

UUCA Coming of Age Program:
Mentors 2015-2016

Thank you for serving this year as a Coming of Age (COA) mentor!
Your role is very important to the success of Coming of Age.
In the following pages, you will find out more information about what's expected of you in this role, and ideas, tips, tricks, and most importantly, a calendar!

In a nutshell, being a mentor requires commitment, thoughtfulness and sincere dedication, rather than scholarship and UU theology expertise. The youth in our Coming of Age program are usually 13 years old. We try to match people with common interests, but it is important to be aware that "one size does not fit all." Each relationship is unique, and there is no fool-proof recipe to make it work. It builds over time, as the mentor and his/her protégé get to know each other better and better. Some relationships click wonderfully well, others are reasonably successful, and a few fizzle completely! Mentors are expected to do whatever they can to make it work (and the youth bear part of the responsibility also), but no matter what happens, they should not feel that they have failed.

Logistically, with the current program, mentors are invited to participate in some of the Sunday morning sessions at 10:00 AM during Middle Hour with their protégé(e), and should ideally get in touch with the youth a couple times each month - in person, over the phone, or through e-mail, in order of preference. It is an opportunity for the young person to share with you what he/she thinks, how he/she feels about what was discussed in meetings and about other topics - you may even learn a thing or two! The youth are encouraged to keep a journal and eventually to write their credo, along with their mentor. A schedule is included in this packet. Frequently there are scheduling conflicts with other activities, including church activities – it can be frustrating, but that's life, and we can just see it as a blessing that we have so many choices!

If you are having trouble connecting with your protégé, contact Rev. Christina or your mentor coordinator, Pat Fleeharty, for advice or suggestions.

You are expected to attend several sessions/events with your protégé to be a part of this year's program experience. Please take your commitment seriously and make every effort at good attendance.

If you have questions, are confused or unclear, or need information...
Please contact Pat Fleeharty or Rev. Christina!

Rev. Christina Leone Tracy - 410-266-8044 x101, cleonetracy@uannapolis.org

Pat Fleeharty - 410-268-9038, pfleeharty@hotmail.com

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis
COMING OF AGE
Outline

COMING OF AGE
Statement of Purpose

The Coming of Age program was created in response to a need for a formal rite of passage for our youth such as exists in many cultures and faiths. The program is designed to help our youth explore their spirituality, deepen their religious understanding and clarify their personal values and beliefs. In addition, the program will ground our youth in the history and structure of the Unitarian Universalist Association and of our congregation, and show them how Unitarian Universalism fits into the larger context of all spiritual traditions celebrated by humankind. Ultimately, participation in the program may increase their sense of belonging in their home church.

In the 2015-2016 academic year, the Coming of Age program will be the curriculum for eighth grade. Meetings will mostly be held on Sunday mornings starting September 20, 2015 and continuing through May 2016 with an additional event in June. See included calendar for more details of when you need to be present.

The Program

Consistent with the values of Unitarian Universalism, the program is a basic structure, the details of which will be filled in by each student. The content of the program consists of three areas: Awakening/Education, Growth/Development, and Sharing/Service. The process involves group meetings of all those involved in the program, a one-on-one relationship with a mentor, and an individual contract for each youth.

Program Content

Awakening/Education focuses on learning about Unitarian Universalism and other religious and spiritual traditions in order to provide a foundation on which to base one's own religious beliefs. Youth will be introduced to the history of Unitarian Universalism, and material will be made available for them to further explore the topic. If they miss sessions of the *UU History* unit, they are encouraged to make them up by attending the "Welcome to UUCA" class offered for adults four times each year.

Growth/Development is aimed at guiding each youth through a growing self-awareness of his or her religious and spiritual values and beliefs. Adults from the congregation share with the youth the importance of spiritual practice in their lives, and introduce the youth to a variety of spiritual

practices. Throughout the year, each student is asked to keep a journal of relevant experiences, and to develop his or her own credo.

Sharing/Service involves putting beliefs into action by committing time and energy to projects in which the participants learn about their own potential to have an impact.

Program Structure

Mentors are recruited to work with a student, and are expected to participate in a group meeting once a month or so. Each mentor provides support and guidance as needed for his/her protégé to fulfill the program requirements. Mentors work closely with the facilitators as well, to ensure that students are not encountering difficulties.

A Fall Retreat at a retreat camp is scheduled at the beginning of the program in the fall. It starts on Friday evening and ends after lunch on Sunday. It includes a parent/child workshop, low ropes and high ropes courses, and an opportunity for each participant to meet his/her mentor. The main goal of the retreat is to foster group cohesion.

Group meetings which include at least one facilitator mostly take place on Sunday mornings when RE is in session, starting in September and continuing through May. Some of the sessions may be extended or scheduled at a different time to accommodate special activities. A detailed schedule will be distributed, and youth are expected to attend most meetings. A few additional meetings may be scheduled as needed to work on the worship service and ceremony.

Going on field trips may be part of the program. Parents might then be needed to chaperone.

A trip to Boston is planned for the spring (Easter weekend). Ideally only the youth and a few chaperones participate. Facilitators usually serve as chaperones for the trip; under some circumstances, a mentor or a parent may be asked to fill that role.

