
Handbook for Youth Ministry Leaders

Resources and Forms for Youth Ministry
and Its Leaders



Updated August 2018

This booklet may be found online at www.macucc.org/youthministry

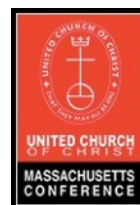


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Introduction

This updated edition of resources for youth ministry leaders is intended to be utilized as a guide for churches and individuals who are seeking to provide a quality youth ministry program. Neither this booklet, nor any other one resource can provide all of the tools or training that are necessary for ministry with youth; however, it is our hope that this booklet will provide the insights and tools that are needed to assist you with the administrative aspects of the youth ministry in your congregation.

Keep in mind that these administrative aspects are only one segment of youth ministry. All who are called to ministry with youth should seek regular training to keep their skills updated, as well as in other areas of ministry such as community building, worship, mission and service.

The Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ continually strives to offer training and events for youth and youth leaders. You will find all of our current offerings on our website's Faith Formation Resources page under "Youth Ministry": www.MACUCC.org/youthministry. It is our intention to offer events that will enhance local church youth ministries, and offer opportunities for youth to connect with others throughout the wider United Church of Christ.

Youth ministry leaders can sometimes feel isolated. We are often undervalued and work without much assistance or support. Through Massachusetts Conference connections, youth ministry leaders can network with one another and find opportunities to grow in their ministry and their faith. We are here to offer support; please feel free to contact me for assistance.

All who are involved in ministries with youth need to know that this is a special calling and that your efforts are indeed appreciated and valued. *Remember that you are not alone.* Trust that God will guide you as you seek help from others.

Debbie Gline Allen

Note:

For those whose ministry includes both youth and faith formation for children and/or all ages, please see *A Christian Educator's Guide to Preparing for a Faith Formation Position* on the Massachusetts Conference Faith Formation resources webpage: www.macucc.org/faithformation.

**Massachusetts Conference
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Administrative Resources

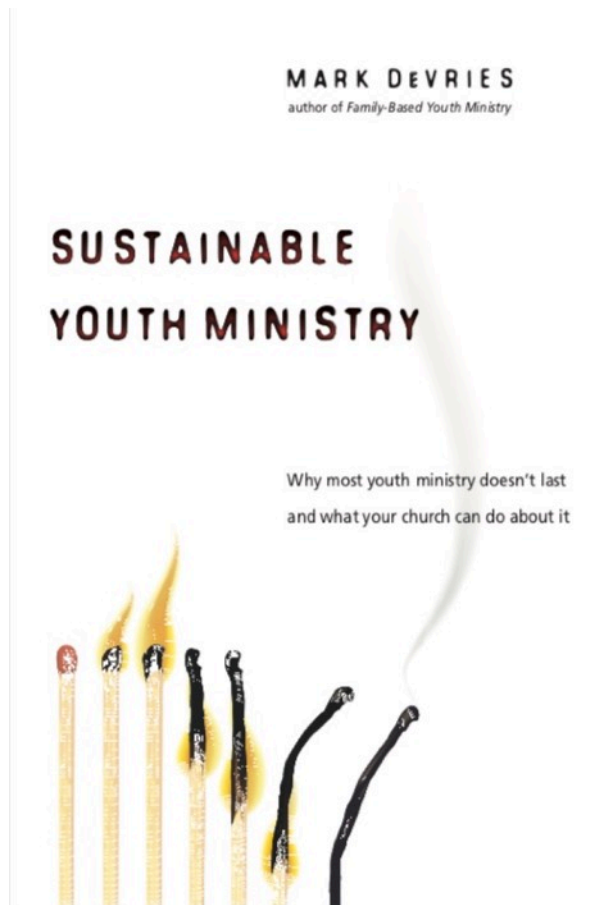


The secret message communicated to most young people today by the society around them is that they are not needed, that the society will run itself quite nicely until they — at some distant point in the future — will take over the reigns. Yet the fact is that the society is not running itself nicely... because the rest of us need all the energy, brains, imagination and talent that young people can bring to bear down on our difficulties. For society to attempt to solve its desperate problems without the full participation of even very young people is imbecile.

— Alvin Toffler

An Invaluable and Comprehensive Resource for Youth Ministries

From the founder of Ministry Architects, Mark DeVries shares his wisdom and knowledge from 30+ years as a youth minister, having learned from both his mistakes and his successes.



A Covenant for Church Youth Ministries

June 2010

This Covenant for Church Youth Ministries is inspired by and adapted from “The National Charter,” a similar set of promises promoted in the United Kingdom by two organizations — the Association of Christian Youth and Children’s Workers, and Youthwork — a collaboration of organizations working together to resource and inspire Christian youth work. The Eastern Ohio Association of the United Church of Christ obtained permission from these UK organizations to draw upon and modify the contents of “The National Charter” for use in this covenant. It was then shared with the Association of United Church Educators, and is used with its permission and blessings.

Background

The Covenant for Church Youth Ministries is a set of eight promises that churches adopt when considering the practices and principles they will use in nurturing and supporting people, both paid and volunteer, who work with youth. (Youth are defined using the United Church of Christ guidelines – ages 13-18.)

1. We will pray and support.

We believe that our youth workers need spiritual support in their work with young people.

We promise to pray for our youth workers and keep their needs a high priority in church prayer life.

2. We will acknowledge the importance of gifts and God’s call.

We believe that gifts and call are best discerned in the context of the faith community.

We promise to provide opportunities for prayerful discernment.

3. We will provide opportunities for retreat and reflection.

We believe that taking time to think and pray is just as essential for our youth workers as organizing events and meeting young people.

We promise to provide opportunities for our youth workers to use part of their schedules for retreat, reflection, worship and personal development.

4. We will provide ongoing training and development.

We believe that maintaining the gifts and skills of the youth workers is an ongoing process and that it is important to continually invest in professional development.

We promise to set aside time and money to provide this for our youth workers.

5. We will give a full day of rest each week.

We believe that taking regular time off helps maintain our youth workers' passion and energy for their work with young people.

We promise to actively encourage our youth workers to take a day away from their role each week.

6. We will share responsibility as a priesthood of all believers.

We believe that having a youth worker does not release the rest of the church from our responsibilities toward young people.

We promise to encourage everyone to play a part in volunteering, praying for and supporting young people.

7. We will celebrate and appreciate.

We believe it is vital to acknowledge what our youth workers are doing and the commitment they have made to work with young people in our church.

We promise to make sure our youth workers know they are appreciated and we will celebrate their achievements.

8. We will strive to be a just employer.

We believe it is important to have clear structures and procedures for recruiting and employing youth workers, and to provide supportive management structures which are fair and just.

We promise to follow non-exploitive practices in the way we employ our youth workers.

Administrative Resources

The Youth Ministry Leader

Adapted from "Youth Advisor," The Leaders' Box: A Leadership Development Resource for Local Churches, United Church of Christ.

Youth ministry leaders are loyal friends, role models, and advisors to youth in church groups. They enable and empower youth to take a major role in choosing the direction of the group and implementing its programs. They guide the youth in areas of study, worship, recreation, mission, and participation in the church's total life.

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Young people have been part of the church from its earliest days, but youth groups didn't develop until youth were set free from work by technology and child labor laws.

As young people gathered in the Pilgrim Fellowships of the Congregational Christian churches and the Youth Fellowships of the Evangelical and Reformed churches, they had adult advisors to meet with them, help them with their planning, and be their mentors.

