



# Faithful Conversations Workshop

Program for Children & Youth

**Saturday, April 27**  
**10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**  
**Agenda & Scribe Notes**

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**Scribe Notes:** Numbered pages 1-10

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**Faithful Conversations Workshop  
Program for Children & Youth  
Saturday, April 27 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM**

**9:45–10:05 am Gathering (light refreshments, coffee & tea)**

**10:05 Welcome, Chalice-Lighting, Introductions**

**10:15 Team Project 1: Commonalities in Q1 Experiences (15 minutes)**

Question 1 asks for positive experiences that made participants feel valued when they were youth. What aspects of these experiences seem common to most? List 6 (more or less as seems appropriate to your group).

**10:30 Team Project 2: Most Important Values in Q6 (15 minutes)**

Question 6 asks what values participants hope our youth will take with them into adulthood. There are many! List 6 (or more or less as seems appropriate to your group).

**10:45 Sharing (15 minutes)**

**11:00 Team Project 3: Most Important Things Adults Can Do Qs 7-8 (30 min)**

Questions 7-8 both asked *what adults can do* to nurture the values they'd like youth to take into adulthood. Q7 were individual responses and Q8 were group responses. Start with responses to Q8, then supplement with responses to Q7, to discern what might be the most important things. List 6 (or more or less as seems appropriate to your group).

**11:30 Group Discussion & Discernment (30 min)**

**12:00 Team Project 4: What Else? Qs 2-3 & 10; 4-5 (20 minutes)**

**A Group:** Questions 2-3 ask what participants appreciate most and what they long for; Q10 asks for parting thoughts. Do these responses support or alter the conclusions your group has developed so far? What might we need to change? List.

**B Group:** Questions 4-5 ask the role of the children and youth in the Fellowship and the Fellowship's responsibility to the children & youth. Do these responses support or alter the conclusions your group has developed so far? What might we need to change? List.

**12:20 Group Discussion & Discernment (30 min)**

**12:50 Wrap-Up & Closing Words**

Question 1	Question 2	Question 3
What story do you recall from your childhood that made you feel connected and valued by a congregation or similar community?]	When I think about the program for the children and youth of UUFHC, I appreciate:	When I think about the programs for the children and youth of UUFHC, I long for:
I lived next to little Catholic Church, huge statue of Mary. Friend next door – we would run to field, look at Virgin statue, felt everything was good. We wanted to be nuns. Very spiritual – didn't want to be Roman Catholic when grew up.	That it exists in this environment – open minds to the world, brings joy.	The program to feel more sustainable, not dependent on staff member
Attended UUFHC youth sleepover. Another member's brother had died – all sat together and drank coffee and talked all night about the brother and how everyone felt. Amazing community experience	That the community stepped up to support children/program	For youth to understand theology of UUism
Went to/lived in very R.C. town with a Jewish last name – felt very ostracized – joined debate league in another county – found my community.	Absolute commitment of the DFF	More kids. I think it's good to have more to bounce ideas off each other, they'd be more comfortable pos for the community, more family.
Different question to respond to – tend to feel a part of most groups I am in. For some reason people accept/respect me from beginning. When I joined, people ready to accept me – growing up R.C. Mostly felt connected and a part of things when I was playing sports.	Rapport between director and kids and how that shows up in how kids participate	Know history, people who came before, know where you came from to know where you're going
I was an altar server and later a lector at church	Jen Blosser's engagement with the kids	A larger group of kids
I participated in a hand bell choir	The connection it fosters with the congregation	Clarity around curriculum and objectives shared throughout the congregation
Choir participation	Intergenerational engagement	Greater array of issues engaged (LGBTQ seems to dominate the focus)
My connections to friends and their families growing up both at school and in the neighborhood	Various opportunities for the kids to engage in the community such as the Sharing Table and field trips through the Building Bridges/Neighboring Faiths curriculum	More service opportunities and more voices for our kids to hear (they tune out parents after awhile)
At school, a special relationship with a teacher who both heard and understood me	The kids's sense of empowerment and the safe space to be themselves	Rituals of comfort/more finding joy in the world as it is (celebrate what's good)
Raised in the Lutheran Church; the youth group working together to cook a meal	Director Jenn is extremely welcoming and energetic	Some connectivity to and a better understanding of the program
Christian school – discussions regarding race provided a first awareness of segregation; had the opportunity to speak to a high school assembly – felt empowered	Not being informed about the current program	Same--some connectivity to and a better understanding of the program
Catholic Church (strict) – the Christmas mass was a good connection with family and friends	Was asked to speak at RE to 15 children, only 1 was there. The program is different but parents seem to be responding well	Knowing what children are doing and seeing them involved in the congregation; understanding how the program works

