

Rite of Passage Ceremony, Whole Congregation

Purpose

This service was created specific to a Unity church service for the youth “graduating” from the youth program, “Uniteen” to the high school program, “Youth of Unity”. The service has been revised to be more general in order to be used for youth at any church that are advancing through the classes of a structured youth program. The language, however, remains somewhat specific to Unity teachings, though the teachings embody Universal Spiritual Truth.

Minister: “Welcome to a very special event in the lives of our young people here at (name of church) _____. Our spiritual community is an extended family and as part of this family we are pleased you are here to share this special moment, this rite of passage.”

“Almost all cultures have rites of passage for individuals as they grow and mature on their sacred journey through life. These rites symbolize certain accomplishments for the individuals involved.”

“As we join in a sacred prayerful state of mind, please focus your love and Christ energy on our blessed youth who are undertaking one of their first rites of passage. These young people are prepared to move from our “Youth” program to our “Teen” program.”

(Lights go out. The “Youth” enter with lighted candles and stand in a line facing the congregation at the front of the church. Starting from left to right, each young person steps forward, recites the following and places their lighted candle in the candle holders; then returns to his/per place in line.)

Youth: (each recites in turn) “I _____, present my Christ light to God and the universe in the presence of my loving church family. My Christ light shines brightly forevermore. It is better to light one candle than to curse the darkness”

(After all youth have placed their candles)

Congregation: “We see how brightly your Christ Light shines. As you travel along your spiritual path, may your light shine brighter, creating a beacon of God. We are here with you always to extend our love, support and help.”

Minister: “Who presents these youth to God, asking this recognition of their spiritual unfoldment and growth?”

Parents and Guardians: “We do”

Minister: “Who will stand for these children representing their spiritual education?”

Youth Leaders and/or Ministry Director: “I (we) do.”

Minister: “How have these children been prepared for this important step in their spiritual growth?”

Youth Leader and/or Ministry Director: “They have been taught the spiritual principles of Truth with love, understanding and fun. They are ready to undertake this new step on their spiritual journey.”

Minister: (to all children) “As you learn and grow in your faith, each of you takes certain steps and we celebrate your accomplishments along the way. Now is the time we celebrate with you. What is your belief about God?”

Youth: “There is only ONE Presence and ONE Power in my life and in the universe—God, the Good, Omnipotent. God is always with me—a kind and loving parent.”

Minister: “Where do we find God?”

Youth: “God is present everywhere in everything—even in the rocks, the trees, the wind, the song of a bird, in all of us and all in the universe.”

Minister: “Who is Jesus the Christ?”

Youth: “He is our older brother, our Way-Shower who came to show us “the Way.” Through his teachings, we are guided and we joyously follow in His footsteps.”

Minister: “What are Jesus’ most important messages to us?”

Youth: “Jesus gave us two great commandments. The first commandment is for us to love God with all our heart, mind and soul. The second is to love our neighbor as ourselves. This is “The Way.”

Minister: “How do we treat God’s Earth?”

Youth: “We are to be caretakers of our earth, including all the animals, plants, and people. We are not the rulers, but God’s stewards of our garden paradise; always striving for global peace, love and unity.”

Minister: “How can you use God’s guidance to help you along your spiritual journey?”

Youth: “Through the Power of God, my thoughts can change my life. I can choose to let go of things that are hurtful and unpleasant. I can choose to think loving thoughts and do loving things. I talk to God. I listen to God. I use Truth I am learning to be the best ME I can be!”

Minister: “Do you promise to do your best to live up to the principles of Truth?”

Youth: “Yes I do.”

Minister: “Do you promise to follow in the footsteps of Jesus by keeping in mind His teachings?”

Youth: “Yes I do”

Minister: (to the Youth Director) “We are pleased to move these candidates for promotion from you “Youth” program into our “Y.O.U. Program”.

Minister: (to the Youth) “This rite of passage is a very important step in your life. Each of you is traveling upon your own individual spiritual path. Sometimes we walk along; sometimes we walk together; sometimes we even need help. But, we are all traveling on a spiritual path. As you leave the Youth program and move into the Y.O.U. Program, you gain more privileges, responsibilities and respect. Remember that you are the only one responsible for your actions, Use what you learn here at this church to help you make your decisions.”

“I invite you to take a moment to focus on the younger children in this spiritual community. They will be looking up to you as their role models. They will be watching you as their spiritual mentors, to see how youth your age can empower them to live lives of love and service. May your journey inspire them to become all they are meant to be.”

“Turn to God in meditation and prayer. Listen to the inner voice of God and learn to trust your feelings. This is God gently nudging you in the right direction. Be alert for God’s guidance. God is always there. Speak to God often. Ask for help and be receptive to God’s guidance. Follow through on the guidance you receive from Spirit. If you have questions, talk to your parents, your spiritual teachers and mentors. Talk to me as your minister. We are all here to support you on your spiritual journey.

“I invite you to take a moment to look out at your larger spiritual community. Gathered here today are your parents, guardians, family, friends, and teachers. Some of us you may not know yet. However, today we all support you on your spiritual journey. As your spiritual family, all of us will continue to be here for you. However, from this day forward, we will see you differently. You have made a passage into young adulthood today. Together we welcome you into the “Y.O.U. Program.”

(Ideally, you would include the “Y.O.U. Sponsors at this time and have them give a brief welcome to the new members).

“In honor of this rite of passage, please accept these gifts as symbols of your spiritual commitment. You can reflect on their meaning and hold them in your hearts in those quiet times when you ask for guidance and direction.”

(The following are ideas for the gifts.)

- Purple Amethyst: Purple is the color of spirituality.
- White Candle in angel votive Holder: To remind you of your Christ light, your quiet times communing with God—and a guardian angel to watch over you.
- A Certificate: Honoring each of you as a unique, beautiful child of God.
- Memories Card: Signed by the adult members of your spiritual community.