadership, and being in sync with what members are looking for are key.

While word-of-mouth is the most successful way of marketing your group, remember that keeping people coming back is heavily dependant on communicating effectively. Many groups have set up Google or Yahoo groups that everyone subscribes to and receives email updates. Having the meeting schedule correct on the church's website is also useful for outreach.

Leadership Development

If I have the belief that I can do it, I will surely acquire the capacity to do it, even if I may not have it at the beginning. —Mahatma Gandhi

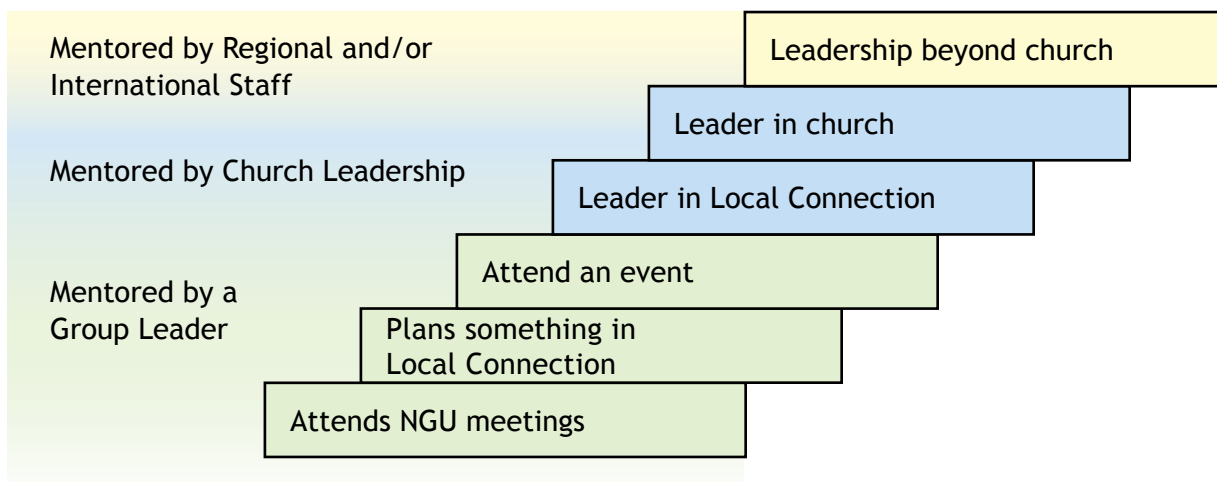
To develop members of your NGU group into leaders, the person facilitating the development of the group should meet with each member to find out what they would like to get out of the group. They should first listen to the members and determine their interests. With this information the facilitator will be able to link members with leadership roles within the group. For example, if someone is interested in prayer, invite him/her to lead a prayer. As they feel more comfortable, give them more responsibility. You can see more examples on the Leadership Ladder below.

Leadership Structure

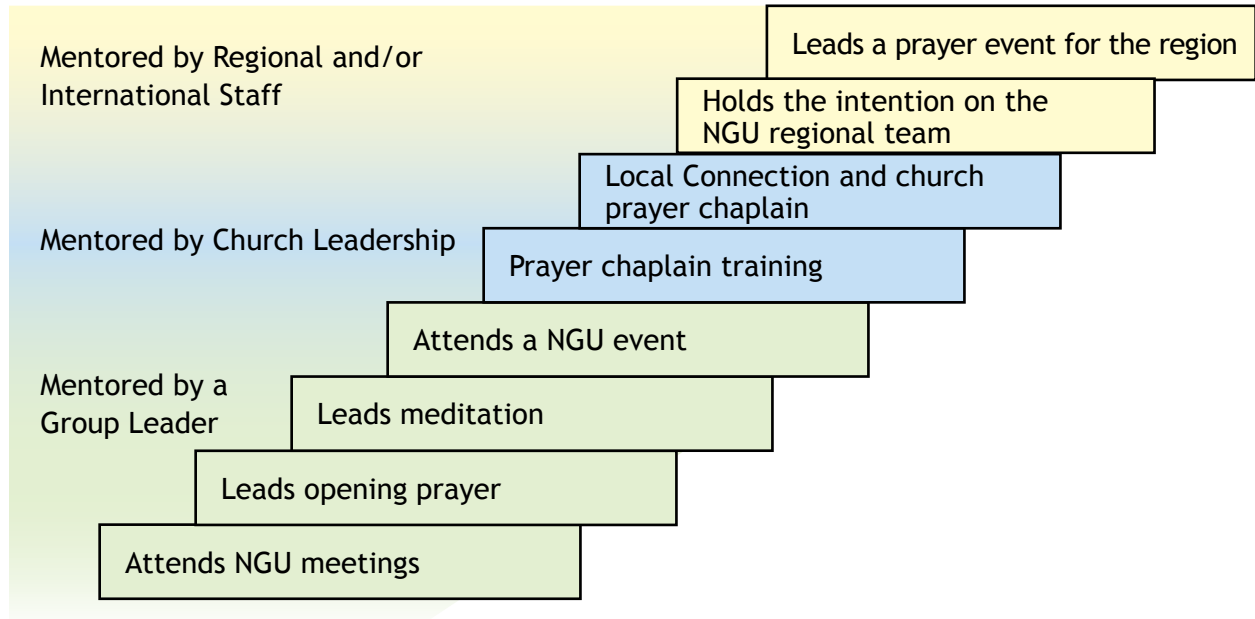
The structure of your group will be determined by what your group is looking to get out of your meetings. For example, if you would like to have lessons, you need someone to lead those sessions and/or lead the lesson.