COMMON PRACTICES

Many churches have one or more youth groups that meet for camaraderie, recreation, study, worship, and mission. They also plan activities such as retreats, fundraising projects, and recreation. Almost all churches that have youth groups have adult youth ministry leaders. They may choose to have elected youth officers who work with the adult youth ministry leaders in developing goals and planning programs and activities.

Some youth ministry leaders have seen many youth groups come and go. In other churches, youth ministry leaders are chosen on a short-term basis. Often the youth ministry leaders are chosen because they are young themselves and it is assumed that youth is a prerequisite for the position. (It needn't be.) Some churches have youth ministry leaders and assistants for each group. The assistants are learning to replace the youth ministry leaders in the following year. Some youth ministry leaders are recruited by the youth themselves, but most are chosen through procedures such as appointment by a Christian Education or Youth Ministry Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Your responsibilities will vary depending on whether there is a youth minister or another staff person with responsibilities for youth work, the expectations of the group, and the age

of the members of the group. Middle high age youth need more help in programming, for instance, than do senior high youth. Some of the things for which you will be responsible are:

- Attending meetings of the youth group. Arriving early and staying until all members have left.
- Participating in planning programs and activities. A variety should be encouraged: music, recreation, outreach and study of issues.
- Participating in activities planned by the group.
- Seeing that the place where you meet is ready for meetings and orderly when you leave.
- Identifying interests of members of the group.
- Being informed about issues that could interest members of the group:.
- Clarifying with the pastors your respective leadership roles with your group.
- Knowing what is available from the conference or association for youth participation.
- Being familiar with resources.
- Taking the group members and their concerns seriously.
- Being an advocate of the young people's participation in the mission of the church.
- Establishing a style of working with youth that is comfortable for you.
- Establishing relationships with each member of the group.
- Using inclusive language and non-stereotyped images.
- Living by the ethics you proclaim, while admitting that you are not perfect.
- Keeping confidences entrusted to you.
- Clarifying with the pastor your respective leadership roles with your group.

SKILLS AND ATTRIBUTES NEEDED

- Being a good listener
- Understanding and commitment of your church's mission
- Having enough experience to have formulated your own values
- Ability to plan
- A willingness to grow in the faith
- Open, honest, and friendly nature

- Ability to share
- Appreciation and respect for young people
- Enthusiasm
- Understanding of the ways meetings work
- Ability to bring people together
- Ability to play without being too adult, or one of the kids

WAYS TO INCREASE SKILLS, KNOWLEDGE, AND EFFECTIVENESS

- Participate in workshops or courses sponsored by your association, conference, local colleges, or technical schools on human development, planning, sex education, drug abuse, working with youth, etc.
- Attend conferences with and about youth.
- Confer with conference staff who have responsibility in the area of youth.
- Ask for a position description outlining responsibilities, expectations, and accountability.
- Talk with experienced youth leaders from your church or other churches.
- Exchange programs or program ideas with other churches and youth ministry leaders.
- Participate regularly in worship and other activities of the church.
- Pray and meditate.
- Become familiar with current youth ministry resources.
- Try to remember the fears, attitudes, and hopes you had when you were the age of the youth, but also recognize that times change.

ISSUES FACING THE CHURCH

- The relationship of the youth ministry leader to the church school and confirmation class is not always clear. How can all work together to enhance the experience of the youth?
- Sometimes the youth group is separate from other activities of the church. What can you do to remind both the youth and the congregation that we are all the Body of Christ together?
- To whom is the youth ministry leader accountable and why?

- What is the relationship between the local church, the association, conference, and national settings of the church in the area of youth work? How can each assist the other?
- Can youth make a difference in the whole church? What is their role in your church?
- Should the youth group be restricted to church members or anyone who wants to attend?
- How are the ages determined for youth groups? What are the reasons for decisions?
- What potential members of the youth group attend different schools? How can the church bring them together?
- As the population shifts and there are fewer teens attending church, how can churches continue to have viable youth groups? What is the possibility of working with other UCC youth groups or ecumenical ones?

QUESTIONS

- Is there any interest or issue from the members of the youth group that you need more information about? How might you get it?
- How do members of the youth group participate in other aspects of the church's mission? What could you do to help them participate?
- Does the youth ministry program include worship, study, recreation, outreach, involvement in the church's mission? If not, how could these be included?
- What's happening to youth in your church's neighborhood? What is your church doing to meet their needs? What is your group's responsibility to these youth?

Administrative Resources

Establishing a Youth Ministry Committee

From The Youth Ministry Handbook, Rev. Kim Mislin, First Congregational Church, Bakersfield, CA. Used by permission.

Note: This article is intended for larger congregations with good-sized youth groups. The information provided is still important, but should be adapted by each individual congregation to meet its unique youth ministry needs.

No one person should be responsible for all aspects of a youth ministry program. There must be shared leadership and a network of accountability, even if the church has only fifty members and four youth. Without this, the church leaves itself open to the potential for significant liability. The easiest way to establish this network of accountability is by establishing a Committee for Youth Ministry that is accountable to the governing body of the church.

The group that the Committee for Youth Ministry reports to should have a member of the Committee for Youth Ministry as a voting member. This person serves as the link between both groups.

The establishment of a Committee for Youth Ministry makes a clear statement about the group's desire to be involved, and intention in having a high quality program for its youth. This positive approach provides a good foundation for the ministry.

A Committee for Youth Ministry should include the following persons:

Voting Members

Chairperson	Someone not usually involved in youth ministry who also has administrative gifts
Representative	From the Committee or Governing Body that the Committee for Youth Ministry is accountable to
Parent Representative	Representing each age group of youth involved in the program (e.g. middle high, senior high)
Youth Representative	Representing each age group involved in the program
Youth ministry leaders	Leaders, facilitators, sponsors from each youth group

Ex-Officio Members (voice without vote)

Ministers	May also be voting members depending on church policy
Church legal counsel	To handle screening forms, incident reports, insurance issues, etc.)
Other church leaders and interested persons	

If youth activities such as choirs, service clubs, and sporting groups are also considered to be youth ministry activities, then representatives of these groups should also be voting members of the Youth Ministry Committee. The goal is to provide a voice for all aspects of the youth ministry program, enriched by the viewpoints of those not directly involved in this ministry, thereby providing balance.

The Committee for Youth Ministry should exercise leadership in the following ways:

1. Establish a Mission Statement of the vision, objectives, and theology of the youth ministry program. This can be used to help evaluate whether particular requests are in keeping with the overall spirit of the youth ministry program. This mission statement is the road map of the program, and can become the basis for long range planning.
2. Establish in writing clear guidelines and procedures for all youth ministry activities. The Committee can modify these guidelines when necessary for Youth Ministry when the group decides that change would be helpful. New guidelines must be circulated to all persons involved, and all guidelines must be consistently enforced. Guidelines and procedures should include fiscal matters, so that those involved in youth ministry are aware of the financial resources available to the program. For example, a policy for fund-raising should be clearly stated, and could be worded in the following manner: General fund-raising for youth ministry can occur, but if funds are raised for a specific event it should be stipulated at the time the funds are raised, so that if the event does not occur, the funds will be placed in the youth ministry account.
3. Review and approve youth ministry activities before they occur. It will be up to the committee to decide which activities require approval. For example, a senior high group wants to study a topic and then go across town for pizza. Does the topic to be studied need to be approved? Does the need for approval depend on the topic (for instance, sexuality)? Do in- town off-campus trips need approval? Is approval only necessary for overnight, out-of-town, or unusual outings? Whatever the committee decides, it is important to be consistent in enforcing decisions.
4. Act as an advocate for the youth and adult leaders. This is one of the most important yet often overlooked functions of the Committee for Youth Ministry. Both the youth and their leaders need prayer, affirmation, and support. Find opportunities to publicly acknowledge the youth and their adult leaders.
5. Mediate difficulties and disputes that involve the youth and/or the youth ministry program. The Committee can act as the intermediary between such groups as the youth and the church governing board, or the youth and the pastors. As mediators the committee can model positive conflict management and communication skills so that problems are dealt with directly and in a respectful, timely manner.

