

INTRODUCTION

About the Chalice Club

The Chalice Club is a project or program run by the children/youth and the adult leaders/advisors. It is meant to supplement Religious Education programs and provide an opportunity for growth in worship, community building, learning, leadership and service (social justice/social action). While the original concept of the Chalice Club was developed about 15 years ago and was modeled more after scouting programs with its badges as rewards, the patches that serve as badges are separate and do not necessarily have to be used with this curriculum.

The Chalice Club was also based on our Unitarian Universalist youth group, YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists). Children/Youth in the K-12 grades are capable of leading themselves in varying degrees. Naturally, the Kindergartener and the High School Senior cannot be at the same levels of maturity and responsibility. While the curriculum takes some of that into consideration as suggestions on completing a project and earning a badge, it is truly up to the children/youth in leadership alongside the adult advisors for any of the age groups to determine how much input they can handle and how much the adults will need to shoulder. On the other hand, if children as young as kindergarten are given responsibilities and empowered to lead themselves, self-confidence and leadership develop.

Children and Youth can be an inspiration to the adults in any community. And they can also be the energy behind some social justice projects. Many of these projects are intended to be done over a period of time and not completed during one Sunday morning time period. Most of these projects will take at least two Sundays to be done as a group project, simply because of the group process in decision-making, which is an integral part of each project.

The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all (UUs second principle and purpose) cannot be met without some effort. Part of that effort is *social justice, social action and education about social issues*. Our national organization *UU Service Committee* or *UUSC* is a good role model for a Chalice Club. But with lesser funds and working locally, even within our own church community much can be done. However, the UUSC has a curriculum available at <http://www.uusc.org> that addresses social justice and gives greater insight to some of the subjects addressed in this curriculum. I strongly urge you to download and read the curriculum. There are pieces of it that might make great handouts to accompany this curriculum.

The **education** about social issues can come from outside speakers. For example, learning about our environment and how we can help is always fun. Ask an ecologist to come speak to your group and learn more effectively what needs to be done in your community, how it can best be prioritized and what your Chalice Club can do to educate the rest of the world, especially the adults in your own church community. Social **justice** happens when we realize that our society

needs to be more just or more equal in some way, such as it is unjust that there are hungry children in the world when there is plenty of food on planet earth. Social **action** is when something is being done, such as cleaning up your church grounds.

For WHOM is *The Chalice Club* Intended?

The Chalice Club is a group program for elementary age children through high school. It is designed to provide an opportunity for children to experience who they are as Unitarian Universalists. It gives children/youth an opportunity to search for knowledge of who they are and what their relationship is to the church community in a more independent environment. The Chalice Club also allows youth (elementary through high school) to explore their spirituality through concrete activities. While I envision that youth and children be empowered to run this curriculum in partnership with their adult advisors, it could easily be used as a fill-in activity or done as an adult-directed curriculum. However, the power of the Chalice Club comes from allowing the youth and children to take responsibility for their own social convictions. One way to do that is to be active in these socially responsible activities.

WHY create *The Chalice Club*?

The goal of world community with peace, liberty and justice for all can be achieved when people are actively working for peace, liberty and justice. When youth create a peaceful community on earth, they are also creating peace within...within their soul. Clarifying individual and group religious values is part of the growth process.

The Chalice Club helps foster a greater understanding of Unitarian Universalism, and encourages the flow of communication between youth and adults. Communication nurtures the freedom and dignity of the questioning mind as it embraces all persons of diverse backgrounds. The Chalice Club enriches the development of a spirit of independence and responsibility.

At this point, the UUA is also pushing for different models of religious education. Boys and active girls are not being satisfied with the story-craft sort of curriculums (see January/February 2003 issue of UU World magazine) that have served churches in the past. The "way cool" sort of approach to religious education may include rethinking the educational approach to the creation of *The Chalice Club* and other approaches to religious education. Giving our children and youth more responsibility to tend their own needs gives them the power that they need and the adults are then in a supporting and empowering position, which does not run down the adult energy pack nearly as quickly.

Motivation for Participants

Youth find pleasure in taking part in group church projects. Church-wide projects give the children and youth contact with the adults and help them better

understand the importance of the projects. By the same token, good programming balances individual growth with community growth. There should be time for learning, fellowship, worship and service for every meeting. While many of the projects in this curriculum are complex, there is not a timeline on how to proceed. I encourage each group to take the time needed to create a balanced program and make sure that as you move forward with each project that you think it through and divide it into tasks. You can assign different tasks to different people or you can simply go through the list of tasks as a group. There are no right or wrong ways for participants to work within this curriculum. I believe that as participants are exposed to ways they can participate directly in social justice/social action projects the motivation to continue will come from within each individual.

During my work with youth and YRUU social justice activities, I have found great interest and enthusiasm for such projects. I have also seen this same spark with younger children, as young as five, when they are given the opportunity to take part in activities that help them get out of themselves and help others, the environment and the world. There is a great sense of self-accomplishment when a project is completed. Take something simple, such as the first project of *beautification*, once the plants are in the ground and the garden is complete. Not only can the children and youth find a beautiful place to meditate and find peace but they've created this for the entire church community. Adults probably will appreciate this project more than the children and youth and their appreciation for this project will make a lasting impression on the younger members of the church community.