It may be helpful to view every member of your group as leaders in various stages of development. The charts below show a step-by-step understanding of the stages of leadership. These are examples of what it could look like, each person's journey will be different.

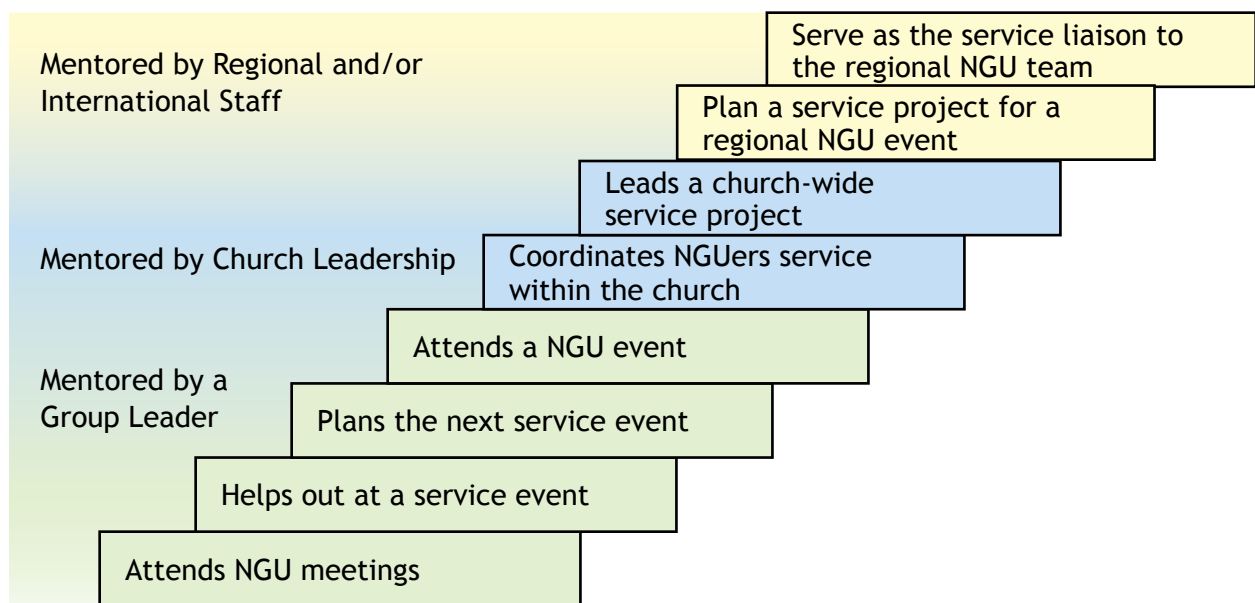
Leadership Interest



Prayer Interest



Service Interest



Resources

There are infinite possibilities for what your NGU group could look like. In the following pages we have included:

- Helpful articles, books and websites
- Leadership Code of Ethics
- Ideas for creating an alternative service
- Unity fact sheets that you can print off for your group
- Creating sacred safety
- A Discernment process

Articles

Contact magazine, June/July 2008 (Technology issue)

www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/contact-magazine.

“How Will the Church of Today Fill the Pews of Tomorrow?”

www.caerupress.com (click guest download)

Books

Be Heard Now! Lee Glickstein

Me to We: A Pastor's Discovery of the Power of Partnership Alan Nelson

Organic Community Joseph R. Myers

The Integral Vision: A Very Short Introduction to the Revolutionary Integral Approach to Life, God, the Universe, and Everything Ken Wilber

The Next Revolution Charlotte Shelton, Laura Shelton

Websites

NGU website: www.unity.org/ngu

Regional consultants: www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org/ngu-next-generation-unity

Silent Unity: www.silentunity.org

Sacred Circle blog: www.facebook.com/UnitySacredCircle

Unity Institute Student Association: www.uistudents.com



Leadership Code of Ethics

1. I dedicate myself to the principle of Truth as taught and exemplified by Jesus Christ, and interpreted by Unity School of Christianity and Unity Worldwide Ministries.
2. I listen to the indwelling Christ for inspiration, guidance and abundance in my daily life.
3. I use prayer as the center of my life and encourage others to do the same.
4. I take time for self care and development.
5. I serve in this role to support the overall vision, mission and goals of NGU and the church.
6. I will maintain integrity with myself and the ministry. I understand clearly the boundaries and appropriate moral behavior with members of the group, congregation, staff, ministers and others.
7. I hold all confidences in sacred trust, except where professional intervention is legally required.
8. I will empower the members of the group to live the Truth. I will present subjects that are compatible with basic Unity principles.
9. I will undertake activities related to the ministry with the approval of my minister.
10. I acknowledge the minister as the leader of the ministry I serve and give my full support and cooperation to the minister.
11. I recognize that all outreach activities must be sponsored by the ministry, region or the Education, Leadership and Ministry Development department of Unity Worldwide Ministries' home office.
12. I acknowledge that open communication with the minister is essential so that all possible options to reach a positive and productive solution may be explored. If a solution cannot be reached, I will contact my NGU regional representative and the young adult specialist at Unity Worldwide Ministries' home office for guidance and support.