After a committee is established it should be publicly recognized in a worship service in whatever way is consistent with the particular faith tradition. In this way the entire church acknowledges and empowers this very important ministry.

The Committee for Youth Ministry should meet monthly for the purpose of being consistently and faithfully involved in the youth ministry program. Once a committee is established and becomes comfortable with a routine, an hour should be sufficient for conducting most business. A sample agenda for a routine meeting is as follows:

1. Prayer
2. Sharing of joys and concerns
3. Review of events requiring approval and any other business
4. Long-range planning
5. Other business
6. Affirmation of youth and leaders
7. Prayer

The Committee for Youth Ministry should report monthly to the committee or governing body to which it is accountable through the person on the Committee for Youth Ministry who is also a voting member on the supervising committee or governing body. In this way, open communication will be maintained and the youth ministry program stands a better chance of being integrated into the overall church ministry.

A planning retreat is often helpful when a committee first forms. Be sure to have a facilitator who understands both the needs of youth ministry and how this ministry should be integrated into the overall life of the church. A retreat can be a wonderful time for relationship building and dreaming as well as designing concrete guidelines and plans.

Sample Part-Time Job Description for a Youth Position

From Called To Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers, Association of United Church Educators. Used by permission.

Sample Part-Time Job Description for a Youth Position

YOUTH COORDINATOR

Purpose of the position: To provide overall leadership for youth ministries including guidance and resources for all aspects of the program.

Functions:

Administration

Supervision

Leadership Development

Planning

Resource Development

Communication

Responsibilities

Participation:

Attend all youth group meetings, leader meetings, and planning sessions, other church meetings and other events/activities as appropriate and/or necessary for effective program leadership.

Leadership:

The Youth Coordinator will provide leadership, training, resource evaluation or development & selection, and support for youth ministry programming, and assist youth youth ministry leaders with program planning and implementation.

Communication:

- The Youth Coordinator will:
- Provide regular communication of youth ministry activities, issues, and programming to the C.E. Board.
- Provide communication of community, church, and wider UCC activities, issues and programming to the youth.

Relationship to the C.E. Board/Pastor:

- The Youth Coordinator will maintain a relationship with the C.E. Board/Pastor so as to be provided with (semi) annual evaluations of programming, leadership style, etc.
- The Youth Coordinator will maintain a relationship with the pastor and with the appropriate board or committee appointed to assist with church school programs or other assigned duties.
- The Youth Coordinator is directly responsible to the C.E. Board.

Time required: 20 hours per week

Compensation Guidelines for Youth Ministry

Types of Youth Ministry Leaders

Youth Leader

In many settings, this person is a volunteer or an active lay person leading the youth group(s). At the very least, this person should be reimbursed for basic expenses such as child care, registration for youth ministry training and seminars, purchase of youth ministry resources, and the like. A volunteer should be considered a member of the church staff, even though he or she may not receive monetary compensation. The absence of a salary should in no way diminish the value and quality of the expectations of the volunteer who takes on this important ministry. A stipend or wage will depend on the amount of hours, the level of experience and expertise, and the degree to which this position is seen as a volunteer position.

Professional Youth Leader

A non-ordained staff member with three or more years experience in youth ministry and/or a degree in theological education, education, or a related field.

Massachusetts Conference Certified Youth Leader

A paid professional who has completed the course work and other requirements for certification in the Massachusetts Conference's Education for Effective Youth Ministry program (www.macucc.org/eeym).

Associate or Assistant Minister for Youth Ministry

An authorized or ordained minister for whom the majority of his/her portfolio includes youth ministry. This type of minister should be compensated according to the Massachusetts Conference clergy compensation guidelines.

Contractor or Consultant

A consultant is generally contracted by the project rather than working a set number of hours. As a contractor, he/she is self-employed and as such is responsible for providing his/her own resources, tools, primary office, and benefits. The hourly or unit rate is thus higher than for a typical employee.

A Note About These Categories

Although the descriptions above seem to fit nicely into labeled boxes, the educational background of youth ministry leaders can be as different and varied as each individual. Some discover their call to minister to youth early on, and are able to follow a college (and sometimes graduate school) curriculum that gives them a good academic background in Bible, theology, and educational theory. Others arrive at a position in youth ministry much later, but are able to use their life experiences in the church as well as their secular employment experience to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

It should also be mentioned that the course of study that most ordained ministers undertake in seminary does not include training in youth ministry. Be sure to talk with prospective ordained candidates to find out what their training and experience has been with teens, rather than assume that the process to ordination included such training.

How a Consultant May Be Utilized

- Develop with and for the congregation a program for youth ministry. This could include an overview of the church year, an outline for youth group meetings, and long range plans for the program.
- Recruit volunteer youth leaders and serve as a mentor to them, providing leadership training, program evaluation, and resources.
- Serve as an interim youth minister.
- Serve as a resource person to boards and committees responsible for youth ministry and/or youth ministry personnel. This may include developing a job description, compensation recommendations, clarification of goals and strategies, and assisting in the search process.
- Serve as a mentor for a new youth minister, providing resources, support, and guidance for a period of six months to a year.

Do You Feel Called By God?

The crucial element in the decision to pursue ministry of any sort is a "call." Do you feel you have a call from God to do this work? In other words, do you believe in your innermost heart that God wants you to do this? Take time to reflect on this carefully because the issue of call is central to authorized ministries in the United Church of Christ. It is also possible to know you want to be doing a certain ministry in the church and not feel the need for the ecclesiastical authority of a recognized ministry.

If you decide you do have a call and you wish to act on it by engaging in the process to become an authorized minister in the United Church of Christ, visit the discernment page on the United Church of Christ website at http://www.ucc.org/ministers_considering-ministry to learn more about the process. If you find that the information provided there strengthens your sense of call, then contact your pastor and your Area Conference Minister to learn how to get started.

Recommended Benefits for Half- to Full-Time Employees

- Vacation with pay
- Travel allowance
- Health/dental insurance & pension as available through the UCC Pension Boards
- Professional expenses
 - Books
 - Registration fees for workshops, trainings, EEYM (www.macucc.org/eeym)
 - Membership in faith formation organizations such as the Association of United Church Educators (auce-ucc.org)

Calculating Compensation

From Called To Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers, Association of United Church Educators. Used by permission.

As Christian congregations, we should strive to give our employees with just and fair compensation. A member of the church's staff who is struggling to make ends meet may find that the incurring stress affects the way he/she performs in ministry. The following recommendations are guidelines to help a congregation do its best to provide just and fair compensation for its youth ministry leader.

The compensation for a youth ministry leader should be appropriate to the individual's education and experience. Persons with experience in complementary fields (such as art, music, and drama, for instance) should have this expertise considered in the discussion of the compensation package. The number of years of church ministry experience and the number of Christian education and/or youth ministry workshops and continuing education courses taken also should be considered when determining the salary for the youth ministry leader.

For a full-time youth ministry position in the church:

(Salary for part-time positions would be the appropriate percentage of the full-time salary guidelines.)