Goal of the Chalice Club

The overall goal of the Chalice Club is to provide a means to recognize our children and youth in a meaningful way for the work that they have done. It was my original intention with the Chalice Club to provide a rewards type program similar to scouting programs where the projects that the children and youth do are specific to Unitarian Universalists. It is also my belief that children as young as kindergarteners are capable with adult help of creating their own safe environment where they can explore the myriad of subjects relating to UUism. The younger children, of course, will need more adult help than the older youth, but they all benefit from experiencing first hand how the democratic process works. It is not my intention, however, to bring impressionable children into harmful environments where information is meant for older children/people, so guidance by adults is a crucial part of this program.

When speakers are invited into the classroom, it is the adults who need to be sure that the adult speakers can address a subject on the kids' levels. Not all speakers are comfortable speaking to kindergartners, so make sure when you are arranging speakers that they are familiar with the age group. If you have a multi-age classroom, it will be particularly important to make sure that the younger voices are equally heard at all times.

To Create a Chalice Club

It is quite easy to form a Chalice Club. The children and adults should look over the sample CONSTITUTION, make changes to fit your own church organization and vote on the acceptance of these rules for setting up the club. Setting dues, electing officers and deciding on meeting times is the last step to creating the club and each group should decide whether that is appropriate for their group. For example, the RE Council/Committee at your church may decide to underwrite the costs for this program. However, setting up a structure for the children and youth to run their own program empowers them to take responsibility for their own spiritual growth. Make sure to examine the YAC (youth adult committee) guidelines to see if your current YAC can expand to accommodate the younger children or a new YAC-like committee needs to be created.

How to Use the Curriculum

This curriculum is intended to help guide you through a year's worth or more of the Chalice Club. The activities and projects are suggestions and do not have to be done in the order that they are given in the curriculum. You may use this curriculum interspersed through other curriculums to fill in. However, the Chalice Club is written as if the children or youth were using it along with advisors. You can easily figure out how to use this as a more teacher-directed curriculum, if needed. Stoles, badges and other awards are similar to scouting and campfire; however, all projects are related to being a Unitarian Universalist. The badges and stoles have been created for you to purchase as an additional bonus and as separate products from the curriculum. They are available at <http://www.sagecreekproductions.com/nostresspress>. It is not necessary to use this aspect of the curriculum. The projects work fairly well as stand-alone projects with the exception of those designed to reward the completion of several previous projects.

Since many UUs have found scouting to be too negative and/or too Christian-oriented for our liberal views, the Chalice Club is an alternative that embraces our UU Principles and Purposes. In recent years, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts have made it clear that their purpose includes a Christian perspective and that it does not include bisexuals, gays, lesbians, transgender or questioning individuals. UUs, however, with our principle of honoring the inherent worth and dignity of every person not only include people with various sexual orientations but of all races, a wide array of religious beliefs and alternative lifestyles and fashions that include gothics and body piercing. Scouting programs have made it clear in the last few years that anything that deviates from its clean-cut Christian idealism is not accepted. On the other hand, many Boy Scout and Girl Scout troupes exist that accept our UU children with their religious beliefs, alternate fashions and sometimes non-heterosexual gender identities. But for those churches who are looking for alternatives to scouting, the Chalice Club will hopefully live up to its expectations. (Please remember that your input can influence future modules of the Chalice Club.)

This curriculum lends itself to a non-standard classroom model. Scouting programs have generally encouraged youth/children leadership. There also has been an emphasis on doing RE (religious education) in a more WAY COOL manner. And while this is only one alternative to help you think of RE out of the box and out of the classroom/teacher model, this model requires you to recruit advisors who are more mentors and helpers than experts on some particular subject, which is usually the resistance adults have in teaching. Advisors are people who like to empower children to learn and to take responsibility in age-appropriate ways. Although we might expect a high school student to make phone calls and set up speakers, kindergartners are not be able to follow through with this sort of responsibility. However, they can run the meetings, explain the projects and do many other things with a bit of help and encouragement from advisors.

It is not necessary for kindergartners to complete the projects in the same way that high school students do. For that reason, I have broken many of these projects down into more age-appropriate groups and given different outlines for earning the awards or patches. In some cases, your students may still find it difficult to complete these projects. Keep in mind that you are in control of the project and its scope. You can make the decision on whether a student or your group has completed the project in the spirit in which it was intended. For example, your group might include one kindergartener and four fourth graders and a high school student. They may have chosen to do a group project for which the kindergartener was completely lost or unable to do because of limited writing or reading abilities. If that be the case, as the advisor, modify the kindergartener's input to the project as appropriate to his/her age and abilities, use the curriculum guide for the project to redirect his/her input, if possible. (I am also available via e-mail connie_dunn@hotmail.com and will be glad to help as time allows.) In the end, it is up to you whether you feel the student has earned the award.

To acknowledge that children are responsible for their own learning and spiritual development may be a leap for some people. However, the Chalice Club sets up an environment where the children learn through being empowered by adult leaders to explore subjects surrounding the projects included in this curriculum guide. Empowerment is sometimes a hard concept to grasp. It does not mean sitting back and doing nothing yet it does not mean taking control and making decisions for the students. However, it does mean that advisors learn to suggest and point out different steps that need to be taken. As the students learn how to make these choices on their own, the advisors' role tends to be less active and more supportive. Rather than do things for the students, an advisor's role is to point out what needs to be done. For example, if it is time to clean up, the advisor should not clean up. He/she should, instead, point out what needs to be cleaned and allow the students to take responsibility for cleaning up after their own project. Even kindergartners can handle this level of responsibility.