Adapted from: *Youth and Family Ministry Guide* (p. 219) Spiritual Educator's Code of Ethics and the Covenant Code of Ethics for a Licensed Unity Teacher.

Alternative Services

Sacred Circle

In March 2008 a prayer service was added to the weekly schedule at Unity Village. The intention was to create a prayer space for those wanting something different than what was currently available. Each week people from a variety of departments, backgrounds, and ages come together for this time of fellowship and prayer. The goal of Sacred Circle is threefold:

- for the service to be accessible for everyone (from the never-studied Unity folk to the long-time minister)
- to create community
- give exposure to and make personal the classical writings of Unity

The following information will guide you in creating this type of service.

The service's basic timeline is:

10:50-11:00	pre-music
11:00	Welcome
11:02	Wiggle Music
11:05-07	Intro of discussion time and discussion time
11:13	Meditation with singing bowl
11:23	Exit meditation and share the affirmation
11:24	Thanks and announcements
11:25	Departure music

Environment: Create a comfortable space by placing comfy pillows around the floor in a circle interspersed with chairs, enabling all to have a way to sit that feels right for them. Place small slips of paper and pens (for prayer requests) on a table by the entrance. Also by the entrance is a place to put coats, bags, shoes etc. In the center of the circle is a large singing bowl on a short stand; affirmation cards are placed by the bowl.

Welcome: Briefly welcome everyone. Invite them to turn off cell phones and feel free and comfortable to participate at whatever level feels right for them. Turn on “wiggle” song and invite participants to dance as they feel led, also invite them to write prayer requests on the paper and place them in the singing bowl. This is also the time to pick up affirmation cards.

Wiggle music: Can be from any genre, but has to be up-beat! Generally the entry and departure music is also up-beat. Often song and quote are chosen to have a similar theme, possibly with the cards printed on paper that is a corresponding color.



Having a broad range, by style and decade, of music helps highlight the intergenerational aspect of the service.

Discussion time: Connection builds community. Read aloud the quote on the card and then ask everyone to find someone to chat with about what the affirmation means to them and if they agree, etc. Each week is a new song and quote. At Unity Village, all the quotes are from a classic Unity writer, do what works for you. You can go to the Sacred Circle blog for samples of sacred circle cards.



Visit the Sacred Circle blog
www.facebook.com/UnitySacredCircle

Meditation: Wrap up discussion time, by striking the singing bowl or some other signal, and invite everyone into a comfortable position and begin playing the singing bowl. This is mainly a time of personal meditation with just the bowl as a point of focus, but modify the meditation instructions to suit the audience.

Exit meditation: invite participants out of meditation by striking the bowl and reading the affirmation. Then, invite everyone to repeat the affirmation together. (The affirmation is created to go with the theme.)

Thanks and announcements: Thank everyone for coming and share announcements (be sure to keep it brief).

Departure music: Could be a reprise of the wiggle song or another fun song that goes with the theme. Our departure and pre music is a playlist with all the previous wiggle music on it plus some others we like.

Emerging Gathering

This excerpt is from Unity Institute Chapel service handbook's section on emerging gathering, and is written with the student chapel service in mind. To make this applicable for your group, substitute "leader" for "minister." The whole handbook, with further ideas, is available online at www.uistudents.com.

Elements of the Emerging Gathering

Before delving into the details of what elements to include in a gathering, the minister will hold a visioning process with the gathering team. The minister will want to discuss how this gathering will be unique from a traditional service. The minister is encouraged to be creative, and to work with the team to create the elements appropriate for the theme. Bring out the creativity of others.

Decide what elements should be included and in what form. For example, prayer and meditation may look different from what we're used to. Perhaps individuals could have the opportunity to create their own elements of the gathering at different stations. Everyone always has the choice to participate or to opt out. There needs to be clarity about what is happening or is about to happen. There must be no coercion or manipulation.

As the minister moves through this section about Intention, Timing and Location, Progression and Structure, the details of the elements to include in the gathering will emerge, as will the design and teams the minister will need for this gathering.

First steps to starting...

- Make prayer and a prayer team the top priority.
- Evaluate your vision and the context in which your "gathering" operates (community)
- Select a vision-based team that will serve in their areas of giftedness
- Move away from a spectator-type gathering
- Organic design to the gathering
- Sacred space is created
- Multisensory (all 5 senses) approach to your gathering
- Freedom of movement
- A different focal point
- May include a revival of ancient disciplines, Christian seasons, Jewish roots, Buddhist elements, etc.
- May emphasize prayer (Taize-like service)
- Communion/Love offering/Open sharing

Progression—Beginning, Middle, End

(Separation-Transformation-Incorporation)

- Make the transition from the outside world to this special moment—an act of gathering together
- Think about which elements are central; think about the movement of the ceremony and keep it short and meaningful.
- Less is more. Giving the elements you have chosen the time they deserve is more important than including everything that could be included.
- Write out a script for the event and design an organic flow chart.
- Rehearse or practice the script.