- A person who is ordained or commissioned should be compensated according to the conference's guidelines for clergy.
- A person who holds a master's degree in religious or public school education may be compensated relative to the equivalent of a public school teacher in the church's district with the same education and same years of experience.
- A person who holds a bachelor's degree in religious or public school education may be compensated relative to the equivalent of a public school teacher in the church's district with the same education and same years of experience.
- A person who has completed the equivalent of a denominational noncredit program of training in church education may be compensated at least 80% of the salary of a first year public school teacher in the church's district.
- For those who have organizational skills and some educational background but little training or experience in Christian education/formation, we recommend compensation at no less than 60% of what a first year public school teacher in the church's district receives. We also recommend that the church pay for this person to complete a program of training in youth ministry, such as the Massachusetts Conference's Education for Effective Youth Ministry program (www.macucc.org/eeym).

As a person receives more training, the salary package should be adjusted annually with a pay raise that recognizes this achievement.

Employee/Volunteer Screening Form for Youth Ministry

*Adapted from a form developed by the United Church of Christ, Congregational, Norwell, MA.
Used by permission.*

Name _____
Last First Middle

Address _____
Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Telephone numbers _____
Best number to reach you Other

E-mail address _____

Other name(s), if any, by which I have been known _____

Position(s) for which you are applying _____

Current (or Previous) Employer name and address _____
Company

_____ Street

_____ City State Zip Code

Your immediate supervisor _____

Church affiliation _____
Church Town and State

Are you currently a member of this church?

- Yes
- No

How long were you affiliated with this church? _____

Have you ever been convicted of or pleaded guilty to a felony?
(If yes, please explain - attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

- Yes
 - No
-
-

Do you have a valid driver's license?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please indicate: state _____ and driver's license # _____

Have you ever had your driver's license suspended because of alcohol or drug abuse?
(If yes, please explain - attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

- Yes
 - No
-
-

Has a civil lawsuit alleging actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct; physical abuse; child abuse; or financial misconduct ever resulted in a judgment being entered against you, been settled out of court, or been dismissed because the statute of limitations expired?

(If yes, please explain - attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

- Yes
 - No
-
-

I have never terminated my employment or service in a volunteer position or had my employment or authorization to hold a volunteer position terminated for reasons relating to allegations of actual or attempted sexual discrimination, harassment, exploitation or misconduct; physical abuse or financial misconduct.

(If yes, please explain - attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

- True
 - False
-
-

Is there any fact or circumstance involving you or your background that will call into question your being entrusted with the responsibilities of the position for which you are applying?

(If yes, please explain - attach a separate sheet if necessary.)

Yes

No

The information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge. I authorize any references or churches listed in this application to give any information (including opinions) that they may have regarding my character and fitness for youth work.

Signature of Applicant

Date

Signature of Church Representative

Date

Please continue to the next page.

List three personal references who are not relatives:

(1) Name _____
Address _____
City, State, and Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____
E-mail address _____
Relationship to you _____
Years known _____

(2) Name _____
Address _____
City, State, and Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____
E-mail address _____
Relationship to you _____
Years known _____

(3) Name _____
Address _____
City, State, and Zip Code _____
Telephone number _____
E-mail address _____
Relationship to you _____
Years known _____

Please continue to the next page.

I hereby request the _____ Police department to release any information which pertains to any record of convictions contained in its files or in any criminal file maintained on me whether local, state or national. I hereby release said police department from any liability resulting from such disclosure.

Signature

Print name

Print maiden name, if applicable

Social Security Number

Print all aliases

Date of birth

Place of birth

Today's date

Print name

Records sent to _____

Address _____

Service of Covenanting for the Youth Ministry Leaders

From Called To Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers, Association of United Church Educators. Used by permission.

This service of worship and covenanting should be welcoming of children by incorporating the arts and as many of the five senses as possible, as well as leadership by children at appropriate times.

PRELUDE

OPENING STATEMENT

The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. (Deut. 6:4b-7)

HYMN: Called as Partners in Christ's Service TNCH #495

or Jesus Loves Me TNCH #327, or a hymn/song of your choice

INVOCATION

STATEMENT

A member of the Youth or Christian Education Committee or other appropriate group shall interpret the purpose of this service of covenanting. He or she should tell the congregation something of the person's background and welcome him or her on behalf of the congregation.

HEBREW SCRIPTURE

[Choose from Deuteronomy 4:12,6-10; 6:17-25; Psalm 25:4-10, or a Hebrew scripture from your choice]

YOUTH CHOIR ANTHEM OR SPECIAL MUSIC OFFERING

CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURE

[Choose from Ephesians 4:1-16; Romans 1:1-18; 1 Corinthians 12:4-31, or a Christian scripture from your choice]

COVENANT

Pastor: Dear friends, _____ Church has declared that, having gathered under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it has called _____ to minister in this place as *[title of position]* and that it now receives *[him/her]* as appointed by God for this ministry. _____, are you willing to enter this covenant with _____ Church?

[Youth Ministry Leader]: I am willing, and I promise to serve this church faithfully, teaching the word of God, according to the faith and order of the United Church of Christ.

Pastor: Members of _____ Church, please rise in body or in spirit and affirm your covenant with your youth ministry leader.

Local Church Members: We, the members of _____, receive _____ as our *[title of position]*, promising to labor with *[him/her]* in the ministry of the gospel and to give *[him/her]* due honor and support.

CHARGE TO THE YOUTH MINISTRY LEADER and the Congregation

A charge by the pastor with whom the youth ministry leader will be associated, utilizing visuals and symbols of educational/formational and/or youth ministries.

RESPONSE BY THE YOUTH MINISTRY LEADER (optional)

A statement of faith incorporating the youth ministry leader's understanding of and hopes for the youth ministry of the church, utilizing visuals and symbols of educational/formation and/or youth ministries.

PRAYER OF DEDICATION

HYMN: You Are Called to Tell the Story TNCH #357

BENEDICTION

Ongoing Nurture and Support

From Called To Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers, Association of United Church Educators. Used by permission.

Support Group

The Massachusetts Conference provides its Christian educators and youth ministry workers with Communities of Practice. These groups of local church education and youth ministry employees meet regularly with colleagues from the same geographic area to share best practices and networking opportunities. Visit www.macucc.org/cecop to locate the Community of Practice in your area, and contact the facilitator to join its e-mail list.

Personnel Committee

If there is a separate personnel committee, be sure that new staff members are connected and have regular meetings with that group. The policies of your congregation will act as a guide to the frequency of the meeting. These meetings should always include time for meeting with a staff person without other staff members present. This will help to build an atmosphere of trust and ensure honest communication between individual staff members and the committee. The evaluation process should be clearly defined (see the Periodic Review page that follows) and a personnel file begun. Confidentiality must be respected.

Communication Issues

Affirm and support the youth ministry of your congregation by intentionally keeping the youth ministry leader's role and work visible. Youth ministry events can be publicized in your newsletter, bulletin, and on your church's website and Facebook page. Announcements can be made during worship. Determine how frequently and in what role the youth ministry leader will participate in worship with the teens to help the congregation to view them as a part of the Body of Christ. Consider other ministries in the life of your congregation that can be opened up to the youth and made an intergenerational opportunity for all.

Personal and Professional Growth

Encourage and support the personal and professional growth of your youth ministry leader. Make available resources (time and money) for his/her to attend professional seminars and workshops as well as personal retreat time for spiritual nurture. The Massachusetts Conference offers a youth ministry training program for youth leaders: www.macucc.org/eeym. Provide an allowance for books and other resources. Provide money to join professional associations such as the Association of United Church Educators (www.auceucc.org), which will also acquaint him or her with colleagues in the profession and solid professional development opportunities.

