



First Unitarian Church

**Youth Programs  
Resource Manual**

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## YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAMS

First Unitarian's Youth Ministry program provides a well-rounded religious education to our youth. While the curriculum varies from year to year, our web of youth ministry balances pastoral care, spiritual development, beloved community, justice making, faith exploration, multi-generational relationships, covenantal leadership, and identity formation.

### Mid-High Program (6th-8th grade)

- Sunday Morning Programming - Every morning at 11 am the Mid-High Group meets to explore Unitarian Universalism, ethics, spiritual practices, and how a community functions.
- Coming of Age - Each spring we offer Coming of Age classes to our eighth graders as they prepare for high school and a bigger role in our faith community. Students learn more about Unitarian Universalism and themselves as they prepare "This I Believe" statements and lead a service for the entire congregation.
- Our Whole Lives (OWL) - A nationally acclaimed, lifelong sexuality curriculum developed by the Unitarian Universalist Association in partnership with the United Church of Christ. Trained volunteers teach First Unitarian OWL classes with age-appropriate content for youth.

### La Amikoj – High School

- Sunday Morning Programming – Adult youth advisers partner with youth to lead curricula that is relevant to youth and that touches each aspect of the web of youth ministry stated above.
- Youth Cons - Weekend long conferences/events designed for youth. Youth from different UU churches in the Mountain Desert District join to worship, learn and to be together in fellowship.
- Bridging Ceremony - Seniors in high school meet with Ministers and advisers to design a Sunday service that celebrates their entry into young adulthood.
- Grill Nights - Informal social gatherings in the summer.
- Service Learning Opportunities - Regular social action is not only a chance to serve the broader community but a chance to learn and reflect on those experiences.

## Our Religious Education Vision

Through participating in the Religious Education Program at First Unitarian, children and youth will:

- Develop social skills and connections that will make them a part of this Church community.
- Participate in practical experiences that relate to UU principles, and that will expand into their daily lives.
- Incorporate UU beliefs into their beliefs into their own beliefs that they can articulate.
- Learn about, appreciate, and respect people of other faiths and beliefs.
- Develop a spiritual foundation that will provide perspective throughout their life journey.

## Web of Youth Ministry

First Unitarian's Youth Programs are based on UUA's Web of Youth Ministry model.

### **Covenantal Leadership**

Youth leadership is a covenantal practice in which youth are safe, recognized and affirmed as full and vital participants in the life of our shared Unitarian Universalist faith community. Advisors encourage youth to take on more responsibility as they grow and develop. The goal is for youth to become empowered and effective leaders through intentional leadership development over time.

### **Multigenerational Relationships**

Multigenerational faith communities have programs that both meet the specific developmental needs of different age groups and bring people together across age groups. Dynamic youth ministry strives to connect youth with people of all ages through inviting them to help with religious education programs, building mentor relationships between youth and adults, forming multigenerational choirs, allowing youth to use their leadership gifts in worship services and workshops, celebrating life milestones such as Coming of Age and bridging into adulthood, and having fun outdoor retreats open to all families and ages.

### **Spiritual Development**

This is the intentional cultivation of spirituality through both individual and group spiritual practices. As spiritual beings, youth experience awe, gratitude, wonder, appreciation and "at-one-ness." Youth ministry should encourage and offer opportunities for engagement in practices that nurture and enliven their spirits.

### **Beloved Community**

Being held in the arms of a beloved community is an essential part of being a religious person of any age. In youth ministry, beloved community has three dimensions: local,

Unitarian Universalist, and interfaith. Youth should be grounded in a local community that creates deep, affirming, authentic and long-lasting relationships. Through camps and conferences, youth can connect with the wider Unitarian Universalist faith movement and see the diversity of experiences that exist within Unitarian Universalism. Interfaith community enriches youth ministry and celebrates differing religious perspectives found in the world.

### **Justice Making**

Youth practice answering our faith's calling to work for justice and to be in solidarity with others who also work for justice in many settings, including in our lives, our local communities, and the wider world. Service trips can help open youth's eyes to the realities confronting other people and inspire them to work for justice. Organizing a social justice project within the congregation can connect youth to the rest of the congregation and place youth as leaders in the social justice work of the community. Youth can also engage in advocacy and education around social justice issues that are important to them.