All your students will not be at one level. This program allows flexibility of wider age groups working together. For smaller programs, this will allow you to work

with fewer adult volunteers. For large churches, this curriculum might work well for a second or third service where you typically cannot divide the children into classes as well. However, it would work just as well inside an all one-age class as a multi-age classroom.

I'm a firm believer that no matter how old or young you are, there is always more to learn. People are always at different levels of spiritual development. In fact, you may find that the adults in your congregation will enjoy working on these projects as much as the children and youth. It could be that the youth and children are more spiritually developed than the adults who have just joined your church. This happens because the new members have not had the same opportunities for development that the children and youth have had. This curriculum might give inexperienced adults some opportunities to explore some valuable new areas of growth for themselves.

This curriculum is PROJECT-CENTERED. The Chalice Club is project-oriented rather than theme-centered. Most projects have been designed to take more than one meeting time to complete. For example, inviting a guest speaker may be a second or third Sunday rather than the first, because during the first Sunday you may need to do some brainstorming and consensus taking to determine an area of a broad topic to learn about.

If it takes six weeks for a child to earn one badge, then it takes six weeks. There should not be a time deadline. Other children or youth may move on to other projects, but children or youth who want to take longer should not be rushed. The curriculum is designed for the group to work together as a group to earn a badge, but it can be done individually, as well.

The curriculum is divided by awards (badges or patches) and outlines the suggested criteria for earning the badge. However, there is no central organization that will impose this criterion as necessary for the purchase of the patch, so the advisors will be in a position to make necessary decisions regarding the earning of any particular badge or patch. And the curriculum is organized from project 1 through project 50, but there is no penalty for jumping around within the curriculum. Please notice, however, that some projects start with an educational project and progress through several more hands-on projects. Some projects simply include the completion of a number of the previous projects.

Since a kindergarten and a high school student are at vastly different growth stages both physically and mentally, the requirements for separate age groups trying to earn a particular badge or patch is outlined when appropriate. Even when a project suggests ALL age groups, it simply means that all the age groups can do the project similarly. They can still do the same activity in separate groups.

The Chalice Club II curriculum is primarily focused on social justice/social action projects. Future modules of the Chalice Club will deal with other UU educational material:

- Chalice Club III will primarily deal with Famous UUs
- Chalice Club IV will primarily deal with home, family and community issues
- Chalice Club V will deal with an array of religions and cultures
- Chalice Club VI will primarily focus on exploring personal spiritual paths
- Chalice Club VII will primarily focus on Developing Self Esteem within ourselves and others
- Chalice Club VIII will primarily focus on Building a Peaceful Community
- Chalice Club IX will primarily explore ministries (not necessarily going into the ministry as in enrolling into seminary but other ministries, such as youth ministry)
- Chalice Club X will explore global connections

At this point in the development of the Chalice Club curricula, Chalice Club II will be released first with the other modules to follow along with the development of the patches. There is not a timeline for the release of additional modules.

After the Chalice Club curricula is complete, it would be perfectly logical for groups to be working out of various modules, possibly even with different age groups working from different modules or within any group to work out of several different modules for a balanced program.

Advisors should be encouraged to wear their stole and encourage the children and youth to wear theirs. At this time, there is no separate track or module for advisors. Advisors should be encouraged to earn the badges alongside the youth and children.

Stoles and Badges

Stoles and badges are available from the author and her Website (<http://www.sagecreekproductions.com/nostresspress>). However, you are under no obligation to purchase these as part of the curriculum.

If you wish to have a custom badge made for your group, contact me, Connie Dunn (940-243-5125 or connie_dunn@hotmail.com). For a small fee, I will gladly help you design it or convert your design into a badge/patch. It is not my intention to make a mountain of money off this, so if you've encountered fees of \$75 to \$100 to digitize a design from commercial facilities, you won't find that here. It usually doesn't take me that long to convert something. However, I often have to modify it. Complicated designs often don't digitize well.

Names and church logos are two of the custom badge ideas you might like to have. Since identification of whose stole is whose would be easier with names, creating a set of name badges may be arranged at the same time as your order for the curriculum, stoles and possibly your first set of badges. It does take us some time to create these products for you. While some companies have everything in stock and pull it off the shelves, we actually don't work that way. We

sew everything as it is ordered. We are home-based businesses (No Stress Press creates the curriculum and subcontracts with another home-based business to do the sewing) and do not have the warehouse space needed to store completed products. Of course, that does allow us some flexibility, as well. So you can ask for custom products, such as stoles in a color not listed (this depends on availability, of course), and we can accommodate without any additional fees. We also wanted to purchase enough material for an entire class at the same time so that there would not be a problem with different dye lots (this causes the same colors to not be exactly the same because they were dyed at different times).

Make sure you set aside time to sew the name badges onto the stoles. And time to sew the additional badges on the stoles will be needed each time your group earns another badge. This task is often done by parents for scouts, but you might find that things that leave the church never return...so keep that in mind as you schedule your time.

Custom stoles can be created for DREs and ministers. If you wish for them to match or coordinate with the RE student stoles, it is possible to do this. If you wish a specific color that is not a standard color, we can also do this since stoles and patches are not created until ordered. Therefore, customizing a stole order is not too difficult, although there may be additional fees due to obtaining material (if it is more expensive material, for example) or creating specific designs. Embroidery on DRE and minister stoles can be done directly on the stole, if you choose.