Structured or Free-form

- Balance the personal and the communal. A successful ceremony is both.
- Participants—Usually it is the act of witnessing by a community that gives ceremony potency. Consider free form participation by attendees.
- How big or small a group you gather will affect the nature of the ceremony and how it will feel for you.
- Consider also how you invite those present to participate.

Discovering the Elements of the Gathering

Suggested Process

- Start with the community to determine themes
- Involve the staff in the process
- Determine Unity teaching topics months in advance
- Develop metaphors and themes
- Design gatherings as a community of Teams
- Sacred Space Team
- Artists Team
- Music Team
- Prayer Team
- Digital Arts Team
- Poetry, Dance, Drama, Video Team(s)
- Tech Team
- Teaching Team

The Lesson

An Emerging Gathering lesson may be quite different from a traditional lesson. It may be very brief. It may be split into several segments given at various times during the gathering. It may be more of a discussion than a lecture. It may be supported by activities such as music or movement. More than one speaker may participate. It may be in dramatic or poetic form.

An Emerging Gathering lesson will be similar to a traditional lesson in that it includes many of the following elements:

- A clear, powerful message based on a Unity Truth teaching
- Creativity and depth in the development and expression of ideas
- Passion for the subject; energetic expression
- Intimacy: do I feel I know this speaker?
- Empathy: do I feel that this speaker understands me?
- Emotional sweep: does this speaker take me into myself, to my heart? Does this speaker open me to an awareness of God?
- Is the speaker warm, approachable, friendly?
- Willingness and ability to engage the audience directly
- A voice that conveys conviction, confidence
- Does the speaker appear relaxed and comfortable? Is s/he standing in their power, present and grounded?
- Is there a balance of seriousness and lightness?
- Does the speaker express optimism and joy in living?

Prayer

Prayer activity can be the most powerful aspect of a gathering, so it is important to include prayer in all its forms when possible. It is not necessary to include a wide variety of prayer activities, but be intentional about the prayer practices used in the gathering. Think about different kinds of prayer that can be used. Some examples of different kinds of prayer include: affirmations and denials; reciting prayers of other faiths (possibly have some presented in other languages as well); call and response; praying with Chaplains before, during and after the gathering; lectio divina; chanting prayers; praying as a group or with one other person; 5-step prayer method; silence. Remember, Charles Fillmore said prayer is communion with God, so how is that expressed? Be creative!

Meditation

Like prayer, meditation is an element in a gathering that can also be very powerful. However, it is not necessary to have a meditation in every gathering. Some examples of meditation include the traditional type with a few minutes of speaking and then a minute or so of silence; use of singing bowls with no words spoken or very few; guided meditations; visualizations; multisensory meditations perhaps with eyes open watching visuals on a screen;

chanting meditation; meditations from other faith traditions.

Again the possibilities are wide-open, be creative and include a meditation if it speaks to the intention of the gathering. It is not necessary to include one just because our traditional services do. Be creative!

Music

Music in an emerging gathering can be quite different from music in a traditional service. For example, you may want to use recorded music, where in a traditional service you would probably always use live music.

You may include long segments of music—up to 20 minutes—in which participants are encouraged to dance as a way of bringing their bodies into the experience. This may be very high energy with lighting effects and video displays going on at the same time. As an alternative for those who do not wish or are unable to participate in dancing, have some percussion instruments available so they can sit and play along.

You may want to include music to underscore video segments in order to bring forth more of an emotional response. This could include softer music, or even music that expresses grief or mourning.

You might plan to have a variety of activity stations around the room. Sometime during the gathering, allow about 20-30 minutes for participants to move around the various stations to take part in the activities. During this time, you should have continuous music to keep the energy moving. If you have live musicians, you might want to designate the ‘band’ as an activity station itself. Participants would be invited to sing along to chants, or to play simple percussion instruments with the musicians. Provide sheets with lyrics. Music could also have a more integrated role in the gathering, e.g., the gathering as opera, with specific pieces chosen to deliver the lesson of the gathering.

If you are using live musicians, ask them to think outside the box in helping to create the experience. Be sure that they understand that an emerging gathering is not about putting on a performance. It is meant above all to be a participatory experience.

Giving and Receiving

The acts of giving and receiving are the same energy. In Unity, we practice this through the giving of our time, our talent and our treasure. We know that whatever we give, returns to us a thousand fold.

In the service, include some element that allows people to step into the energy of giving and receiving. This may be in the form of passing a basket; it may be a basket near the door

with a sign on it; be creative. It could come at any point during the gathering, including as participants enter or leave. Just be sure to frame it in the spiritual context of giving and receiving.

Flow

A successful ceremony should be relatively self-explanatory, like a work of art.

While some explanation is probably necessary, think about when and how you explain things.

Think about where you have music underscoring any speaking or other activities.

