

## Section Three: Building Teen Ministry Programs

### Part 3: Creating a Youth of Unity Chapter

The International Youth of Unity (IYOU) is a program of Unity Worldwide Ministries, under its tax-exempt status and bylaws. The bylaws previously in place for IYOU have been dissolved and replaced with these policies and procedures, which extend only to international-sponsored events. International Youth of Unity honors the unique needs of its regional and individual ministries and does not require that regions and/or ministry youth programs adhere to these policies in structuring their own programs.

### Chapter Eligibility Requirements

To participate in IYOU and to be considered an active YOU chapter, the group must:\*

- Be under the direction of a recognized Unity member ministry of Unity Worldwide Ministries
- Be active in their regional YOU program
- Include one or more teens ranging from the ages of 14 through 18 years of age (YOUer) and have adult sponsors over the age of 25 (YOU Sponsor). In order to protect insurance liability, Unity Worldwide Ministries highly recommends the “two adult rule”—at least two adults present in the group at all times. (See [Section Nine: Sacred Safety](#).)

**\*Starting in 2007, the above chapter eligibility requirements replaced the previous program of chartering.**

### Starting a New Chapter

This outline provides a framework for creating a YOU group. Once the creation and program have been cleared by the minister, there is a comprehensive assessment tool to discover the areas of excellence in the teen programming for YOUers as well as the opportunities for growth. Complete the assessment with your the Youth and Family Ministry Director (YFMD). After assessing, the sponsor(s) meet with the YFMD to continue in planning, using the following format:

- Pray
- Let Spirit direct the process of selecting additional YOU sponsor(s); someone who understands the commitment of time, love and mentorship is required. Set up interviews with possible candidates, using recommended Sacred Safety practices. For information, see [Section Nine: Sacred Safety](#).
- The YFMD, members, sponsors and ministers decide on an appropriate meeting place and time.

- Promote the new YOU program with an exciting announcement from the platform several weeks prior to beginning and continue several weeks in a row. Create an announcement for your monthly and weekly bulletin, website, Facebook page, ministry newsletter, Sunday morning Power Point announcements, etc. Encourage participating teens to invite friends.
- Hold YOU group each week. Use Unity Worldwide Ministries' teen curriculum, Truth books, UWM small group ministry study books etc. [www.unityworldwideministries.org/curriculum](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/curriculum)
- When a core group is established, take time after class to discuss social activities, service projects, regional retreats and rallies, chapter officers, IYOU event, newsletters, including what skills and resources are needed to accomplish these things.
- Have fun.....flow with the needs of the GROUP.
- Explore local and regional training opportunities. Consider attending and/or sending YOU sponsors to Unity National Youth Ministry Training at Unity Worldwide Ministries Home Office. [www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-ministry-training](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-ministry-training)
- Contact your regional YOU consultant and let him/her know what help or ideas you need. Make sure you're on his/her mailing list for the regional calendar, newsletter, teaching materials, trainings, and flyers announcing regional events. You will then be a part of a Regional YOU program and can be in contact with other chapters.
- Sign up for Unity Worldwide Ministries' e-newsletter, *The Path* and notifications of new *Unity Leaders Journal* articles at [www.unity.org/enews](http://www.unity.org/enews).
- Visit the IYOU web page at [www.unityworldwideministries.org/iyou-international-youth-unity](http://www.unityworldwideministries.org/iyou-international-youth-unity) and the IYOU Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/youthofunity](http://www.facebook.com/youthofunity).

## Promotion, Motivation

- Include an announcement about YOU from the lectern/pulpit and/or the bulletin. Create a Power Point slide to include in the Sunday morning announcements, if appropriate.
- Place posters in the ministry telling about your activities and inviting others to join in the fun or create a handout brochure.
- Advertise YOU as more than a class. It is an experience of young people exploring ideas, meditating and sharing all kinds of activities together.
- Invite YOUers to discuss methods of inviting and welcoming other young people.
- For promotion outside the ministry, the best tool is a good activities program. When friends hear what YOUers are doing, they often become interested.
- A prime incentive for attendance and participation is the desire to attend sub-regional, regional and international events.
- Many teenagers work at part-time jobs or have transportation difficulties. To ensure continued interest, try to schedule activities at times when those who work can also participate.

- Young people return to places where they are receiving support, encouragement and a chance to explore situations they have going on in their lives. If the Sunday morning lesson is stimulating and relevant to the needs of young people, class members will look forward to attending.