The stoles are offered in different colors and in three different sizes – small, medium and large to accommodate the broadest array of body types. The colors correspond with the YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalist) color codes:

Stoles – Colors and Level Meanings		
Level	Color	Meaning
K-2	Blue	Learning
3-5	Yellow	Community Building
Middle School	Red	Worship
High School	Green	Social Action
Leaders/Advisors DREs/Ministers	Purple	Leadership

K-2 is set for BLUE and LEARNING, because this group is at the level of learning more. This age group is not quite ready for complex community building, worship or thinking up their own social action projects (of course, this is a norm and does not cover each individual in any given age group).

3-5 is set for YELLOW and COMMUNITY BUILDING, because this age group is generally quite social and the need for community building crops up often. They are still learning, of course, but not quite ready for the complexities of worship or thinking up their own social action projects (of course, this is a norm and does not cover each individual in any given age group).

Middle School is set for RED and WORSHIP, because this age group is ready for worship. They still need to learn and work on community building, but they may not be ready to move into thinking up their own social action projects (of course, this is a norm and does not cover each individual in any given age group).

High School is set for GREEN and SOCIAL ACTION, because this age group is ready for thinking up their own social action projects, and designing their own worship services. They still need to learn and work on community building (of course, this is a norm and does not cover each individual in any given age group).

Leaders and Advisors are set for PURPLE and LEADERSHIP, because they are the leaders for their groups. There should be a balance of youth/children and advisors.

What is a stole?

A stole is the cloth that your minister wears around his neck and hangs down. Ministers often only wear their stole for formal occasions when they are dressed in their robes, as well. However, some ministers wear only the stole. There is no right or wrong way for Unitarian Universalist ministers to wear a stole. Usually, ministers receive special stoles when they first become a minister. It might be part of their ordination process.

While you will not be a minister just by putting on the stole, the stole is meant to make you feel closer to God/Source. Plan a special service with the adults; so that all the youth can wear their stoles and have all your advisors wear theirs, as well. You could even do this as an installation service to install your advisors, especially if you have not officially recognized them in the past. Don't forget to include your minister and DRE into your plans.

Using the Handbooks

A CHILDREN AND YOUTH HANDBOOK and an ADVISOR HANDBOOK are included in this curriculum. These are modeled after handbooks used in YRUU (Young Religious Unitarian Universalists). They are meant to help in the leadership and setting up of the Chalice Club. Youth (11 and up), however, may set up a (junior or senior) YRUU rather than a Chalice Club or use with an existing YRUU program. The Chalice Club II could be used as the social justice/social action component. Future Chalice Club modules might also be used to help with worship or other areas.

ABOUT YRUU

YRUU is already a club-like organization within UU. One of its purposes is to develop leadership among the youth, which is one of the goals of the Chalice Club. I would encourage youth to incorporate the Chalice Club into their existing YRUU program. However, if one does not exist, I have included information on setting up a YRUU program. NOTE: Much of the information about YRUU can be found at www.uua.org/yruu. One of the benefits of YRUU is to participate in district and continental activities, which give youth a broader connection to organized activities. The projects contained in the Chalice Club curriculum might be a way of focusing on social justice, which is one component of YRUU.

MATERIALS INCLUDED IN HANDBOOK

Some of the materials included in the Children and Youth Handbook are modifications of materials used at Leadership Development Conferences through YRUU. While many senior YRUUers may already be familiar with these concepts, the inclusion of this material is to help younger youth and children and to be a resource for older youth.

The stages of group development, brainstorming and consensus making are all concepts used in YRUU and have been modified for use in this curriculum.

CHILDREN AND YOUTH HANDBOOK

Introduction

Children and Youth are empowered to facilitate their meetings with help from their advisors.

If you have a very large program, you may want to establish several Chalice Clubs to accommodate the various age groups. Youth may want to establish YRUU groups instead, which may use the Chalice Club materials as a means of recognizing its members for the work they have done. Samples of a constitution or bylaws are included in this handbook.

How to Run a Meeting

Running a meeting might look too hard to some or appear too easy to others. However, there are some simple tips that make running a meeting more successful.

First of all, let's give you a name. If you run the meeting, we will call you the **facilitator**. Since you may have had adult teachers in that role before, don't be afraid. You may be young, but you are just as capable of being the **facilitator**. Typically, a **facilitator** just makes sure that all parts of the meeting have a leader, which means, of course, that you can ask your other club members to take part in the meeting. For example, someone needs to read the Chalice Lighting Reading and someone needs to light the Chalice. You may also need to make sure supplies are available for particular projects, so talk with your advisors or someone else when necessary to arrange for the supplies to be available.

Typical Structure of a Chalice Club Meeting

NOTE: Arrange chairs in a circle with an altar in the center for the chalice.

LIGHT CHALICE

Lighting the chalice helps everyone focus. Read some words for lighting the chalice. These words can be read before or after the chalice is lit. Here is a sample of a good reading to open your Chalice Club Meeting:

We light the Chalice for love.

We light the Chalice for peace.

We light the Chalice for service.

We light the Chalice for community.

We open our Chalice Club with love.

We open our Chalice Club with peace.

We open our Chalice Club with service.

We open our Chalice Club in this, our UU, community.

JOYS, SORROWS and CONCERNS

Sharing what has happened during the last week, helps us get to know each other and build our own Chalice Club community.

PROJECT

If you are all working on the same project, designate someone to explain the project. If you need to make a decision about the project, use the Consensus Model found in your handbook. Ask an advisor if you have any questions.

Once the project is explained, everyone should go to work on his or her own project unless you have determined that this will be a group project. Then decide how it will be done.