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What story do you recall from your childhood that made you feel connected and valued by a congregation or similar community?]	When I think about the program for the children and youth of UUFHC, I appreciate:	When I think about the programs for the children and youth of UUFHC, I long for:
In my family, everyone listened to opinions - felt I had value	Overall, I can appreciate this fellowship takes youth seriously	More opportunities for connection i.e. singing children out to RE at services
Strict church with lots of abuse – felt a connection to other students; were very protective of each other	Not sure what is in the program today or how it is structured	More children in the program
I had rheumatic fever and my classmates supported me	Teaching about other religions – expanding minds	More music making from our children and youth
I sang a solo in church	Diversity	More kids – a large RE program
Girl Scout troop	Everyone is accepted – free to be themselves	Kids getting together for fun activities outside of RE
Sunday School	Commitment to loving our kids and being there for them	Guidance for life through UU Principles
Second grade teacher, who taught through music	Having children in the service – at least for the first half	Clearer understanding of what RE is all about also engaging activities with age peers
Literal breaking of bread by congregation when visiting friend's Methodist Church	Choices of the rooms back there, particularly the calm one, though I can't remember any of the room names	Opportunities for children and youth to exhibit service in broader community
Small country church provided home-made gifts while in hospital, and physical stuffed animal lended support to member and to member's family	My son is cared for and supported despite his family structure. He doesn't need to explain	Structure patterned after past programs and after what I see on UUA website
I was an Altar Boy, given responsibilities and performed services and tasks for the church	Offers children the opportunity to gain religious literacy	A program that both serves the kid that's been attending for years and the newcomer
Shared experiences with youth is when I felt valued and connected to the church.	The safe space provided to them	Cohesiveness and cooperation amongst the community regarding program
Participating in a monthly prayer group as a youth with children and adults. I was allowed to sing at the meeting	The sense of extended family provided to the parents, children, and youth by the entire fellowship	Increased inter-generational interactions
Serving as a teen member of a pastor search committee made me feel valued as I was participating with all adults.	Their participation and visibility during worship	Cohesiveness, support, and trust from community for children and youth program
Helping with social justice activities that made me feel valued by the community	The degree to which the congregation honors and respects their journey	Mechanisms for involvement without having to sacrifice personal and previous congregational experiences

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I was given an opportunity to be heard	The opportunity to be exposed to the UU values at an early age	Relevancy for the children and families who are participating now
I was encouraged to engage in social justice activities and it made me feel relevant and hopeful	We are showing the youth the values we share through our own actions	Youth to remember what they learned here fondly and value the experience throughout their lives
When you are with other people who believe the same things. You feel safe	Youth explore different traditions and values than what they already know	Connections to be created between congregants, youth, and their families
I recall the first time I was included in a Catholic service as a youth member. It made me feel like I was important to the adults	Open-mindedness and encouragement to think on their own	More volunteers to participate in the delivery of youth programming
When I was young I told my parents about my confusion over religion and was affirmed when my mother said that we all feel this way	Facilitators in the education space contribute ideas to the youth education program	Transparency in programming. A list of programming topics and content to be available to everyone.
I participated in a project building race cars as a team. The value was in partnering with older youth who made me feel respected	I am not involved so I can't say I know enough to answer this	What we used to do
My first Communion in the Catholic church made me feel a like a valued member of a religious group	The effort that has gone into our current programming	There is a gap between the elders and the children these days. I long for a connection to be made between the groups that closes this gap
My Confirmation in the Catholic church at 12 years old made me feel included in the church congregation as a full member	Impressed with the youth and how they handle themselves when they take leadership roles. I enjoyed their leading the service recently.	Youth development into adults who have memorable UU experiences and live the UU life
Working with a high school student [and] feeling picked to participate in the church service	Kids growing up in community versus a set of religious beliefs	The teaching of UU principles
	I feel ignorant about the substance of the programming, but I am glad it's here	Learning about other religious institutions
	The Coming of Age program	To see the program grow and attract new parents
	The youths's freedom of the pulpit	To return to a time when the children started the service with everyone and then the adults sang them out to faith formation
	I have no familiarity with the program but grateful that our youth have the opportunity to experience the curriculum	Children have input into how we implement programs---perhaps conduct exit interviews
	I feel uninformed about the program but wish it was a greater part of the new member program	More information about the youth programs