Administrative Resources

Periodic Review

From Called To Educational and Formational Ministries: A Guide for Local Churches, Educators, and Youth Workers, Association of United Church Educators. Used by permission.

Review is a process for assessing what is of value. The review or evaluation process is not a substitute for conflict resolution. Rather it is a means of identifying growth and growth goals and affirming the church educator or youth worker. This review guide has been arranged in three sections so that the Board or Committee and the educator or youth worker can work separately, then together, to compare expectations and deal with any discrepancies.

Questions and areas for the Board or Committee to address

- What are the strengths of our educator/ youth worker?
- Is support for your educator youth worker adequate? Not adequate? In what ways?
- List the goals the committee considers important to implement for the coming year.
- Which goals could our educator or youth worker plan/coordinate/implement?
- For which goals might other staff take responsibility?
- For which goals might volunteers take responsibility?
- List possible ways to implement these plans.
- What are areas in which our educator/youth worker might consider continuing education in the coming year?
- How will participation in continuing education be facilitated?

Questions and areas for the educator or youth worker to address

- What are some major personal accomplishments of the past year?
- List the goals you see as important to implement for the coming year.
- Which goals could I plan/coordinate/implement?
- For which goals might other staff take responsibility?
- For which goals might volunteers take responsibility?
- List possible ways to implement these plans.
- What are the areas in which I might engage in continuing education in the coming year?
- What will I need in the way of resources and time to do so?
- How has the Board or Committee been most helpful? Least helpful?

Questions and areas for both the Board or Committee and the church educator or youth worker to address together

- List the strengths of the educator or youth worker.
- What are the highlights of our church's educational youth ministry in the last year?
- Which previously set goals were met? Which were not? Which goals were changed or modified?
- Are the position description expectations still realistic? What might be added? Deleted? Changed?
- How can the support for the educator or youth worker be improved?

Recommendations for the coming year

- Compensation issues
- Resources for ministry (volunteers, program and expense money, facilities, etc.)
- What goals for the coming year could strengthen the church's educational youth ministry? Be specific and realistic!

Resources for Youth Leaders



Youth ministry is not about getting things accomplished — only the act of God can bring about the transformation we seek. Youth ministry is about participating deeply in young people's lives as we await, together in suffering and joy, the coming of God.

— Andrew Root

Guidelines for Adult Supervision

From The Youth Ministry Handbook, Rev. Kim Mislin, First Congregational Church, Bakersfield, CA. Used by permission.

Adult leaders for a youth ministry activity function as representatives of the church and as such are held to different standards than when acting as a parent or adult in their own family. The rules and guidelines of the church must be followed by all leaders at all events, thereby providing appropriate supervision for the youth. Illegalities and irresponsibility cannot be allowed. Supervision must be consistent, reasonable, and prudent.

Adults are encouraged to remember that they will be providing both supervision and modeling adult Christian behavior for the youth in their care, and should endeavor to see that the example they set is consistent with the values and expectations of the church community.

The following chart outlines minimal levels of adult supervision necessary for youth ministry activities:

Age Group	During the day at Church	During the day &/or overnight, at the Church or off-site
0-2nd Grade	2 adults per group	1 adult for every 3 children; 2 adults minimum
3rd-6th Grade	2 adults per group	1 adult for every 4 children; 2 adults minimum
7th-8th Grade	2 adults per group	1 adult for every 4 youth; 2 adults minimum
9th-12th Grade	2 adults per group	1 adult for every 5 youth; 2 adults minimum

An “adult” is defined as a person at least 21 years of age. Adult leaders must be a minimum of five years older than the oldest youth in the group. Whenever possible, a male and a female adult team is preferred.

A “group” is defined as youth of one age group from one church.

Any scheduled event that does not have the minimum number of adults required as outlined in the chart above must be cancelled.

There is no church-sanctioned event in youth ministry that permit one adult to be alone with the youth. There must always be a minimum of two adults present.

Field Trip Procedures

From The Youth Ministry Handbook, Rev. Kim Mislin, First Congregational Church, Bakersfield, CA. Used by permission.

Planning Overnight Activities or Field Trip

- At the beginning of the year, all youth complete the MEDICAL RELEASE FORM. This completed form must be on file in the church office. Each time an overnight activity or field trip is planned, the original must be taken with the group leader while a copy remains in the church office. This form must be reviewed and updated for each trip by the adult leader, and is updated at the beginning of each program year.
- The IN-TOWN MIDDLE/SENIOR HIGH ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM is for youth in grades 7-12 only, and will be filled out at the beginning of the year and kept on file in the church office. Each time an in-town activity is planned, the original must be taken with the adult leader while the copy must stay in the church office. This form is updated at the beginning of each program year.
- The IN-TOWN YOUTH ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM is for youth up to and including 6th grade. This form must be filled out each time an overnight or youth activity is planned. The original must be taken by the adult leader while a copy is kept on file in the church office.

Additional Procedures for Planning Off-Site Field Trips

1. When an out-of-town field trip is planned, the adult leader coordinating the activity should inform the Committee on Youth Ministry (or Christian Education, Faith Formation) at least two months prior to the planned event.

Approval of any activity must be secured before any specific fundraising can be done. If funds are raised for a specific activity and the activity is canceled, the funds must be returned unless specified at the time of the fundraising that if the activity was canceled, the monies raised would go into the general youth account.

2. The OUT-OF-TOWN ACTIVITY PERMISSION FORM must be provided to the parents/guardians of the youth involved in the activity.
3. By the day of the trip, leaders must submit all necessary signed field trip permission slips, copies of which will be kept in the office, a definitive itinerary, including phone numbers, and the originals of the Medical Release Forms, copies of which will be kept in the church.

All drivers for out-of-town field trips must be 25 years or older and have a copy of their drivers' license and proof of insurance in the church office.

Medical Release Form

From The Youth Ministry Handbook, Rev. Kim Mislin, First Congregational Church, Bakersfield, CA. Used by permission.

Name of youth _____ Birthdate _____

Address _____

Name of parent or guardian _____

Best phone number to reach you _____

Youth's physician _____ Phone _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Health History (Please check all that apply)

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Frequent colds | <input type="checkbox"/> Seizure Disorders | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appliances (retainers
contact lenses, etc.) | <input type="checkbox"/> Stomach upsets | <input type="checkbox"/> Diabetes |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sleep disturbances | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Asthma |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional/behavioral
disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Vision/hearing
impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Motion sickness |

Other _____

Allergies _____

If any of the above is checked, please give important details _____

Date of last Tetanus shot _____

Is your child/youth taking a prescription or non-prescription medication?

- Yes
 No

Continued on next page

1. Medication _____
Dosage and Frequency of dosage _____
2. Medication _____
Dosage and Frequency of dosage _____
3. Medication _____
Dosage and Frequency of dosage _____
4. Medication _____
Dosage and Frequency of dosage _____

Can your son/daughter be expected to take the right amount of medication at the proper time? If the answer is no, arrangements must be made with the adult in charge.