### **Pastoral Care**

Like people of all ages, youth have specific pastoral needs that are met in communities where people know how to listen deeply. Everyone works together to create a religious community that provides pastoral care with youth. This includes creating safe congregations, supporting youth who are in crisis, and celebrating their joys and accomplishments. Pastoral care with youth is also strengthened when ministers have a direct relationship with the youth in their congregations.

### **Faith Exploration**

Structured learning environments promote the free and responsible search for truth, meaning and purpose as a part of youth faith development. Faith exploration takes place when youth engage with workshops at camps and conferences, as well as through curricula that challenge youth to look deep and develop their faith. Because the Unitarian Universalist approach to religious education acknowledges that we are all both learners and teachers, when youth are asked to lead or facilitate education programs, it is a learning and leadership development opportunity.

### **Identity Formation**

Dynamic youth ministry supports youth in their journeys to figure out who they are as spiritual beings, relational beings, racial/ethnic and sexual beings, people of faith, justice makers, lifelong learners and leaders, as well as how they fit in multigenerational communities. Youth ministry helps youth develop a healthy identity in these areas and learn to live with integrity so that their Unitarian Universalist faith is inseparable from their identity as a whole person.

## **COMMUNICATION**

Information about RE programs and activities can be found at the Church's website at <http://uuabq.com/religious-education/re-children-and-youth/> as well as through the

Church's weekly e-broadsheet, the monthly Messenger and the RE Department's three Facebook pages: Mid-high, La Amikoj (High School), and First UU Families

## YOUTH ADVISOR POLICY

Approved by RE Council 9/27/15

*This policy exists to assist the Youth Program Coordinator to manage the Mid-High and La Amikoj youth programs. The goal of this policy is to maintain a healthy partnership between youth and adults.*

### Staff Level Policy

1. Youth advisers are managed by the Youth Program Coordinator (YPC).
  - a. Advisers should stay in good communication with the YPC and when appropriate inform them of any issues that may arise.
  - b. Youth advisers should be selected by the YPC in collaboration with the Director of Religious Education (DRE).
2. Youth advisers can serve Mid-High for no more than three consecutive years and La Amikoj for no more than four consecutive years.
  - a. Since youth can only be in these youth groups for three or four years, this insures that these groups never becomes the adult's group and that power and experience is spread evenly.
3. Youth advisers are there to guide, mentor, and be in partnership with youth and abide by all safe church policies that involve working with youth.
  - a. Youth advisers should be discouraged from being advisers if their children are involved in that particular youth group. At this developmental stage, it is healthy for youth to form relationships with adults other than their parents/guardians. Reasonable exceptions should be made.
  - b. To encourage a team approach to youth ministry and expose youth to a diversity of adults, youth advisers should commit to being with the youth 2 Sundays a month and never be there every Sunday except in emergency situations.
  - c. Youth advisers need to be at least 25 years old.
  - d. Youth advisers should be members in good standing of First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque.
  - e. Youth advisers are mandatory reporters.

## YOUTH PROGRAM COORDINATOR JOB DESCRIPTION

Revised by Mia and approved by RE Council by email 3/20/16

**Position objective:** The role of the Youth Programs Coordinator is to coordinate, help develop and provide continuity in youth programming. The scope of this position includes

a primary focus on participation in junior-high (also called mid-high) and senior-high youth programming.

The YPC supports the purpose and policies of First Unitarian, Albuquerque, and its religious education ministry.

The YPC workweek is 10 hours, including most Sundays.

**Qualifications:**

- Professional or volunteer experience working with mid-high and high school aged youth in a religious or related setting. Good understanding of youth and adolescent development.
- Strong organizational and communication skills, including the ability to text and utilize social media such as Facebook.
- Must be able to work well in teams and with youth and adults who hold a variety of theological positions. An active member of First Unitarian preferred.
- Valid driver's license, insured, and with a good driving record.
- The ability to be a positive and compassionate role model/mentor who maintains appropriate relationship boundaries.
- Become aware of and be in compliance with the Code of Ethics for adults working with youth in the UUA. Demonstrate a full understanding of the concept of safe church as outlined in First Unitarian's policy manual.
- Education: Bachelor's degree in education or a related field preferred.
- Must be at least 25 years of age. A background check will be required for employment in this position.
- Experience with special needs youth a plus.