## Positive Methods for Managing Classroom Challenges

### Silliness and Horsing Around

Address the group by saying something like:

*“It’s okay if you choose not to do this activity, but I’m asking you to allow the rest of your classmates the chance to participate without interruption.”*

### How can I possibly teach everything, so kids are well-versed in the Bible, Unity principles, their own life issues, etc.?

Answer: You can’t. It’s about providing tools & empowering self-discovery

Living Curriculum vision, includes: “to empower facilitators to see education as a process, through which they effectively support the unfolding of the child’s spiritual nature and model the living of the spiritual principles...”

### Off the Subject

If the discussion has moved from the topic you originally introduced to a new subject, wait to see whether or not the new topic is relevant and important to the students. If it is, be flexible. Let go of your lesson plans and let the spirit in the room direct the session.

### Monopolizers

In some group discussions there will be one or two people who monopolize the conversation. Sometimes, they will even use the class discussion time as “personal group therapy” by introducing shocking or painful information. This captures the attention of others and keeps the attention focused on the individual member. If that person is struggling with an issue, the sponsor or facilitator can suggest meeting after class.

In addition, when someone is monopolizing the discussion time but is staying on the day’s topic, invite others who have not had a chance to speak by saying:

*“Let’s reserve the next ten-minutes of class time to hear from the people who have not shared yet.”*

If you do this, don’t be surprised if your comment is met with stony silence. Hang in there. More than likely, after several seconds of silence, one of the more reticent class members will speak up and you will have laid the foundation for a new means of communication within the class.

### Small talk

If the discussion has wandered too far off the topic or people are having side conversations among themselves, bring the attention back. When you have everyone's attention, ask the students if they want to continue discussing this topic in small groups or if they want to abandon the topic altogether and move on to something else.

### Summary

The information in this section is essential to the success of your YOU chapter. Since the primary goal of YOU is to provide an inviting environment where youth can explore their spiritual lives, how you facilitate the meetings and the way you present the material is of vital importance. The time you spend exploring your own spiritual life will serve you well in your role as YOU sponsor. Go to God first!

The following pages illustrate feedback questions for both the YOUer and the sponsor.

## YOU'er Feedback Form

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. How satisfied were you with this month's sessions?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. How satisfied were you with the group discussions?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Were you satisfied with the amount of prayer?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Were the activities during class time meaningful?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Was the sponsor attentive to your needs?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Did you feel included?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Were you given sufficient time to "process" your feelings during class?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How well did the sponsor handle conflict within the chapter?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. How satisfied were you with the lesson topics?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How well do you think your chapter members communicate with one another?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. How well do you think your sponsor communicates with the chapter members?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Are you satisfied with the relationship between chapter members and the rest of the ministry community?

Rate each question with a number from 1-5 that expresses the way you feel with "1" being "very" and "5" being "not at all"

## Sponsor Feedback Form

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. How satisfied were you with this month's sessions?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. How satisfied were you with the group discussions?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Were you satisfied with the amount of prayer?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Were the activities during class time successful?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Were you attentive to the youth?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Did you include everyone?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Did you give sufficient time for the chapter members to "process" their feelings during class?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. How well did you handle conflict within the chapter?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. How satisfied were you with the lesson topics?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. How well do you think your chapter members communicate with one another?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. How well do you think you communicate with the chapter members?
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Are you satisfied with the relationship between your chapter and the rest of the community?

Rate each question with a number from 1-5 that expresses the way you feel with "1" being "very" and "5" being "not at all"

## YOUer Open-ended Questions for Feedback

1. What do you consider the high point of this month's work?
2. What things gave you the most satisfaction?
3. What would make the sessions better?
4. What can the sponsor do to make these sessions better?
5. What can you do to make the sessions better?
6. What issues, concerns, or questions would you like to see raised in the group next week?
7. Comments:

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

## Sponsor Self-evaluation Form

1. What monthly objectives have I met?
2. What percentage of group time is dedicated to activities and discussion?
3. What is the percentage of members who participate in the discussions?
4. What steps have I taken or will I take to respond to this month's feedback?
5. What visual/physical changes have I made in the classroom to stimulate interest?
6. What part of the hour do the chapter members seem to enjoy the most? Why?
7. What area of leadership or facilitation would I like to change or develop?
8. What happened this month that I feel good about?
9. What would make the sessions better?