- Yes
- No

I give my child permission to administer his/her own medications

Signature of parent/guardian

Youth's insurance carrier & policy number _____

Name of primary insured _____

Other pertinent information _____

Continued on next page

STATEMENT OF CONSENT

I, the undersigned, parent/legal guardian of _____,
do hereby consent to any x-ray exam, anesthetic, medical diagnosis or treatment and
hospital services that may be rendered to said minor, under the general or specific
instructions of _____
(name of youth's physician)

or, if unavailable, two on-call physicians at a hospital or clinic. It is understood that this
consent is given in advance of any specific diagnosis or treatment, and is given to encourage
those persons who have temporary custody of my child, in my absence, and said physician to
exercise their best judgment as to the requirements of such diagnosis or said medical
treatment.

This consent will remain effective until the _____ day of _____, 20_____
delivered to said persons entrusted with the care, custody and control of said minor child. I
understand that any and all medical expenses incurred are my responsibility and that there
is not medical insurance coverage provided by _____
(name of church or organization)

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

Insert your church name and letterhead here at the top of the page

In-Town Youth Activity Permission Form

Your child/youth would like to participate in the following activity:

Activity _____

Description _____

Date and time of activity _____

Leaders _____

Cost _____

Method of transportation _____

Additional information _____

I give my child/youth, _____, permission to participate in the activity listed above.

Youth's name _____

Address _____

Parent or guardian's name _____

Best phone number to reach you _____

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Special instructions _____

Parents: Does your child's/youth's Medical Release Form need updating?

Yes

No

Parent or guardian's signature _____

Youth's signature _____

Date _____

Insert your church name and letterhead here at the top of the page

Out-of-Town and Special Activity Permission Form

Your child/youth would like to participate in the following activity:

Activity _____

Description _____

Date and time of activity _____

Leaders _____

Cost _____

Method of transportation _____

Additional information _____

The church will provide the sufficient number a adult leaders based upon the number and age of youth attending the activity. If transportation by car is required, it will be provided by adult drivers. If the activity involves staying overnight out-of-town, a separate form will be attached.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact

_____ at _____.

Youth's name _____ Youth's cell phone # _____

Address _____

Parent or guardian's name _____

Best phone number to reach you _____

Continued on next page

Emergency contact _____ Phone _____

Special instructions _____

Parents: Does your child's/youth's Medical Release Form need updating?

Yes

No

By signing my name below, I give my child/youth permission to participate in the activity listed above.

Parent or guardian's signature _____

Youth's signature _____

Date _____

Incident Report

Name of youth _____

Home address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone # _____ Date of birth _____

- Male
- Female
- Gender non-compliant

Name of parent/guardian _____

Home address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone # _____

Name of second parent/guardian (if applicable) _____

Home address _____

City, State, and Zip Code _____

Telephone # _____

(1) What is the nature and extent of the abuse, injury or accident? Include specifics such as date, time, and location.

Continued on next page

(2) What are the circumstances under which the reporter became aware of the incident?
(include witnesses)

3) What action has been taken thus far by the reporter?

4) Please give other information which you think might be helpful in establishing the cause of the incident/or the person responsible for it. If known, please provide the name(s) of the alleged perpetrator(s).

Signature of reporter _____

Printed name _____

Date _____

Professional Self-Care



Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens,
and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28

Ongoing Nurture and Support

Personnel Committee

Make sure there is a separate personnel committee for the non-ordained staff members, and see that new staff members are connected and have regular meetings with that group. The policies of your congregation will act as a guide to the frequency of the meeting. These meetings should always include time for meeting with a staff person without other staff members present. This will help to build an atmosphere of trust and ensure honest communication between individual staff members and the committee. The evaluation process should be clearly defined (see the Periodic Review Process on the following page) and a personnel file begun. Confidentiality must be respected.

Communication Issues

Affirm and support the educational ministry of your congregation by intentionally keeping the Christian educator's or youth ministry leader's role and work site visible. Educational events can be publicized in your newsletter, bulletin, on your church's website, and via social media. Announcements can be made during worship. Determine how frequently and in what role the Christian educator/youth ministry leader will participate in worship to encourage the congregation to see the educational dimension of worship life and affirm the validity of the his/her ministry.

Personal and Professional Growth

Be sure your Christian educator/youth ministry leader connects with a Massachusetts Conference Christian Education Community of Practice in your area (<http://www.macucc.org/cecop>). These groups offer networking, peer support, increased awareness of UCC resources, and a sharing of best practices in the ministry of Christian education and faith formation. Encourage and support the personal and professional growth of your Christian educator/youth ministry leader. Make available resources (time and money) for the Christian educator/youth ministry leader to attend professional seminars and workshops as well as personal retreat time for spiritual nurture. Provide an allowance for books and other resources. Provide money to join professional associations such as the Association of United Church Educators (www.AUCE-UCC.org), which will also acquaint him or her with colleagues in the profession and solid professional development opportunities.

Certification

Provide the funds for your Christian educator/youth ministry leader to pursue certification through the Massachusetts Conference, and provide incentive for the completion of either in the form of increased compensation or benefits.

Christian Educator Certification Program: <http://www.macucc.org/certification>

Effective Education for Youth Ministry: <http://www.macucc.org/eeym>

Periodic Review Process

Review is a process for assessing what is of value. The review or evaluation process is not a substitute for conflict resolution. Rather it is a means of identifying growth and growth goals and affirming the Christian educator/youth ministry leader. This review guide has been arranged in three sections so that the Board or Committee and the Christian educator/youth ministry leader can work separately, then together, to compare expectations and deal with any discrepancies.

Questions and areas for the Board or Committee to address:

- What are the strengths of our Christian educator/youth ministry leader?
- Is support for your Christian educator/youth ministry leader adequate? Not adequate? In what ways?
- List the goals the committee considers important to implement for the coming year.
- Which goals could our Christian educator/youth ministry leader plan/coordinate/ implement?
- For which goals might other staff take responsibility?
- For which goals might volunteers take responsibility?
- List possible ways to implement these plans.
- What are areas in which our Christian educator/youth ministry leader might consider continuing education in the coming year?
- How will participation in continuing education be facilitated?

Questions and areas for the Christian educator/youth ministry leader to address:

- What are some major personal accomplishments of the past year?
- List the goals you see as important to implement for the coming year.
- Which goals could I plan/coordinate/implement?
- For which goals might other staff take responsibility?
- For which goals might volunteers take responsibility?
- List possible ways to implement these plans.
- What are the areas in which I might engage in continuing education in the coming year?
- What will I need in the way of resources and time to do so?
- How has the Board or Committee been most helpful? Least helpful?

Questions and areas for both the Board or Committee and the Christian educator/youth ministry leader to address together:

- List the strengths of the Christian educator/youth ministry leader.
- What are the highlights of our church's educational youth ministry in the last year?
- Which previously set goals were met? Which were not? Which goals were changed or modified?
- Are the position description expectations still realistic? What might be added? Deleted? Changed?
- How can the support for the Christian educator/youth ministry leader be improved?

Continued on next page

Recommendations for the coming year:

- Compensation issues
- Resources for ministry (volunteers, program and expense money, facilities, etc.)
- What goals for the coming year could strengthen the church's educational ministry?
Be specific and realistic!

Recognizing Stress and Burnout

Definitions

All people who work on a daily basis with human beings at one time or another may experience stress or burnout. Stress is the result of having to deal with too many crises that break the balance we have in our lives. Burnout can produce exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Burnout is the result of our inability to deal with stressful situations in our work, in our lives or in our family life.