Music is one of the most powerful tools to ensure seamless flow. You might want to introduce the ceremony and explain what you will do before you begin and then go through the ceremony without interrupting the flow. In general, you will need to strike a balance between helping people understand the ceremony and letting the ceremony flow and speak, as it were, for itself.

While you will have an order for your gathering, be prepared to shift things if needed in order to match the activities and energy of the participants. This is the nature of an organic gathering.

Have fun! Be your own wizard! Don't be afraid to make "mistakes"—the people you gathered are there to support you. And remember: ceremony is one of the most powerful tools we have for facing the chaos and joy of life. Use it!

Atmosphere—Create a Sacred Space

The first step is to move out of our daily world into a world of possibility. Here are some things to consider when creating a sense of the sacred.

- You may want to physically create sacred space by forming a circle, delineating the boundaries with ribbons or flowers or...
- Flowers, fabrics, music, scents (be careful of people's allergies) are all tools to create sacred space
- Pick smells and/or colors that support your intention and theme
- Altar space/construction
- Room décor, pictures, fabrics, symbols, etc.
- Seating arrangements and seating styles, chairs, pillows, or not, etc.
- Lighting—consider the time of day and mood you are designing

Use of Technology

Various forms of technology are often included in an Emerging Gathering, though they are not required. The following is a brief list of ideas you might want to consider:

- Audio—CD recordings of music during the service, audio recordings of readings, audio interviews, whale songs, Tibetan bowls, etc. You will need a sound system that has a CD player, or you will need the ability to plug a computer into the sound system.
- Video—you may want to include video clips from YouTube (you must have a VERY reliable internet connection since these cannot be downloaded), video clips you make, short clips from movies, PowerPoint slide presentations, etc. These can be used as a focus for meditation, for discussion, for a lesson, etc. If the video element has sound attached, you will need the ability to hook the computer into the sound system.
- Lights—you may want to include innovative use of lighting if such equipment is available in your venue. This can include colored gels, disco ball effects, laser light shows, etc.
- You may want to set up an activity station that has computers with theme-specific software as part of an interactive experience for congregants. You will need to provide computers, software, etc.

Of course, this list is not exhaustive. Feel free to think outside the box. Take advantage of the talents available on your Emerging Gathering Team and in your congregation.

The crucial thing to remember is that any technology must always be in service of the theme of the gathering. It's not about putting on a show. It's about creating a multisensory experience so that your congregation can have a deeper encounter with God.

Top 10 Ways to Make Your Church Intergenerational

Presented by:

The International Next Generation of Unity Team
at People's Convention 2007

10. Provide Opportunities to Serve the Community

- Have service-oriented volunteer opportunities.
- Invite young adults to head up teams to perform services in the community.
- Get buy-in from different generations on the type of service to perform in the community.
- Do service in the church and in the wider community (i.e. community run/walk for a charity, service trips, environmental cleanups).

9. Incorporate Diversity

- Studies show what's on the platform is what's in the congregation. Have a goal to have a variety of backgrounds and ages represented on the platform and all publicity forms.
- Invite many different types of musicians to perform at church, or have different types of music.
- Invite a diverse group of guest speakers and workshops, stay consistent with the Unity message, and presentation style becomes less of an issue.
- Be open to providing worship service in different ways (i.e. styles, content, techniques, and times).
- Teach to various learning styles (visual, aural, verbal, physical, logical, social, and solitary) using techniques such as PowerPoint, visual aids, movement, ritual, and experiential.

8. Music

- Bring in local musicians (look in jazz clubs, open mic's, colleges, etc). Be sure to check for Unity appropriateness of song content.
- Use live music vs. hymnals.
- Use more contemporary arrangements of hymns.
- Use technology to help people know the words to sing; this frees up hands to clap.
- Connect with other churches to become aware of great music and musicians.
- Have the music support message.
- Great music helps draw people in.
- Start small, add one instrument at a time.
- Energy is as important as content.
- People are looking for an emotional connection.
- Subscribe to the Sound Connections E-newsletter (unity.org).

7. Offer Spiritual Education

- Offer a variety of classes and workshops.
- Have a calendar on your website with up-to-date info.
- Work with other churches in your area to create a community calendar.
- Invite young adults and teens to participate in classes and prayer chaplain training.
- Invite young adults to lead classes (or co-lead).
- Offer scholarship opportunities for young adults to attend conferences and Spiritual Education and Enrichment (SEE).
- Support young adults in their spiritual growth with encouragement and financial support.
- Try something you've always done in a new way.

6. Offer Small Group Ministries (Sometimes called Magnet Ministries)

- Many young adults like the intimacy of small groups and the ability to interact in a group setting. Local Connections can serve this niche.
- Invite young adults to lead small group ministries.
- Provide spiritual parenting groups.