Question 4	Question 5
In a few words, say what role children and youth should have within the Fellowship	In a few words, say what the Fellowship's responsibility is to children and youth
They bring life, joy. They are the future. They carry on. When they come, they bring a sense of wonder and joy.	Support their individuality, support their journey, also be holistic, support as a family
Whatever they want their role to be we should make that. Leave the door open.	Provide safe space to grow, educate about other world faiths, having a working knowledge of Christianity since in 2024, Christianity is used for negative things
Active – equal to adults – they should not be subordinate. They should have the same ownership as the adults in all things	Just because we've always done things a certain way doesn't make it right. We have to be willing to get out of the way.
Reason for having youth program. They are fellow learners. Some kids participate more because they want to.	Support them, space, finance, people to work with them. Make them feel valued.
Integrate into the service – the rhythm of beginning service together, story time, singing to class	Provide safe space, a sense of belonging and partnership
Inspiration	Safe space, to model positive behavior
Age appropriate engagement, possibly a kids choir	Physical safety as well as emotional safety also UU values education
Visible and active roles, light chalice, story of all ages, opportunity to stay in service, greeter/order of service providers	Hold space for spiritual exploration
Visible roles – let them rise to occasions and take ownership over something. Involve in committees	Give them education and experiences that parents may not be able to provide (example given of visiting other churches).
Only expectation should be that they are "sponges".	A safe and welcoming environment
Be themselves; feel safe in the environment; just to be	Interaction with children of other faiths
Opportunity to express their opinions	A safe environment; teach them values

Question 4	Question 5
In a few words, say what role children and youth should have within the Fellowship	In a few words, say what the Fellowship's responsibility is to children and youth
Whatever they're interested in doing	We need to be good role models
Not necessarily expectations but given the opportunity for roles like lighting the chalice	Safe space/caring adults
Learning to be part of the Fellowship – interacting with adults	Give them principles they'll use for the rest of their lives
Be in first part of service	Safety first. Respect their individuality
Connected to the rest of the congregation	Children should be visible
Children coming up front during service/saying their names (facilitate knowing the kids)	Values to carry forward into life
No comment	No comment
Integrated and in sync with adult programs; parallel topics in adult worship service and in RE	To set up an appropriate container and curriculum that is aligned with UU principles and values.
Education and performing service in broader community and be participants in worship service. In other words, they should contribute	Encouraging
Learners who react to what we give them, but who do not generally lead the way	To provide physical and emotional safety approaching a feeling of home, as well as to arm them with knowledge that will help them cope with life's spiritual challenges
Bring joy	[Be a] living model of our UU beliefs
Provide relevance and perspective	Provide physical and emotional safe space and constructive examples of practicing UU principles
Individual choices with our support and invitations to be involved.	Practice what we teach/preach as UU's by our sides
Their presence reminds us that nothing should be static	Model what it means to be a UU and live it