Materials for projects remain the responsibility of the advisors and other RE (Religious Education) staff. If you decide not to do a project and skip to another one, you need to discuss it with your advisor to make sure supplies will be available for you and other participants.

If someone needs help with their project, they should go to the advisor for help.

CLOSING

It is just as important to close your session, as it is to open it. Since you open it with a Chalice Lighting, you can close it by collectively blowing out the flame and singing a song. Songs can be chosen from the UU hymnal or from other resources. Ask your advisor for some help in selecting a song. Adults often have resources hidden away.

The Meeting

If your role is not the facilitator of a Chalice Club meeting, chances are that you'll be running a business meeting for a Chalice Club Board or YRUU YAC. The main difference between these meetings is the structure. A business meeting requires an agenda.

State the Purpose

One of the first things to do is to state the purpose of any meeting. In doing so, you clarify what you intend to accomplish. For example, if you are running a Chalice Club meeting, you simply announce the fact that you are about to start a Chalice Club meeting. If it is a Business Meeting, you simply announce that.

Greetings and Introduction

Arrange for introductions, such as *my name is Connie, I like chocolate*. Sometimes, this section overlaps with other Check-In sort of activities, such as Joys, Sorrows and Concerns that is typical of a Chalice Club meeting.

Agenda

Business meetings require an agenda or list of what you intend to talk about. Sometimes agendas are built at the beginning of each meeting. However, most of the time, as a facilitator, you must know what to talk about ahead of time.

Be On-Time

If you are the facilitator of *ANY* meeting, arrive early. Make sure your meeting starts on time and ends on time. If you need to, set a limit for each agenda item. You can appoint a timekeeper. If you take the meeting seriously, the participants will, as well.

Be Prepared

This may mean that you need to make phone calls before the meeting or you may need to gather materials. If you treat the meeting time as if it were as precious as it is, you'll find others do as well.

Set Positions

The facilitator is virtually responsible for everything. But in running a meeting, it is often helpful to appoint others to assist you in running the meeting. For example, you may appoint a job jotter or energy monitor.

Facilitator:

The person responsible for the overall meeting.

Job Jotter:

The person responsible for jotting down all jobs. This happens when the group decides that some sort of action will be taken. Often, the group yells "Job Jotter" whenever jobs are decided.

Energy Monitor:

The person responsible for monitoring the overall energy level of the group. If the group becomes sluggish, the *Energy Monitor* can call for an energy break. This person also leads energy breaks, which typically consist of songs, stretches or activities.

Topic Dog:

This person is the one who calls attention each time the group wanders off the topic.

Maintain Focus

Try to keep everyone focused, especially yourself. Exploit all opportunities to get people moving, such as asking others to record brainstorming efforts, hand out papers, etc. Try not to let the topic drop or get pulled off the topic. Appointing a *Topic Dog* may help.

Converting Words into Action

Basically, the business of any business meeting is to address work that needs to be done. To get the work done, you may need to ask, “Joe, will you do this?” or “Will someone do this?”

Review the Meeting

Successful meetings take effort and produce accomplishment. Schedule time near the end of the meeting to review what happened

Yield the Last Word

Closing a meeting is just as important as starting one. Give everyone one last chance to say whatever they wish. IMPORTANT NOTE: This may be where your most valuable contribution is made, so listen and pay attention!

Important Components for a Successful Group

Every group should develop strong bonds, but it doesn't necessarily happen by itself. From Denny Ryberg's book *Building Community in Youth Groups*, published by Group Publishing, Inc. and the *Youth Advisor's Handbook* by Shell Tain, published by the UUA, I suggest a model of building intimacy. This model is taught at Leadership Development Conferences (LDC) and is published on the UUA website at <http://www.uua.org> (follow the links for youth).

There are FIVE COMPONENTS: *Bonding, Opening Up, Affirming, Stretching, and Deeper Sharing*. What some groups don't understand is that these five components are like building blocks. You cannot start at *Deeper Sharing* and skip to *Opening Up*. You have to start with *Bonding* and move to *Opening Up*, then *Affirming*, then *Stretching* and then *Deeper Sharing*. And what is even more important is that each time your group changes – whether you gain or lose members – you need to start over with these building blocks. So that you get a better understanding of these components, I'll go over each one. However, if you want more information, check out the UUA Website or other Youth materials.

BONDING

The first building block to creating a successful group or community is *bonding*. Getting to know each other seems logical and you may assume that since you have all been coming to the same church for several years that you should know each other. But that is not always the case.

Bonding is more than just sharing the same physical space. To bond, you need to get to know each other – you need to know what you have in common and how you are different. Bonding activities should include emotionally low-risk activities, so that no one reveals more about himself or herself than he or she is comfortable with.

Some activities that work well are scavenger hunts, role-playing, cooking or creating something, such as a piñata for your church's fair...anything you can do as a group and casually chat with each other.

OPENING UP

Opening up is a natural extension of *bonding*. When you spend more time together, you begin to share things about your interests and hobbies and then about your hopes, fears and dreams. Activities such as check-ins; joys, sorrows and concerns; or games that require you to share a little more about your own personal concerns and opinions aid the *opening up* process.

AFFIRMING

As your group opens up, you need to make sure that everyone supports each other in an affirming way. Keeping negative comments, such as "Oh, that's stupid!" out of the group will help. As a facilitator, you can always remind the group that it's fine to disagree, but that all are entitled to their own opinions. As UUs, we respect and honor a diversity of thought. However, require your group to be as positive as possible. Make sure that they understand the meaning of "supporting." Advisors can help clarify when needed. This is a difficult concept for some people to get. Activities that support *affirming* are ones where the group makes it known that they support the personal ideas and feelings of each other.