**Primary Duties:**

- Take advantage of learning materials provided by the UUA on youth ministry, programming, and advising. Ongoing learning and training is an expected part of this position.
- Work with the Director of Religious Education to implement programming which explicitly reflects and includes the eight components of the Web of Youth Ministry: Faith Exploration, Identity Formation, Covenantal Leadership, Multigenerational Relationships, Spiritual Development, Beloved Community, Justice Making, and Pastoral Care.
- Maintain close communication and collaboration with the DRE, including regular updates on events, classes, volunteers, and youth, and communication about any program needs.
- Schedule and attend regular meetings with Youth Advisors, and support them with ongoing training in goal setting, content development, and team development, ideally once per month.
- Schedule weekly advisors for senior-high and mid-high groups. Maintain the schedule two months in advance, including advisors for each meeting, topics, and activities, and other information as appropriate. Distribute schedule.

- Assist with recruitment of volunteers and advisors.
- Provide a report monthly, and attend R.E. Council meetings when requested by the Council.
- Coordinate with staff and other groups within the church to facilitate the involvement of youth in the larger church community.
- Support the visibility of youth programming, and its vision and direction, in the congregation.
- Have conversations on a regular basis with youth, parents, and advisors that keep communication lines open.
- Support and participate in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Coming of Age program and the 12<sup>th</sup> grade Bridging program each spring.
- Maintain an awareness of and plan and participate in youth community-building events such as Grill Nights, Halloween Dance, and overnights, and in programmatic events such as the LGBTQ Parade, MLK Parade, and other social justice activities.
- Maintain awareness of district and cluster events and conferences, publicizing as needed. Assist with applications for financial aid for these events when warranted. Participate as a sponsor or chaperone when reasonable/possible. Attend at least one youth con annually with youth group. (Overnights are compensated with a stipend.)

#### **Additional Administrative Duties:**

- Help to organize and facilitate necessary registration/attendance forms and other paperwork in partnership with the R. E. Administrative Assistant and the DRE.
- Participate in monthly First Unitarian staff meetings and the annual staff retreat.
- Working with other R. E. staff, help coordinate Our Whole Lives (OWL) programming to insure that teen classes are offered.

## **CHILD PROTECTION POLICIES**

Draft 2-16-16 (is being reviewed by Healthy Community Committee and the Board)

*These policies are created to address the special level of care and protection of children participating in our religious education programs, especially from sexual abuse from adults staffing and volunteering in our programs.*

### **Sexual Abuse Prevention Policies**

No minister, adult leader, childcare employee, church school teacher, or other person working under the auspices of the First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque shall engage in sexual, sexualized, seductive or erotic behavior with children or youth under age 21. Neither shall they harass or engage in behavior with youth that constitutes verbal, emotional, or physical abuse.

No person charged or convicted of a crime against a minor or who is required to register with the state of New Mexico as a sex offender may be on the staff or volunteer in children's programs. (See Sex Offender policy for more)

All volunteers working regularly with children will be ongoing participants in the life of the congregation, and known to the DRE. The DRE, in conjunction with one of the ministers, may ask any volunteer to withdraw their services.

## Background Checks

- The Church will bear the cost of all background checks and keep all results confidential and in locked files.
- All childcare providers and volunteers working regularly with children will undergo background checks. ("Regular" means volunteering more than twice in the program)
- Background checks will be repeated at least every two –three years for ongoing volunteers.
- All Church staff undergo regular background checks.