5. Provide Support During Times of Transition

- Find out where congregants are moving and call ahead to the new community so they can be welcomed in their new environment.
- Simply have a meal with those in transition.
- Conduct rites of passage ceremonies during:
 - high school graduation
 - puberty
 - college graduation
- Offer spiritual counseling for:
 - couples/marriage preparation
 - military families
 - family planning
 - spiritual parenting

4. Attract Young Families Through a Great Children's Ministry

- Refer to Unity Worldwide Ministries' Youth and Family Ministry Guide for detailed help
- Build it, and they will come.
 - Have a nursery with trained child care providers. If a parent does not feel comfortable leaving their child in the nursery, they won't come back.
 - Have (hire) a qualified Youth and Family Director.
- Use a Unity-based curriculum.
- Have a strong, vibrant, passionate and well-trained youth ministry staff.
- Provide continuing training.

3. Don't Believe the Myths. While any of these statements might be true to any individual, they are not true for the whole of young adults. Keep an open mind and open heart.

Myth #1: Young adults are a financial drain on a church.

Myth #2: Young adults must go to the “wilderness” (go away from the church for a while when they are young).

Myth #3: Young adults are unreliable.

Myth #4: Young adults are ineffectual leaders.

Myth #5: All young adults are well-suited, and have a desire, to volunteer in the youth education department.

2. Use Current Technology

- Podcast your service.
- Go green! E-newsletter, E-vite for events, classes.
- Maintain a current website including:
 - calendar of events and classes
 - minister's blog, be real, what are you learning today?
 - live stream of the service, archived services
 - a forum
- Consider a MySpace or Facebook group for your church.

1. Teach by Doing

- Be Authentic - your life lessons/challenges are very important.
- Be passionate, be engaging.
- Have a dialog with the congregation, instead of talking at them.
- Be present; teach through your actions in the church.
- There is a need to see the fullness of life experiences. It's ok to talk about the “bad” stuff that has happened in your life, and follow it up with what you learned, share practical tools on what to do.
- It's OK to not know all the answers. Ask questions about what's important to the people in your community.
- Offer young adults the opportunity to teach by doing as well through:
 - platforming
 - being a board member
 - volunteering
 - facilitating a small group ministry

Unity Basics

The History of Unity

(cited from Unity Church of Christianity in Houston, TX)

Unity was founded in 1889 by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in Kansas City, Missouri, and was rooted in this couple's desire for physical healing. Both were well-versed in world religions. Myrtle discovered that by repeating the affirmative prayer, "I am a child of God, therefore, I do not inherit sickness," and praying for perfect health for two years, she was healed of terminal tuberculosis. Charles used the same type of prayer that affirmed God's presence within him, and he was healed of injuries that had hampered him since childhood. Their friends soon began practicing affirmative prayer, the Fillmore's began writing about their beliefs, and the Unity movement was born.

Unity Village, located 15 miles southeast of downtown Kansas City, Missouri, was originally established by the Fillmore's as a place for people to be refreshed from the activities of daily life. The Unity School of Christianity was eventually organized, and Unity Village became its home. The Mediterranean-style grounds include 1,400 acres of gardens, woodlands, and recreational facilities that attract thousands of spiritual seekers every year. Unity School is world headquarters for the over 100-year-old and still-growing movement. Unity groups are now found all over the world ... in North, South, and Central America; the West Indies; the Caribbean; Africa; Europe; Russia; the Middle East; India; the Pacific Rim; and Australia.

5 Basic Unity Principles

1. There is only presence and one power active in the Universe and in my life God, the Good. In other words, God is all there is. In Unity we don't believe that there is an evil force or "Satan" that is always tempting us to do the wrong thing. We understand that evil is a result of humanity's belief that it is separate from God.
2. If there is only one presence, God, then that presence must exist within everyone and express as everyone and all of creation. The very essence of who we are is God; therefore, we are inherently good. We call this presence of God within our "Christ" or our "Divine Self."
3. We create our experiences by the activity of our thinking. Better known in Unity as "The Law of Mind Action." Everything in the manifest realm or "the world as we know it" has its beginning in thought. The Law of Mind Action is as much about our response to the world around us as it is about creating the world around us.
4. Through prayer and meditation, we align our hearts and minds with God, bringing forth wisdom, healing, prosperity and everything good. Meditation is how we come to know who we are and prayer is how we bring that into reality.
5. Knowing these Truths is not enough, we must live them in our daily lives, through our thoughts, words and actions. Gandhi said, "Be the change you want to see." This fifth principle is about "walking our talk," "living our Truth," and "being the change we want to see."

The Twelve Powers

Adapted from *The Twelve Powers of Man* by Charles Fillmore

The Twelve Powers are attributes or qualities of God that are a part of who we are as spiritual beings. These twelve powers give each human being an unlimited potential for spiritual growth and enlightenment. Charles Fillmore, co-founder of Unity paired each of these powers with one of the twelve disciples and a color. Later each was also matched with one of the twelve months of the year.



Faith is represented by Peter and the color blue. We focus on the power of Faith in the month of January. Faith is our ability to say “yes” and accept God’s good into our lives.

Love is represented by John and the color pink. We focus on the Power of Love in the month of February. Love is the harmonizing power which allows us to know our oneness with all that is.

Strength is represented by Andrew and the color green. We focus on the power of Strength in the month of March. Strength is our inner patience, tolerance and steadfastness that allows us to bring forth Divine ideas.