STRETCHING

As your group *stretches*, it will need to respond to a situation that is beyond what usually occurs in its members' daily lives. Activities include ropes courses and other activities that build trust.

DEEPER SHARING

Like *stretching*, *deeper sharing* allows people in a group to go beyond normal barriers to share extremely personal feelings. Activities include exploring feelings and opinions on very personal subjects.

More Building Blocks

While the FIVE COMPONENTS are sequential steps to building a good community, COVENANTING is more like a tool. A covenant is a set of rules or guidelines about how a group will interact together. Using the consensus model, brainstorm about rules and agree on a specific list. After you have made your covenant, have each person sign it to seal his or her agreement to adhere to the rules.

Covenanting can be used for regular meetings and again for special occasions, such as lock-ins. Any time a portion of a group embark on a project, the covenant can be used as a tool to address the way in which the group will work.

Sample Constitution

Chalice Club Constitution

Article I

The purpose of this group shall be to provide an opportunity for growth in worship, recreation and service, to supplement the work of religious education with additional experience in learning, and to build a foundation for directing and evaluating activities by members of the group. This is a basis for future church experience.

Article II

The name of this organization shall be THE CHALICE CLUB.

Article III

The membership shall consist of children ranging from five through eleven years of age and covering kindergarten through fifth grades. **NOTE:** *At eleven or twelve, children are usually of age or grade (middle school) to enter Junior YRUU program and at 14, YRUU programs are normally offered. This constitution assumes that a separate constitution for YRUU programs exists.*

Article IV

Officers shall be: the president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer. Usual duties shall be assigned to such officers.

They shall be elected by secret ballot from recommendations made by a nominating committee. The term of office shall be one year. **NOTE:** *Shorter terms may be set up to allow for more leadership development.*

The Executive Committee shall consist of four officers, plus one person from each grade level represented by this constitution.

Article V

Advisors for the group shall be one or more adult advisors chosen jointly by its members and the Religious Education Committee/Council.

Article VI

Meetings shall be held as often as the group chooses and should not compete with other church programs.

Article VII

Dues – amount and payment – shall be set by the vote of the group.

Article VIII

Committees shall be selected to carry out responsibilities for programs, recreation, worship, etc.

Article IX

An Annual Report shall be made by the president to the annual meeting of the church.

Article X

The Consensus Model may be used in place of voting as a decision-making tool.

Sample YRUU Bylaws

Young Religious Unitarian Universalists By-Laws

ARTICLE I: Name

The name of this organization shall be *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* Young Religious Unitarian Universalists (YRUU)

ARTICLE II: Affiliations and Associations

This organization is affiliated with the continental YRUU, a part of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA); the *NAME OF DISTRICT* YRUU; and *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME*.

ARTICLE III: Membership

Membership in this organization is open to all who are age fourteen (14) or have enrolled in high school through age nineteen (19) who shall be members of *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU.

ARTICLE IV: Youth Adult Committee (YAC)

A. Powers and Duties

Section 1. The YAC shall be responsible for the general operation and administration of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU and shall be a component of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* Religious Education (RE) Council (**NOTE:** *alternatively the YAC can report direct to BOARD*)

Section 2. The YAC shall:

- a. Provide leadership that will stimulate the development of quality programming for *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU activities;
- b. Act as a core support group, serve as a clearinghouse and coordination body for congregation activities;
- c. Promote individual security and self-worth among *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU members;
- d. Promote communications and facilitate participation among *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU members both as individuals and members of local youth groups;
- e. Act as a liaison between the local, district and continental levels of YRUU;
- f. Obtain funds, organize support, and keep the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU community on a course of sustained progress;
- g. Maintain an archive of *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU activities and general information regarding YRUU. This information shall be made available upon request.

B. Composition

Section 1. All *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU members and their adult advisors are eligible to be members of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YAC in the following positions:

- a. A minimum of two (2) advisors;
- b. A minimum of one (1) youth;

Section 2. Two (2) advisors and one (1) youth of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YAC shall also serve on the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* RE Council.

Section 3. The operating year of the YAC will correspond with the operating year of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* Board.

C. Qualifications

Section 1. Youth positions

- a. To be a member of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YAC, youth must be eligible to remain in YRUU for the duration of their membership.
- b. Youth must be able to demonstrate an understanding of the understanding of the processes and responsibilities of the YAC.

Section 2. Adult positions

- a. Adults must be able to demonstrate an understanding of the processes and responsibilities of the YAC.

ARTICLE VI: Amendments

A. Notice of any proposed amendments to these by-laws shall be presented to the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU at least thirty (30) days before being considered at a subsequent *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU meeting.

B. Amendments shall be approved by a two-thirds (2/3) vote of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* YRUU and by approval of the *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* RE Council and *YOUR CHURCH'S NAME* Board.

Consensus Model

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There are some general hand signals used in the Consensus Model. When a consensus is being called, participants may signal **yes** by using a closed fist in an up and down motion or **no** by using an open hand in a side-to-side motion.

Since this model is found in many different books and explained in more detail, this curriculum will quickly outline the steps for consensus.

Step 1: Clarify Process

Explain the process of using the consensus model. Since there are variations of this model, it is necessary to explain how this works so that everyone is on the same page. Also people not acquainted with this model become familiar with the process. Go over the hand motions, so that everyone understands.