Question 4	Question 5
In a few words, say what role children and youth should have within the Fellowship	In a few words, say what the Fellowship's responsibility is to children and youth
Learn and practice the UU values and principles side by side with congregants	Provide them the tools needed to deal with life's frustrations and challenges. Serve as a touchstone to return to
An active learning role. Learn from programming and then apply it through fellowship initiatives	Guide the youth as they grow into good people with a set of basic values
The youth could participate more in weekly services. They may become junior members of the worship committee or deliver the entire service frequently.	Provide an education
Their role is to be part of the congregation and not separate.	Let children know they are respected and valued just the way they are
Place youth on committees to participate in services [greeters, distribute programs, light the chalice, etc.]	We need to be inclusive and purposeful in how we include the youth in our fellowship
Youth involved in more aspects of the fellowship	To bridge the gap between youth and adults. We need to make our children and youth feel included, wanted, and contributors. We do this through kindness and compassion.
They are an integral part of the congregation. They are hope. They are the future. They need more responsibility in our functions on a much higher level than being included in the service every once in a while.	Give them attention, get to know them, and respect them as fellow UU's
They are the future of our fellowship. They need more opportunities to engage in outreach and community engagement activities	Serve as guest speakers in Faith Formation and volunteer in the program
To be full members and participate as other members do. For example, they should be a part of every service and work on committees	Make our youth aware of our beliefs, practices, and traditions
Active engagement with the congregation as a whole	Model 7 principles to our youth
Active participation in our service	Provide information and answer questions as they travel their own religious journey
Contribute to the service	Encourage open-mindedness, kindness, and caring
Integration into all fellowship activities as is age appropriate	Share all facets and beliefs of UU life
Interconnectedness with all adults	Share our beliefs about God, Holy Spirit, etc. Introduce UU Christianity
Participation without burn-out	



Question 6 (Index Cards)	Question 7 (Index Cards)	Questions 8 (Discussion) & 9 (Sharing)	Question 10
List a few qualities you hope the youth in this Fellowship will carry with them into adulthood (index card or chat)	What are the top three things we adults can do to nurture these qualities in our children and youth	Small groups of 2-3: List what your group agrees are the top three things the Fellowship can do to nurture the qualities we hope they will take with them:	In a sentence or two, do you have an additional, parting thought?
Empathy, courage, gentleness, live the life of the spirit, willingness	Demonstrate respectful disagreement that doesn't seek to divide, create spaces for expression the way youth want it, show up	Give of time/show up, help develop/model right relationships, say thank you to them	There is obviously interest – it's something people care about. Look how many people stayed after church today to participate
Compassion, honesty, hope, empathy, feeling valued, their role in creating a better world	Provide opportunities for community service, nurture a sense of fellowship with our community and the world, encourage a life-long journey of discovery and learning	Model healthy relationship boundaries, behaviors, instill UU values, support with time/talent/resources (pledge)/show up	Need to ensure we are not adversarial – that we show that we have common goals – but it's not black/white, right/wrong, win/lose. We have to watch how we do this because the kids see and we are in opposition of what we want to teach.
Kindness, understanding of diverse community, finding their individual value, a sense of belonging in UU community	Relationship development, give of our time, say thank you to our children and youth	[Be a] role model in interactions with fellowship members and fellowship practices.	Gratitude
Curiosity/love of learning, ability to disagree with ideas while respecting others, understanding their place in the world	Resilience to handle hard things in life; Respect and honor for themselves/ kindness for others; honor for themselves/ kindness for others; Questioning mindset.	Talk about "hard" topics in the youth setting. Support them in "working out" their views and forming their own opinions on topics	Happiness with process
Honesty	Show kindness; care for them and love them as a human: let them see how we handle negative things in our lives – let them know when we feel the negatives in our lives	Accept ideas and be willing to discuss in a positive manner.	Need for memory touchstones, such as blessing of backpacks, bridging ceremony
Awareness of responsibilities as adults	Live our lives following these qualities	Be role models	Building value and belonging
Caring about other people	Show curiosity and hold our history	Respect and honor them as individuals	This process of asking for our opinions is great
Remembering UU values and 7 principles which enable their ability to question	Bring UU history to lessons in a way that's relevant to their lives: good stories of UUs of the past and present: when available, how UU children are making a difference	Coming of Age trip to Boston and Neighboring Faiths experience	Need to know more about faith formation - this hasn't been shared
Kindness; caring and loving for each person/empathy; strength to handle the negative things in life	Respect and honor their individuality; Listen to them; provide engaging programs so they will have a lot of great UU stuff in their memory banks	Select and pay for curriculum that promotes a pluralistic perspective both in terms of faiths as well as in terms of physical and emotional differences among people.	We need to be open minded – this is for the future
Empathy, trust, acceptance, kindness, concern for others, positive outlook	Compassion for others; Acceptance of differences; Recognition of our interdependence	Promote self-confidence with rituals and with a congregational culture of pride and acceptance of their UU faith.	Change is inevitable – ask me my opinion and give me opportunities to get involved
Tolerance, kindness, curiosity	Hold every member accountable; Model disagreement with compassion and respect; Practice community engagement	Alignment (generally) of adult worship service topics and themes AND providing these well in advance just like the monthly themes are published for adults	Why did it change?
UU Identity; knowledge of our rich history, how we as a denomination are growing and changing; accepting new ideas while keeping old ideas that still work	Listen without judgement; Practice understanding; Sharing joy	Model & Practice UU Values; Responsibility to Practice Self-Reflection; Increased Inter-generational Interactions	Teens used to do a project for the church (fire pit, banners, picnic tables) Kids need to be in age groups with appropriate curricula