Wisdom or Judgment is represented by James, son of Zebedee and the color yellow. We focus on the power of Wisdom/Judgment in the month of April. Wisdom/Judgment is our ability to allow Divine guidance to flow through and express in the choices we make.

Power is represented by Phillip and the color Purple. We focus on the power of Power in the month of May. Power is our ability to consciously choose and direct our thoughts, words and actions.

Imagination is represented by Bartholomew and the color light blue. We focus on the power of Imagination in the month of June. Imagination is our ability to create a manifest image from a Divine Idea.

Understanding is represented by Thomas and the color gold. We focus on the power of Understanding in the month of July. Understanding is our ability to see the presence of God in everything and everyone, and to know that the power of God is at the core of everything.



Will is represented by Matthew and the color grey/silver. We focus on the power of Will in the month of August. Will is our ability to get our personality out of the way so the Will of God is the guiding force in our lives.

Order is represented by James, son of Alphaeus and the color olive green. We focus on the power of Order in the month of September. Order is our ability to keep God first in all things, which in turn, allows the Divine plan for our lives to unfold through us.

Zeal or Enthusiasm is represented by Simon the Zealot and the color orange. We focus on the power of Zeal/Enthusiasm in the month of October. Zeal/Enthusiasm is our ability to express the Light and Life of God with passion and joy.

Renunciation or Release is represented by Thaddeus and the color russet. We focus on the power of Renunciation/Release in the month of November. Renunciation or Release is our ability to let go of anything and everything that slows us on our journey to wholeness. The key to Renunciation/Release is forgiveness of self and others.

Life is represented by Judas and the color red we. Focus on the power of Life in the month of December. Life is our ability to heal and restore ourselves to the Divine Idea of Wholeness.

Online Resources

Unity North Truth Center, Indianapolis, IN
www.unity-north.org/pages/12pwrman.htm

Unity Church of Practical Christianity, Clear Lake Area, TX
www.unitychurch.info/twelvcp.html

Prayer and Affirmations

Prayer is an inseparable part of spiritual life. In Unity, prayer is a conscious connection with God and a service to our world. Prayer in its purest and simplest form is simply letting go of human will and perception to allow the Divine to be revealed through our mind and heart. It is in prayer that one can come to recognize the “still small voice” of God within.

Unity’s approach to prayer is affirmative, positive prayers that claim the good that is available to each of us all of the time.

What is affirmative, positive prayer?

An affirmation is a positive statement of Truth that when used in prayer is how we claim that which is ours in Truth. The act of affirming is how we say “yes” to God, it is the mental movement that accepts Divine Truth as the only reality. Affirmations establish in consciousness a broad understanding of the divine principles on which all life and existence depend. By affirming Truth we are lifted out of false thinking into the consciousness of Spirit. (adapted from *Revealing Word*)

Meditation

There are as many ways to meditate as there are people on the planet and each practitioner must find the practice that works for them. A regular practice of meditation brings calmness and inner peace. It also helps the practitioner develop concentration to aid in other activities. Studies have shown that meditation provides a healthy balance in life. It expands a person’s world view and enhances coping skills for dealing with day-to-day life stresses. Meditation is how we discover who we are in Truth and prayer is how we bring that into reality.

Meditation is continuous and contemplative thought; to dwell mentally on anything or nothing; realizing the reality of the Absolute; a steady effort of the human mind to know God; our spiritual approach to God. The purpose of meditation is to expand our consciousness Godward; to bring into realization divine Truth; to be transformed in spirit, soul, and body by the renewing of our mind.

(*Revealing Word* pg 131)

Prayer and Meditation Resources

Silent Unity: The Light That Shines for You

There is a light that shines in Silent Unity 24 hours a day. This light represents a spiritual light generated by more than 100 years of constant prayer. It is the light of thousands of voices who join in speaking words of faith and blessing. It is a light lit by many decades of faith in God and by many hearts and minds united in the love of God.

For more information about Silent Unity visit their website, www.silentunity.org

Silent Unity is available 24/7 ready to offer you free confidential prayer support whenever you want it.

Call: 1.800.NOW.PRAY (1.800.669.7729) 816.969.2000

Write: Silent Unity, 1901 NW Blue Parkway, Unity Village, MO 64065

On the Web: www.unity.org/prayer

Other Online Resources

Learning Meditation

www.learningmeditation.com

Treeleaf Zendo

www.treeleaf.org

Prosperity

(*Revealing Word*, pp. 158-159)

The consciousness of God as the abundant, everywhere present resource, unfailing, ready for all who open themselves to it through faith. “They that seek Jehovah shall not want any good thing” (Psalms 34:10).

The difference between spiritual prosperity and material prosperity is that spiritual prosperity is founded on understanding of the inexhaustible, omnipresent substance of Spirit as the source of supply; the material belief is that the possession of things constitutes prosperity. Giving in the right mental attitude creates prosperity. Giving with the fear of lack leads to poverty. Giving with the thought of a large resource opens the way for a large income. “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over” (Luke 6:38).