Step 2: Present the Proposal or Issue

Once the process is explained, then a proposal or issue can be brought up for decision-making. This should be done without a discussion or comments from anyone.

Step 3: Questions to Clarify Presentation

At this stage, anyone with a question about the presentation may ask. They may not ask a question that leads to a discussion. This stage is meant for clarifying what is being presented only.

Step 4: Group Discussion

After clarification of the issue or proposal is made, then the group moves into a discussion phase. During this time, no concerns should be directly addressed; instead, this is a time to discuss the issue or proposal without placing any value upon it.

Step 5: Call for Consensus

When the facilitator calls for consensus, the group uses the agreed upon hand signals to indicate a **yes** or **no** vote for consensus. If there is consensus, then the

decision has been made. However, if there is one **no** vote, you must go to *Step 6*.

Step 6: List Any Concerns

During this step, brainstorm all concerns. Allow each person an opportunity to voice a concern.

Step 7: Group Concerns

Group the concerns into categories.

Step 8: Resolve Grouped Concerns

Many concerns can be resolved. Go through the categories of grouped concerns and resolve them. This may entail the proposal or issue be revised or restated, which will require the okay of the person who initialized the proposal or issue.

Step 9: Call for Consensus

At this point, concerns should be resolved. Use the hand signals to indicate consensus. If everyone agrees, you have consensus and your decision is made. However, if anyone does not agree to consensus, go to *Step 10*.

Step 10: Restate Remaining Concerns

Restate the concern of the person or persons.

Step 11: Questions to Clarify Concerns

Ask questions to clarify what the concerns are.

Step 12: Discussion – Limited to Resolving One Concern at a Time

At this stage, you discuss each concern one at a time. You try to resolve the concerns during the discussions.

Step 13: Call for Consensus

Again, you call for consensus using the hand signals. If you have consensus, then the decision is made. However, if you still do not have consensus, go to *Step 14*.

Step 14: Alternative Closing Options

Since consensus was not made, resolve by:

1. Sending the issue or proposal to a committee.
2. Allowing the people not in consensus to stand aside.
3. Declaring a Block (this should be used only when the person not in consensus objects on principle to something about the proposal or issue not based on personal preference.)

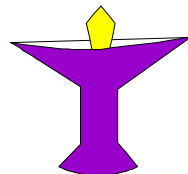
Brainstorming

Brainstorming is always a good way for everyone to be involved in the creative process of decision-making. Sometimes problems seem very complex, but brainstorming solutions may bring to light many solutions.

The following is an outline of information a facilitator should know about brainstorming. Use this information to help FACILITATE a BRAINSTORMING SESSION!

1. Remind your group to turn off the censor. Brainstorming is a time to get out all ideas no matter how wacky they may sound.
2. Help clarify the reason you are brainstorming beforehand so that you can brainstorm for specific ideas or solutions.
3. Since brainstorming can take a long time, set a time limit. However, if you feel that the ideas are too great to stop, you can extend the time. Remember, as a facilitator, you are in charge.
4. To end a brainstorming session, give everyone one last opportunity to share. This is especially helpful for people who have trouble turning off their own censor or for shy individuals who are reluctant to jump in and share at will.
5. Brainstorming does not have to be done by everyone voicing their ideas, you can give people an opportunity to share their ideas by allowing them to write them down. You need a method to record. One suggestion is to give each person stick notes and allow them to stick them up on the sheet...this is particularly helpful when you need to categorize your ideas.
6. Brainstorming does not have to be written. It is possible to visually brainstorm by drawing pictures. This method can be especially helpful when a group seems to have low energy. Visual brainstorming can be simple and fun. However, it is rarely used when you need solutions to problems. It works best when you need to describe things.
7. A negative aspect to brainstorming is what to do after you've created the list. You might:
 - a. Narrow the list.

- i. Simply read off the list, clarifying what each item means and allow questions about it to be answered and maybe even briefly discuss it, then get a consensus on whether the group wants to keep it on the list or cut it.
 - ii. Next, go over each item left on your list, again clarifying, allowing questions and discussing it, then getting a consensus on whether the group wants to keep it on the list or cut it.
 - iii. As you repeat this process of narrowing your list, you should be able to get the list small enough that your group can come to an agreement on which item(s) should be used or followed up on.
- b. Using the “Affinity” technique of writing ideas on sticky notes.
- i. Categorize the sticky notes into groups. If you did this when you posted them originally, move to the next point.
 - ii. Title each grouping and move similar groups together.
 - iii. Title each grouping of groups and move these similar groups together. Continue grouping until you have a clear hierarchy of ideas.
 - iv. With these titles, you have now have a smaller list of ideas.
- c. Move to your consensus model of decision-making and further reduce your choices until you have come to a decision.



ADVISOR HANDBOOK

Introduction

As with YRUU Advisors, **The Chalice Club** advisors should remember to empower the youth to do as much as they can on their own. With the younger children, you may need to give more help than with the teens or youth. However, kids can have positive leadership experiences, as well.

With younger children, **The Chalice Club** advisor should function somewhat like a scout troop leader, which is to make sure supplies are available for activities and make sure that the student leaders understand what they are supposed to be doing.

Advisors should strive to support the members with educational resources, communications network and love. Allow the youth the opportunity to select as much of the programming of **The Chalice Club** as possible.