## The "Two Adult" Rule

- The "two adult" rule is in effect at all events which are a part of our church's programs, wherever they occur.
- For the purposes of these rules, Children are persons under the age of 14, youth between 14 and 20, and adults 21 and over. A Supervisor is one of at least two persons charged with the leadership (teaching, advising, chaperoning, etc.) of a group of children or youth. For the purposes of these rules, "unrelated" means not immediate family or romantic partnership.
- There will always be at least two unrelated supervisors or one adult and one unrelated teen teaching/leading/caring for children together. With the two exceptions below, no one other than a child's parent or guardian should ever be alone with a child (out of sight and hearing of other adults, or behind a closed door. In groups of children, one supervisor must be over the age of 18, and the other supervisor will be at least 14. When working with youth, one supervisor must be over the age of 25, and the other supervisor will be at least 21.
- Exception 1: The ministers may meet with children or youth alone, when absolutely necessary to care for them. Preferably this meeting will take place in a public place or during office hours.
- Exception 2: One adult may drive youth to events, but there must be more than one youth in the vehicle and youth and adults should have signed a covenant which acknowledges that sex or sexualized behavior between adults and youth is prohibited.

## Staff/volunteer Ratios for child safety and other rules

- The RE program will make every attempt to maintain at least the following ratios of caregivers to children; 2:20 for children over the age of 5, 2:12 for children between the ages 2–4, and 2:6 for children under the age of 2.
- At least one parent or guardian must remain on campus while their child is being cared for except in the case of special programs for which parents have left specific contact information and agree to remain contactable during the time their child is in our care.
- All volunteers working regularly with youth will be asked to sign off that they have read, understand and will comply with the Church's RE Volunteer policy.
- The DRE or ministers, in consultation with each other, may require an individual to withdraw from contact with children or youth if they deem it necessary for the safety of the children or church. This request may not be appealed.
- All activities involving children and youth should be considered "semi-public". Doors must be open or unlocked, windows remain uncovered, and visitors should be welcome to drop by. (Sex Education Programs offer a higher level of privacy, and sex education leaders are given more careful screening and training.)

## Childcare (outside of Sunday morning)

The Congregation offers childcare for some, all-Congregation activities, hiring childcare workers. When the Church offers childcare, the rules above apply. All persons offering childcare to children on Church property must be on the Church's childcare staff, with the exception of the caregiver of a child with special needs, who is under the direction of the child's parent.

## Reporting Requirement

When any minister, adult leader, childcare employee, religious education teacher, or other person working under the auspices of First Unitarian Church has reason to suspect that a youth or child under 18 has been the victim of sexual abuse, physical abuse, or neglect, (at church or elsewhere) these suspicions shall be immediately reported to the Senior Minister (unless the senior minister is the suspected perpetrator, in which case the suspicions shall be reported to the president of the Board.) It shall be the responsibility of the senior minister (or board president, if the senior minister is the suspected perpetrator) to investigate these suspicions, and in those cases where sufficient cause exists, the minister shall make appropriate reports to authorities as required by Mandatory Reporting Laws.

If there is cause to believe that a staff person or volunteer in the RE program is a perpetrator of abuse, the DRE shall be notified.

## Drivers

Anyone driving children or youth to church events at the request of the church, other than that child's parent, must be over 21, have a clear background check being done and have signed the church's RE volunteer agreement.

## OVERNIGHTS

First Unitarian often hosts overnight programs for children and youth on our campus. The Church's Child Protection Policy must be followed.

1. When there are up to 21 youth present, there must be three adults present including at least 1 male and 1 female.
2. If more than 21 youth are present, an additional adult is required. The ratio is to be no more than 7 youth/adult.
3. Youth should RSVP so that the required number of chaperones will be present.
4. The Overnight Checklist must be used to ensure that staff communication and planning has taken place. In addition, parents must be informed who the chaperones will be as well as the agenda.
5. Chaperone contact info will be shared with parents of youth attending overnight.
6. Setting up overnights should be a team effort by advisors and parents with input from staff.

The Overnight Checklist must be used to ensure that staff communication and planning has taken place. In addition, parents must be informed who the chaperones will be as well as the agenda. Chaperone contact info will be shared with parents of youth attending overnight. Setting up overnights should be a team effort by advisors and parents with input from staff.

First Unitarian also coordinate programs in which children and/or youth participate in conferences or retreats at other facilities. First Unitarian or other churches and organizations may organize these conferences or retreats. District Cons will use its adult/youth ratios for these events.

