



Coming of Age Mentorship Overview

At Unity Church–Unitarian, ninth graders are invited to participate in Coming of Age, our faith’s “rite of passage” to becoming a young adult on a free and responsible search for truth. Teens deepen their Unitarian Universalist identity and examine the impact of their values on their lives. A highlight of the experience is the opportunity for youth to connect with caring, committed adult “mentors” as they work through the process of clarifying and articulating their spiritual beliefs. Adults who mentor often experience a spiritual deepening of their own as they watch their young friend come of age.

What do mentors do? Mentors are not asked to fly solo; we offer structured activities to provide direction and support. Events include attending worship services throughout the process with your youth, discussing the theological topics raised in the teens’ class, experiencing a “Sacred Spaces” spiritual practice event at the church, helping youth reflect about and create their credo, and witnessing the teens share their credo statement in the joyful ceremony that concludes the course. Many mentors also take the initiative to connect with their youth outside of structured church events by going out for dinner or dessert or coffee, taking a walk together, having a phone conversation, and so on, at the discretion of the youth’s family. There is also an expectation that they together perform a service activity to the church and/or its community partners.

The focus of this program’s mentorship is on exploring spirituality together, not on imparting adult wisdom. Youth tell us it is helpful for them to have some one (who is not their parent) to talk with as they prepare their credo statement. Please know that the relationships formed in this mentorship program vary. Some youth and mentors become close and form lasting bonds beyond the program. Other relationships do not develop into enduring friendships, and we honor that reality. Friendship is not the goal of the program, but our youth are better off having another adult at this church that knows them and shows genuine interest in them.

What makes a good mentor? Mentors should be involved in the Unity Church community and be familiar with Unitarian Universalism. Mentorships are usually successful when mentors show interest in their youth without judgment, are willing to talk about their own spiritual journey, are honest, sincere, present, punctual, and fun-loving. There is a commitment of time and energy involved in mentoring. It is important that mentors are aware of this and are able to make the commitment wholeheartedly. Please review the dates below; **if you know that you will have a conflict with these dates, this is not the right commitment for you at this time.** The quality of the relationship that a youth and mentor develop depends heavily on the mentor’s availability and his or her engagement in the process.

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Important Dates for Mentors

Mentor Orientation	Thursday, September 4, 2014
COA Opening Retreat	Saturday, September 27, 2014
Sacred Spaces Potluck (<i>tentative</i>)	Friday, January 23, 2015
Coming of Age Dinner & Ceremony	Saturday, April 25, 2015
Coming of Age Sunday Service	Sunday, April 26, 2015
4:30 pm Sunday Worship Services	Four services throughout the year TBD

*Other meetings for Mentor support and spiritual deepening will be offered throughout the year.
These dates will be given as the year begins.*

Mentors are not assigned; they are chosen by teens and their families. However, families can and should ask for assistance in finding an appropriate mentor; and final approval of Mentor choice will be made by RE. Parents of other ninth graders concurrently in COA generally should not be considered as mentors.

Serving as a mentor can be one of the most personally fulfilling and enriching opportunities one can find in this spiritual community. Church members who are interested in being recommended for mentorship should contact Drew at the church office.

Thank you for considering mentorship as a part of your ministry to Unity's youth.

If you have any questions please contact:

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