Crisis

Life brings with it certain levels of crisis. (For the purpose of this document, the word “crisis” refers to high-stress events, both positive and negative.) The two main classifications of crisis are developmental and accidental. A developmental crisis is one that is produced by our own maturation. Such events include marriage, birth, graduation, retirement, new jobs, and other changes that are part of the life cycle. Accidental crises, on the other hand, include sickness, accidents, surgery, moving, unemployment, and/or natural disasters. Both types of crises produce stress in our lives. If we are not able to deal with the levels of stress produced by various types of crises, burnout can result. Psychologists and psychiatrists agree that stress is cumulative. When you keep adding too many crises together, the level of stress increases and the ability of the person to cope is diminished.

Christian educators and youth ministry leaders are continuously dealing with different types of crises in their work environment. Just a telephone call from a Sunday school teacher saying that she or he can not be present on Sunday creates a certain level of stress if the ministry team is not functioning well. If parents are complaining about a program or about any specific activity, stress is created. How much stress a person can handle at a particular time depends on how well equipped that person is and what support is available and utilized by him or her.

Let's look at the previous example. When the Christian educator receives that telephone call and knows that there are other people she or he can count on, the level of stress is reduced. On the other hand if there is nobody she or he can call at the last minute, it creates a stressful situation.

Sources of Stress

- How many hours a week do you work?
- Do you see your work growing and your time shrinking?
- Who is in charge? To whom do you report?
- What kind of relationships do you have with your colleagues?
- What are the things you do not like to do, but are expected of you?
- Do you feel well compensated for the work you do?
- Who cares about your work?
- What are the sources of support for your work?
- How do you balance your work with your family life and your leisure time?
- What support do you receive from your Conference, Association or national offices?
- How do you renew your skills?
- How do you adapt to or resist change?

These and many other questions can help determine if the situation you work in creates levels of stress that can lead to burnout. Stress is dynamic and can change from one moment to the other. However, burnout is a sense of failure that is more difficult to deal with because it radically diminishes coping mechanisms.

Burnout

- Are you frustrated with your ministry situation?
- Do you think you are at the end of your rope?
- Do you feel emotionally drained?
- Have you lost the passion for your educational or youth ministry?
- Do you care what happens to the participants?
- Are you having problems relating to other people?
- Do you feel everybody blames you for what is wrong and nobody recognizes what is right?
- When you wake up in the morning, do you dread going to work?
- Do you feel that you are pounding your head against the wall?
- Has your health been affected?

If you answered yes to two or more of these questions, you are a candidate for burnout. But this does not necessarily mean you are at the end of your rope. There is hope.

Steps for Dealing with Stress and Burnout

- Take a break. Create distance between yourself and the situation. Take time for spiritual renewal through prayer and biblical reflection.
- Explore and identify the situations creating stress. Try to boil down the problem to just the specifics. What is going on? What is the real problem or situation? Break down the problem into its parts.
- What resources do you have available to help you deal with the particular problem? Consider personal strengths, a problem solving process, and communication skills.
- Identify the problem or situation. Define all the possible alternatives, evaluate the alternatives and choose the best options, and act on them.
- Celebrate the value of personal relationships and the support network you have. Take time to seek support and other points of view. Contact your Association, Conference or national office for networking and support, particularly the MA Conference Christian Education/Youth Ministry Communities of Practice (<https://www.macucc.org/cecop>). Your Association of United Church Educators Regional Representative is also a good source of support (www.AUCE-UCC.org).
- One of the strengths of human beings is to learn by our mistakes or our challenges. Take time to articulate in writing what you have learned. These learnings can be helpful in a future situation.
- God will not abandon you. Pray. God will provide you with the peace, patience, and endurance to work through those situations that create stress and burnout in ministry.

Resignation or Dismissal

You love what you do. You love being a Christian educator or youth ministry leader. However there are times when a person needs to move on, and there are times when a church needs to move in a different direction. Separation can take two different forms — one is resignation from the position; the other is termination by the employer. Each one requires a different approach.

Resignation

Resignation is considered a voluntary action. Changes in personal circumstances, the discovery of incompatibilities with the persons you work with, or marked theological differences that make you uncomfortable could all be issues leading to your resignation.

The issue of separation is a stressful one to deal with, even if you are resigning on good terms. You have developed special relationships with people in the congregation, staff, children, youth, and adults. What should you do?

Create opportunities to express your feelings to those who will be missed. Provide some kind of closing, perhaps during a worship service, or the church may want to have a special reception for you. An Exit Interview (see pg. 59) is a process that many churches find helpful for allowing each party to share thoughts and learnings, as well as joys at the close of your time together. Events like this help in the separation process for all concerned. Once you leave a position, ethics requires you to respect the church's new beginning without you.

If resignation is provoked by particular situations in the work environment, and you feel that the best way out is by resigning, you should be honest. Learn from your experience. It may be time to make an assessment of yourself and set new goals.

Dismissal

The other type of separation is dismissal by your employer. This type of separation creates high levels of stress for all involved.

Questions to assess your situation:

- Were there any early signs that termination might happen? Did your evaluation show possible signs of dismissal?
- Was there an unusual amount of criticism about you and your work? If so, how did you respond?
- Were your relationships with other staff members deteriorating?
- Were there major theological or philosophical differences between you and the congregation and/or the staff?
- Was the church cutting staff because of financial support or budgetary losses?
- Do you feel the dismissal was unfair, or you have been mistreated?

Dealing With Reality

Responding to some of these questions may help you put reality in perspective. Do not jump immediately to conclusions before you have examined the total context of the situation. Try to get some responses from the pastor, your supervisor, the education committee or the church board. An Exit Interview (see the following pages) with church representatives can be helpful to you and the church.

Face Your Feelings

Whenever dismissal occurs there are a lot of feelings on both sides. You may feel anger, bitterness, guilt, confusion, loss of identity and low self-esteem. Remember this type of news creates imbalance in your life and emotions need to be addressed in a healthy manner. Remember to be intentional in retaining your professional demeanor.

An unexpected dismissal can create financial setbacks, loss of health insurance, separation from loved ones, and can threaten your personal stability in many different ways. Refer to your contract. What does it say about termination? Does it guarantee any type of compensation in such cases or continuation on the health insurance for a reasonable time? Be sure to check if you are eligible for unemployment.

An Ethical and Professional Response

You will need to maintain a professional attitude when interacting with your peers, colleagues, and the people in your congregation after your departure. Realize that, like you, the congregation needs to move forward, and any disruptive conversations or actions that arise out of unresolved anger or stress will not be helpful for either party. The Massachusetts Conference has staff members who can help you work through any pain as well as offer guidance in working through issues that you or the congregation may need to address. (If you are ordained, your Committee On Ministry can help in this way.)

After your final day of employment, it is customary, and wise, to discontinue contact with the members of the congregation. This will help them to make a smooth transition to a new Christian education/youth ministry staff person. If you are a member of the congregation you served, you will need to have discussions with the pastor and church leadership as to how you will continue to function as member, particularly when a new Christian education/youth ministry staff person is hired. As difficult as this could be, it may be possible that both parties will determine that you seek membership in another church. In either case, speaking the truth in love will be the best course of action, followed by a decision or compromise that will best serve the Church.

Planning Your Future

Your next step is to take responsibility over your life. Life must continue. This is not the end of the world, although it might seem like it to you now. These are some of the steps you can take:

- Pray
- Do something good for yourself.
- Make an assessment of yourself and your personal resources.
- Set continuing education goals, if needed.
- Find support from people doing the same type of ministry.
- Do not let your bitterness sever relationships with people closest to you.
- Take steps to promote your spiritual growth.
- Prepare new goals for your ministry and your life.
- Update your resume or Ministerial Profile.
- Develop a network leading to your next position.
- Try to learn the most you can from this temporary setback.
- Trust God. Trust in the One that can lead you forward.