For retreats, conferences or programs that involve an overnight stay, in order to participate all children and youth must have a signed permission slip from their parents. First Unitarian or the organizing groups must provide the permission slip. In addition, each child or youth must review and sign a behavior agreement, which among other things prohibits sexual activity and the use of drugs or alcohol during the entire overnight program.



## Overnight Checklist

This checklist is to be used by the leaders when planning for an overnight event.

Event: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

- Rooms reserved (Memorial, Wesson, Arnold)
- Get Parents Involved and communicate a month ahead of time
- Inform parents who the chaperones will be and the agenda for the overnight
- Get the word out:
  - eBroadsheet
  - Messenger
  - Flyers
  - Email
  - Facebook
- Sleeping Arrangements
  - Male/female
  - combined
- Permission Forms
- Enough Adult advisers
- What is the purpose?
- What is the Agenda?
  - Worship
  - Opening Circle w/  
Icebreaker games and rules  
for the evening
  - Workshops
  - Gaggle groups
  - Free time
  - Movie
- Who are the Youth Leaders?
- Food
  - Dinner
  - Breakfast
  - Snacks
- Arrange Cleanup
- Arrange Sunday morning chaperone times

5/15/16

## SCHOLARSHIP POLICY

La Amikoj Designated Scholarship Fund  
9/27/2015

*The La Amikoj Scholarship Fund is intended to support First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque youth in attending workshops, conferences, and activities that will help them develop in their faith and leadership skills and connect youth with the broader Unitarian Universalist faith community.*

### Applicant Eligibility:

1. Grades 9-12.
2. Registered in RE at First Unitarian
3. Active in La Amikoj.

### Scholarship Use:

1. To attend faith development activities such as Youth Cons or other UU youth leadership workshops.
2. Scholarships can be provided for registration fees for individuals.
3. Scholarships cannot be provided for transportation or meal costs. By accepting scholarship funds, youth commit to arranging transportation, lodging, and their own meals if they are not included in the activity.
4. This account is not to be used for UU Kids Camp registration.
5. An individual youth may receive scholarship funds totaling no more than \$250 per calendar year.
6. Scholarship applications must be turned in to the Youth Program Coordinator or designee no less than 30 days prior to the activity.
7. A decision will be made and provided to the applicant in writing within two weeks of application.
8. After the activity is completed, the applicant will bring the experience back to the church community in some form, such as a presentation to the congregation or La Amikoj group or leadership activity, among other possibilities.
9. Payment will be made directly to the institution coordinating the activity and not to youth or their families.

## La Amikoj Scholarship Application Form

DATE OF APPLICATION: \_\_\_\_\_

### Youth Information

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Las Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Current grade in school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent or Adult Mentor Information

This person will commit to assisting the applicant in realizing the goals of this scholarship and making logistic arrangements when necessary.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Current grade in school: \_\_\_\_\_

### Workshop / Activity Information

Name of activity: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Dates: \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

Payment will be provided to (name and address):

Please provide a brochure or flyer (or link to a website) that would be helpful in the evaluation of your request. This could be emailed to [dre@uuabq.org](mailto:dre@uuabq.org) or a link provided here:

Please provide a full budget, including registration and travel costs:

How much scholarship money are you requesting? \_\_\_\_\_

La Amikoj Scholarship Application (page 2)

Please write a short paragraph in your own words explaining how this workshop or activity relates to your faith development or contributes to your UU community:

What will you bring back to our church community and in what form? For example, you might make a presentation to the congregation or La Amikoj; you might commit to a leadership activity, or coordinate an event, among other possibilities.

Reference: Please list an adult reference from First Unitarian Church of Albuquerque who we may contact who can address your interest in this workshop or activity.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail: \_\_\_\_\_

How does this person know you?

How long have you known this person?

\_\_\_\_ Yes, I have read the accompanying Scholarship Policy.

Applicant's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Mentor's Signature: By signing below, I affirm that I will personally assist this applicant with making the necessary arrangements to attend this workshop or activity.

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

If there is a mentor, parent should fill in:

I am aware and approve of my child working with the adult mentor:

(Print name of mentor) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2/23/16