Consider your job of ADVISOR as a ministry to the children and youth in your congregation. Remember that *doing* is not always a good thing. As adults, we often fall into that mode of *taking care of things*. But children and youth learn even through their failure. Empower the children and youth to do XX, but don't do XX. If XX doesn't get done, then XX wasn't important to them. Help them see the consequences of not doing the job. Then, empower them to clean up after themselves. This is especially powerful when you empower them to a job that would prevent a large mess.

ADVISORS should be mentors and friends to children and youth, but this is not say that they should not be teachers. There are many teachable moments, use them.

While children and youth need to own their own decisions along with the rewards and consequences, they also need ADVISOR help when they are doing things that are unfamiliar. As with YRUU groups, ADVISORS are cautioned to strike a balance between rescuing struggling youth and allowing them to suffer the consequences – good and bad.

Keep in mind that with children and youth empowered groups, the adults are not the leaders. The children and youth are their own leaders. Peer-led groups, however, need the support of ADVISORS. By support, you may only need to lend your enthusiasm. And when other adults call you to ask your group to do this or that, even if it fits within some project guidelines that your group is working on, keep in mind that your job is to ONLY bring it to their attention. You can be positive about it, but allow the children and youth leaders to bring it before the group, if possible. No matter how it comes up, allow them to make the decision. And respect their decision. Your job may be to run interference with the adults that don't understand youth and child empowerment.

You may also need a copy of the *Children/Youth Handbook* to help empower the children and youth to lead themselves.

Creating a Safe Group

Much has been done within our UU churches over the last decade to secure our programs and protect our children and youth from predators. Selecting advisors and selecting teachers must be done with our young people's security in mind. However, most churches have developed safe congregation policy. Check to see how your group falls into the policy.

One rule of thumb is to select two advisors to work as a team. Therefore, the children and youth are never alone with only one adult. This protects both the children/youth and the adult advisors.

If your group is to travel to another location make sure your congregations has developed a travel policy that includes permission from parents for transportation.

Code of Ethics

Children, youth and adults in leadership roles are in a position of stewardship and should model appropriate behavior and foster the spiritual development of everyone in the community.

Any form of sexual relationship between an advisor and a child or youth is inappropriate. Sexual harassment whether it is physical, verbal or emotional sexualization (flirting) cannot be tolerated. If someone feels uncomfortable or awkward, you have gone too far. Even if it's just an innocent hug, it doesn't matter. If the youth feel it's too much, it is!

Make sure, as an adult advisor, that your needs are met outside the group. It is important that you remain in an "adult" role. Children and youth are looking for a friend and advisor, but they want you to be an adult one. This does not mean or imply that you can't play games or participate with your group. It does mean that you should keep a certain distance or boundary between you and the youth/children. If the youth/child make demands or requests that are inappropriate, or are too physically affectionate with you, it is up to you to set the boundaries. Often youth/children test their boundaries, but you must set the boundaries and establish limits with them. Being sensitive to the issue of boundaries is paramount to creating a safe environment for the children and youth in your group.

As an advisor, you are a role model. When segregated sleeping areas are designated, you should abide by that rule even if you are attending with your husband or wife. If there is no smoking, don't smoke. Likewise, drinking and taking illegal drugs are inappropriate.

As an advisor, you are granted a unique opportunity to develop a relationship with a youth or child. You may be their first adult friend who isn't a relative or teacher. You are in relationship with them because you want to be, not because of your kinship or profession, which gives you a unique opportunity to offer the support and help they need. This is not a baby-sitting arrangement or a

congregation's police officer. This is a unique ministry opportunity. To be the best advisor, you simply need to live in the world as a Unitarian Universalist adult.

Confidentiality

The issues of confidentiality seem to crop up at regular intervals and have been discussed thoroughly by many RE professionals. State by state there are guidelines that are mandated to legally require you to divulge certain confidential information.

While children and youth need to feel you will keep their personal sharing confidential, you may need to qualify certain information, such as suicide and abuse. Information shared about these two sensitive areas may put you in a mandatory reporting position. Therefore, you should stop your group before this sort of information is shared and advise them. Although this can be awkward, it is less awkward than having to break confidentiality.

Check with your Director of Religious Education (DRE) or RE Committee/Council to find out the guidelines that have been formulated for your state and your church.

Model Leadership

Advisors should model leadership for their youth and child leaders. In modeling, the advisors should remember not to take over. Stepping back and allowing the youth to resume can be contrary to your normal mode of operation. However, it is necessary.

As an advisor, it is also hard to know when to step up to rescue. Weighing the consequences against the lessons learned may help. It is a balancing act. The best practice is to hold your tongue and count to ten, then count to ten again. It is very difficult to listen to a group try to solve a problematic situation that you have the experience and expertise to resolve in a matter of minutes. But given time, youth leadership can resolve problems and in the process the self-esteem of your youth/children have been boosted.

There are times when the youth/children will just not know what or where to turn and will look to you for help, this is when you step in and model the leadership skills you are trying to develop. Model inclusiveness and then coach your youth/child leader as he/she guides the group. Make helpful suggestions in what steps could be taken.

To help model leadership, get to know and understand the Consensus Model and Brainstorming techniques.

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Power Dynamics

As an adult, you may not be aware of the power you wield. You may have “power over” your children/youth, but this sort of power can be abusive power or it can be used to pull a child out of the path of an oncoming car. A “power with” model honor youths’ voices and encourages youth/children leadership and decision making processes. Using this model advisors encourage youth leadership even if they feel it might not be the best decision. The “power within” model recognizes the inherent worth and dignity that every individual possesses.