A Transition Retreat is held at the church on a Saturday afternoon in the spring. The youth and their parents participate together in a ritual ceremony to acknowledge the transformation that has taken place over the year. It marks the youth's transition from child to "responsible youth" on his/her path to young adulthood, and requires the parents' willingness to let go.

A worship service to mark the completion of the program is planned by the youth. It is presented in front of the congregation the first Sunday in June.

Special costs associated with the Coming of Age program include a fee to cover the expenses for the Retreats, the field trips, and the trip to Boston. Scholarships are available in case any of the special activities represent a financial hardship for the families - Several fund-raisers are held to help defray part of the costs. If you are aware of financial hardship for your protégé and their family, please encourage them to make arrangements with Rev. Christina.

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis

COMING OF AGE The Role of Mentors

1. Work with the participant to:
 - encourage him/her
 - help him/her set goals
 - help him/her make choices to fulfill the requirements
 - monitor progress
 - discuss questions
 - be a resource and advisor/guide
 - assist in writing a credo
 - be a trouble-shooter and help overcome practical obstacles (e.g. problems with rides, scheduling, etc.)
 - seek the advice of the COA Facilitators or the Faith Development Minister in case problems arise
 - sponsor participant for the recognition service
 - assist in preparing presentation for recognition service.

2. Cultivate a good personal relationship with the participant:
 - establish trust
 - keep confidentiality
 - be aware of parents' needs, but keep confidences unless safety is at risk
 - be supportive without being intrusive or judgmental
 - share personal beliefs, experiences, thoughts, feelings
 - offer to spend some personal time with the participant around similar interests (even if the young person does not accept, he/she will appreciate the invitation).

3. Communicate with your protégé a couple times a month – in person, preferably. If that's not possible, then touch base occasionally over the phone or through e-mail or Facebook.

4. Attend designated Coming of Age meetings (schedule will be distributed). Some meetings may include a social event (food), special workshops to facilitate group process, and time for mentor and participant to interact one-on-one.

5. Participate in planning and preparation for the service at the end of the program.

6. Listen, listen, listen (rather than advise).

"Tips for Mentors"

1. It's a good idea to send an email or call the youth's parent early on in your mentorship. Introduce yourself, tell the parent a little about yourself--what you do for work, what your interests/hobbies are, how you came to UUCA, etc. Tell the parent any ideas you have for upcoming opportunities for you to get together with your mentee. Ask the parent what his or her expectations for your interactions with their child and how they would like to set up your meetings. Also state how you would like to contact your mentee and ask if that is ok. For instance, I asked if I could friend Kennedy on Facebook and if I could call/text and/or email her.
2. DO things. Many kids this age aren't ready to just sit and have deep conversations with a mentor. Working side-by-side can help foster communication... Take a bike ride, go to a show or festival together, work on a garden or a craft project, build something, or cook together.
3. It's a good idea to include your mentee in things you're doing at UUCA. For instance, I took my mentee a few years back to several Full Circle events and to UUCA's drum circle. This helps the youth see the workings of our church and all of the wonderful things we are doing.
4. Maybe observe "take your daughter/son to work day". I took my mentee a few years ago to work with me for a day. I arranged this with her parent (who had to write a note to get her excused from school) and with my administration at my job. It was nice to show her what I do all day and it was eye-opening for me to see my job from a teen's perspective.
5. If you're having trouble catching up with your mentee, try to swing by the COA meeting room on a Sunday around 11:10-ish to check in and say hi after group meets.

--Raven Bishop, October 2010

Unitarian Universalist Church of Annapolis
COMING OF AGE
Compiled from past mentor orientation workshops

What does it mean to mentor?

What skills are involved in mentoring?

Get to know youth as a person first	Let him/her know <u>you</u>
Do something fun	Open-ended questions
Supporting youth's ideas, being supportive	Allowing youth to be dependent some time
Admitting "I don't know; I am on a journey too"	Reporting serious problems
Show the youth the ropes	Non-judging, being non-judgmental
Open - honor others	Flexibility in scheduling
Questioning	Asking open questions
Being disciplined - to get work done	Exposure to other adults with similar ideas
Listening for understanding	Being understanding and relating
Silence, reflection	Motivate students
One-on-one bonding (this person is here for me)	Listen
Make it easy for them to fit in	Authenticity
Make them feel that someone cares about them	Acknowledgment, empathy
Problem-solve real life choices	Sharing own experiences
Have a memorable role in their life	Model
Help them verbalize concerns	Not talk down
Guide	No easy answers
Find out where they are starting from	Being flexible in your thinking, open-minded
Help mentees achieve their goal	Be a complement to them
Provide something parents can't provide	Validate their ideas
Help build their confidence	Safety - someone to go to
Confidentiality, trust	Sharing with Uus - some shared values
Being positive about students, on their side	Sharing your own difficult experiences
Be careful about bringing in our own baggage (getting clear about what it is)	
Show them how to find their own way and find their way through confusion	
Offer some structure and continuity (they know you are reliable and available)	
Help them explore possible solutions <u>without telling them what to do</u>	
Ask youth what his/her expectations of the program are, and check in periodically	
Being a resource person, helping find information.	