Exit Interview

A framework for a Christian education/formation staff member

This may be revised or adapted to your individual circumstances and church context as necessary. Remember that an exit interview is a time for mutual reflection, not evaluation or a time to emphasize negative experiences. Yet it may be helpful to the church to hear the departing individual speak honestly and openly about challenges both professional and personal in nature without judgment.

It is recommended that two or three gather to listen and reflect. It would be important for the Chair or representatives of the Christian Education Committee or Board and either Personnel or Pastoral Relations Board or Committee to be present, as well as an individual of the departing staff member's choosing — invited for support and to listen in.

Opening Prayer and Candle Lighting 5 minutes

Moments of Reflection 20 minutes (Choose 3-5)

1. Who or what has blessed your ministry here?
2. What were the greatest joys or high points in this work?
3. What were the greatest challenges or low points in this work?
4. How have you known God's presence in this work/ministry?
5. What do you celebrate about your work or what gave you great satisfaction?
6. Is there an accomplishment you'd place first on your resume or profile?

Moments of Review 20 minutes (Choose 4-6)

1. What enhanced working relationships here?
(With staff, committee members, etc.)
2. What hindered working relationships here?
(With staff, committee members, etc.)
3. Which job responsibility was most rewarding? (In what way or why?)
4. Which job responsibility was most difficult? (In what way or why?)
5. Do you have recommendations for the scope of this work to make to the congregation?
6. Would you add/delete any tasks or responsibilities?
7. Was the work adequately resourced and supported?
8. What, if any, changes or improvements would you recommend that might be particularly helpful to the person that will be hired as the next Christian educator/youth ministry leader?

Closing Prayers 5 minutes

Safe Conduct Resources



You must be holy in every aspect of your lives, just as the one who called you is holy.

1 Peter 1:15

Why do we have SafeConduct™ or Safe Church Policies?

It's not to avoid law suits, although that is an offshoot of having a plan. We do it because it is the right thing to do theologically and ethically.

Safe Conduct/Safe Church and mandating reporting covers not only children and youth, it also extends to the elderly, as well as people with disabilities.

Even though much has changed over the past fifteen years, the sexual exploitation of people under the age of 18 remains a significant problem. Sadly the number of unreported cases far surpasses those that are reported.

Legally the sexual exploitation of children is viewed as the use and abuse of power and as a paid staff member or unpaid volunteer who works with people under the age of 18, you are a mandated reporter, and it is your responsibility to ensure that the people in your church who have contact with children are qualified to work with children. If you have knowledge of abuse, and you remain silent, you are viewed as an accomplice and complicit in the abuse. As a mandated reporter, if you fail to submit required oral and written reports you can be fined up to \$1000. If you willfully fail to report an incident of abuse or neglect that results in bodily injury or death of a child, you can be punished by a fine up to \$5000 and 2 ½ years in jail.

All that said, the legal system's remedy is very limited and relegated to monitoring. It can never compensate a child for the loss of trust and/or faith that they suffer. Only the church has the potential to do that.

We have worked with many churches across the Massachusetts Conference. It is most disconcerting when a church pushes back and says "We don't need a policy." "It will never happen here." "We're a small community church; everyone knows everybody." Even if that is true — and believe me, we pray it never happens in your church, or any church — there is someone in your congregation that has suffered abuse somewhere in their lifetime. By ensuring that your church is truly a safe church, that child or adult may feel safe enough, they may trust enough, to tell you because they know you care and will do something about it. Your church can be a safe refuge for children.

The Massachusetts Conference website, www.macucc.org, has a wealth of resources available on the Safe Church and Safe Conduct Ministry page. Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have.

Ellie Richardson,

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SafeConduct™ – Safe Church Resources

UCC Insurance Board:

SafeConduct™ Workbench

<https://www.insuranceboard.org/safety-resources/safeconduct-workbench/>

The Workbench includes helpful *free* resources for UCC churches, whether or not the UCC Insurance Board is their carrier.

Resources include: A self-assessment tool to evaluate your current policy
A policy template to help create a *SafeConduct*™ policy for your church

An Administrator Guide that explains where and how you can access free training modules for your church. It also provides pricing information for performing national background checks.

MA Department of Criminal Justice Information Services (DCJIS):

iCORI

<https://www.mass.gov/criminal-record-check-services>

This link provides information on how to register your organization to perform criminal background checks in Massachusetts. It also links to CORI training modules. This is a free service.

iCORI training module

<https://www.mass.gov/files/2017-07/icori-policy-trainings-organizations.pdf>

Model CORI Policy

<http://www.mass.gov/eopss/docs/chsb/dcjis-model-cori-policy-may-2012.pdf>

MACUCC iCORI webpage

<https://www.macucc.org/cori>

National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW):

SORI

<https://www.nsopw.gov/en>

This link allows a national search of public information regarding the presence and location of sex offenders. There are also links to training resources.

This is a free service.

Massachusetts Department of Children and Families:

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting: a Guide for Mandated Reporters

<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/DCF/can-mandated-reporters-guide.pdf>

An excellent resource that provides information on who, how, and where to report.

Federal Emergency Management Agency

FEMA Guide for Developing High Quality Emergency Operations Plans for Houses of Worship

<https://cdn.fedweb.org/fed-91/2/DHS%2520Guide%25201.pdf?v=1416511478>

An excellent resource for developing safety plans for natural disasters and active shooter situations.

For our recommendations of books, resources, websites, blogs, curriculum materials, and workshops/conferences on youth ministry, visit

www.macucc.org/youthministry

What matters to you matters to us
Massachusetts
Conference churches have always worked for social justice. From founding the first public schools to ordaining the first African-American pastor.

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Youth Ministry

SAVE THE DATE!
New England Youth Environmental Justice Summit
April 7, 2018 - 9 AM-4 PM
Worcester, MA

Click here to download the flyer.
Click here to register.

ERVE 2018 is a 4-day event that will grow your spirit through workshops, service, worship, and recreation. The estimated cost to date is \$375 per person plus \$100 for R/MA/CT bus transportation. Please [pre-register here](#) to help us plan for transportation. Print & post the ERVE 2018 flier at your church! Click here for details specific to the MA, CT, & RI Conferences including transportation. Contact Debbie Gline Allen, MACUCC Christian Education and Youth Ministry Consultant, with your specific questions.

IFYI 2018 Summer Fellowship

Click here for more information about the Interfaith Youth Initiative's 2018 Summer Fellowship August 1-7 at Brandeis University for teens of all faith backgrounds, ages 16-19

Education for Effective Youth Ministry

- Faith Formation, Christian Education & Youth Ministry
- Advent, Christmas and Epiphany
- Baptism and Communion Resources
- Bibles and Septuagint Books for Children
- Certification Programs for Christian Educators & Faith Formation Classes For All
- Communities of Practice for Christian Educators & Youth Ministry Leaders
- Confirmation Program Resources
- Confirmation retreats
- Copyright information for churches who show videos and DVDs
- Curriculum Resources
- Daily Lectionary
- Education for Effective Youth Ministry (EYEM)
- Educational Ministries Resources
- Intergenerational Worship & Ministry
- Lent & Easter Resources
- Outdoor Ministries
- Racial Justice Resources for Families
- Resource Center Media Lending Library
- Rethinking Sunday School
- Safe Church and Safe Conduct Ministry
- Spirituality Resources
- Vacation Bible School Resources
- Webinars
- Youth Ministry