Tithing

(Adapted from *Revealing Word*, p. 195)

In the Old Testament the tithe or tenth is mentioned as a reasonable and just return to God by way of acknowledging God as the source of supply. Tithing is a practice of giving your tenth to the person, place or organization where you have received your spiritual good. It is a tacit agreement that humanity is in partnership with God in the conduct of our finances. This leads to confidence and assurance that whatever is done will bring increase of some kind. “Give, and it shall be given unto you” (Luke 6:38).

Tithing, which is based on a law that cannot fail, establishes method in giving. It brings into the consciousness a sense of divine order that is manifested in one’s outer life and affairs as increased efficiency and greater prosperity. It is the surest way ever found to demonstrate plenty, for it is God’s own law and way of giving. “Freely ye received, freely give” (Matt. 10:8).

Sacred Safety

“Risk management is about keeping our children and adults safe through policies, procedures and practices that seek to reduce the possibility of injury, loss or dangerous situation. This in turn reduces the church’s liability risk. Continually educating families, volunteers, staff and congregation on your plan is an import part of this process.”

—*Youth and Family Ministry Guide*, p. 191

There are several ways in which you can create a safe and loving environment for your NGU group. The three main areas covered in creating this safety includes: people, programs, and facilities.

Child Care

The Next Generation group needs to be aware of the church’s risk management policy for child care during classes and small group ministries. Since NGUers are young adults, the need for childcare may be a necessity for some members with young children. So make plans in the beginning on how to satisfy the NGU need and safe-guard the children in a fun, loving environment.

Work with the minister and your youth and family ministry representative to decide who is to care for the children. Does the church provide guidelines stating that children must be supervised at all times on the property? A church-trained adult may be a volunteer or paid position. If paid, determine what amount and how funds will be allocated to pay for child care expenses.

Background Checks

Does the church have a policy regarding background checks? If yes, who is responsible to fund the expense?

Unity Worldwide Ministries strongly suggests and encourages individual Unity ministries to conduct background screening on all adults—either paid staff or volunteers—working with minors. Visit the Unity Worldwide Ministries website www.unity.org/yfm (see “Sacred Safety”) for information on steps involved in background screening and agencies that will assist you with the screening.

Emergency/Evacuation Plans

The NGU group will need to be familiar with the church's policy regarding emergency and evacuation plans. It's important to review and have a copy of the written plan on how to evacuate the church as well as how to secure (lock down) an area quickly. What communication technique does the church use to inform group leaders and facilitators in regards to an emergency situation: such as an intercom system, text messaging, or in person, etc?

Parents will need to be aware of the safe place for children in order to connect with and sign their child out during an emergency.

Attendance Procedures

Attendance sheets are an important part of any class or group meeting. If you or church staff need to contact members of the group for any reason (such as weather cancellation or other unexpected issues) having the names, phone numbers, and email address of the group is essential. Check with the church for its requirement regarding group/class attendance.

Event or Outing Procedures

Planning an event or outing for your group can be as simple as having everyone meet at a restaurant for lunch, or as logistically involved as a weekend retreat. If you are new to planning events, there is a checklist on pg 256-7 of the *Youth and Family Ministry Guide* that is designed for youth events, but lists many things you might want to consider.

For any official outing:

- Church liaison knows about and has approved the event.
- Liability/photography releases are on file for participants.
- Group agreements of behavior have been discussed and agreed upon by participants.

Group Discernment process

created by New World Unity Church, Springfield, Va.

“Abiding in the Presence of God” is the context in which this process is experienced. Stop at each critical point to heed inner prompting. Trust the process. Realize this may be a cyclical process, and you may return to any step at any time.

1 Asking

Center in prayer. Allow a question to take shape beginning with what, not how, when, which one, who or why. The intention is to reveal, “What is ours to do?”

2 Aligning

Identify the guiding principles & values that are important here. What is your credo? What is your Vision, Mission Statement Spiritual Principles, Beliefs, Values?

3 Releasing

Specify impeding thoughts, assumptions, experiences, fears, or agendas (+ or -). What must we release to participate freely in God’s unfolding?

4 Proclaiming

Affirm attributes of your divine potential. What must we embrace to be conscious of God expressing as us? WE ARE ...

5 Contributing

Declare your gifts. Ask, “What do I bring, as an individual that I am willing to offer?”

6 Focusing

Arrive at one clear question. It is the vehicle for the remainder of the process. “What is ours to do...”

7 Receiving

Take the question into the silence. “Be still and know.” Clearly articulate responses received without judging or giving details.

8 Converging

Cluster responses according to their common themes. Around which concept(s) does the group energy gravitate?

9 Expanding

Exercise your power of Imagination to “be there now”. What does each emergent concept look and feel like expanded to its ultimate?

10 Unifying

Reflecting on the expanded concept(s), create a statement that supports moving forward.

11 Anchoring

Embrace an anchor. What image, symbol, song, quote, affirmation or biblical text roots us in the Truth of this experience?

12 Implementing

Take action. Who will do what, when? (Refer to Contributing)

Celebrate! Share the joy with the community. Be grateful, communicative and mindful as the plan unfolds.

Inspired by *Discerning God’s Will Together* by Charles Olsen and Danny Morris, Alban Institute. Version 11 updated 7/2006.