What is difficult? To be able to...

Create a balance between sharing your own ideas and drawing the youth's out (selective self-revelation)
Be tuned in to their comfort level, i.e. introversion, extroversion, comfort with silence, readiness to deal with issues, need for direction vs. open-endedness
Not ask teens to share more than they are ready to share
Know when to push a little, when not to
Have balance between fun/light stuff and heavy stuff
Maintain your own human-ness, not have all the answers, share own struggles.

What will you get for yourself?

Satisfaction to do something well: listen, guide
Get to know the youth
Learn about own beliefs, question
A relationship - really knowing someone
Give something, pass on own wisdom, learning
Be challenged
Make a difference in someone's life

Outcomes for the Youth

Be able to better verbalize the ideas associated with UUism
Be able to express own values
Be secure that their own ideas have merit
Expand own horizons, learn about others' beliefs
Involvement, opportunity to grow through experiences
Be able to think through problems
Develop confidence to make well-informed choices

Potential difficulties

Artificial, not knowing what to do; feeling inadequate
Difficulty in drawing students out or getting them to talk
Transitioning between “getting to know” and doing the work
Relating to a teenager
Finding common ground
Conflict in what mentor and parents are saying
Scheduling

Questions, concerns

Were some youth pushed into participating or was it their own choosing?
Parents may have expectations of resolving specific problems
Confidentiality (especially regarding parents)
Finding right level of connection, involvement
How to build relationship without overwhelming or underwhelming
Need for mentor support system
Gender imbalance (many more girls than boys in the program).

CALENDAR

For your information, below is our 2015-16 calendar as it stands:

Occasionally changes must be made, but we try our best not to deviate from this calendar, and to let you know with plenty of advance notice if a change must be made. **Please mark your calendars and check your email regularly!**

Blessings, -Rev. Christina Leone Tracy, UUCA Faith Development Minister
410-266-8044 x101 // cleonetracy@uuannapolis.org

Calendar --

** Please note the October 11th Mentor Training, Lunch, and Family Meet 'n Greet at the West River Retreat Center! This is very, very important to attend. Mark your calendars and make every attempt to be there. Directions are on the next page. **

* Please note those dates marked with a single asterisk are "events" including fundraisers and we need mentor help. However, you are not expected to attend every event, though as many as you can attend will be greatly appreciated. Communicate with Pat Fleearty and other mentors to ensure coverage of mentor support at each event.

Dates otherwise unmarked are class sessions you will attend with your protégée.

2015-2016

**Sun., October 11 - 10am-2pm West River Retreat Center training, lunch, family meet n' greet

Sun., October 18 - 10am-11:10pm - Emerson Room - Class support (Who do I want to be?)

*Sun., November 1 - 8am-1pm- Fahs House Parking Lot - Yard Sale

*Sun., November 15 - 9am-3pm Rake-a-Thon Fundraiser - Meet at UUCA and travel
(rain date: Sat. November 21, 9am-3pm)

*Sun., December 13- 10am-1pm- Emerson Room/ Off-site - Shopping Day for Family Tree

*Sun., January 31 - 10am-4pm - Emerson Room - Craft-Making Day for V-Day Sale

*Sun., March 6 and 13- 10am-1pm - Emerson Room/ Off-site - Justice & Food Drive
On March 6 we'll "seed" the neighborhood with bags and lists and pick them up the following week, on March 13. Need some drivers.

(→ ALSO need a couple to help also on Saturday February 28 to "re-seed" the neighborhood!
Please let Steve know ASAP if you can help. 2 hours max. steve@doody.com)

Sun., April 10 - 10am-11:10pm - Emerson Room - Credo Development (Big Questions)

Sun., May 8 - 10am-11:10pm - Emerson Room - Worship Planning

Sun., June 5 - 10am-10am - COA Worship Service + Credo Presentations ← don't miss it!

RETREAT: Sunday October 11, 10am-2pm

**Training for mentors (10-12:00)
Meet your protégé and his/her family!
Bring a dish to share at potluck lunch**

Directions to West River from UUCA:

**West River Center is located at
5100 Chalk Point Rd,
West River, MD 20778**

(About 18 miles and 20-25 minutes from UUCA)
Phone #: 410-867-0991

The map to West River and the map of the W. R. Center are easier to see online (in color!) at <http://www.bwccampsandretreats.com/WestRiver.html>
You may want to look that up before getting on the road.

From Baltimore and Annapolis

Take I-97 South to Rt. 50 East. Go approx. 1/4 mile to Rt. 665 (Aris T. Allen Blvd). Follow Rt. 665 to Rt. 2 South (Solomon's Island Rd.). Cross the South River Bridge, proceed to Rt. 214 (Central Ave.) and turn left at light. Go approx. 1 mile and turn right onto Rt. 468 (Muddy Creek Rd.). Follow Rt. 468 for 8 miles. Turn left onto Chalk Point Road (look for Amoco and Paceway convenience store on left). Follow Chalk Point Rd. for 1 mile; turn left into West River Center.