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An open mind; a loving heart; kindness to all; curiosity; respect for others; a sense of fun; a sense of humor; Great listening skills	Model practicing UU values; Good listening skills; Self-reflection	Accountability for modeling UU values; Promoting joy and positive well-being; Create opportunities for listening to one another	What are the statistics on UU congregations: How many use standardized curricula vs something else?
Empathy, Resilience, Wonder, Listening	Teach practices for grounding and peace; Model UU practices; Share joy	Experience joy together; Create inter-generational experiences to promote listening to one another; Model the practice of UU values	What are we doing in RE? We need to be able to explain it to others who may be interested. (Note: several people expressed reluctance to recommend our RE program to neighbors/friends at this time)
Inherent dignity and worth of all, Love, Taking Action	Demonstrate service	Provide education (diversity and leadership); Actively demonstrate or model our UU values; Provide meaningful inclusion of the youth in worship services	It would be interesting to involve the youth in the Faithful Conversation process
Acceptance, patience, trust, don't have to think alike to love alike, action	Model acceptance	[Create] opportunities to practice what we believe; [Provide] education about the differences in people and diversity; Treat youth with kindness and compassion	Is our summer camp just ours or a standardized/shared program?
Empathy, resilience, wonder, listening, advocacy, & patience	Talk/explore different faiths with them	Model behavior; Provide opportunities to practice beliefs	Loves the summer camp
Fairness, justice, being grounded, sense of self	Give them room to grow and learn	Engage respectfully; Support youth programs	Loves the offer of room choices, particularly calm room for those who need it
Resilience	Be available with our experience		We have to teach kids some self control and expect them to sit down and close their mouths and listen, regardless of their mood or fancy
Discernment	Answer the call when RE program requests help		We need to help our children and youth understand that as we engage in social justice, that they understand life's challenges as well as blessings. Let them know they are going to be alright. Social justice doesn't have to be a heavy burden
Self-trust	Give them curriculum rich with stories allowing them to live other lives besides their own		We have a gap in our programs for youth and children in that there are no rituals and standards that serve as tools for resilience
Sociological Imagination (see C. Wright Mills)	Rituals of affirmation both large and small		We are seeking rituals for refuge and resilience
Teamwork	The study of world religions (which is not offered in Public Schools)		We need to support our families and not just the children and youth
Confidence in the future	Keep our faith formation director; Involve youth in all congregational activities; Educate adults about what youth think of them		It takes a village and we all have responsibility for supporting and nurturing our youth
Accepting of mental and physical differences	Education; Engage in discussions; Be active examples of UUs		Optimistic about the future. This process includes the community and seems fair.
Openness to learning and challenges	Listen to youths' ideas; Accept them and their diverse ways of worship; Seek out youth volunteers for programming events.		This process should be conducted with the youth in their own groups

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Service	Practice what we preach; Show love for all; Treat youth with kindness and compassion		I feel frustrated. We could have said the same things we said today 20 years ago, but what programming we have now is just not working
Acceptance of people of different faiths	[Create] opportunities to be engaged in the world; Help them with introspection and growth into UU's; Trust their vision		I wonder about the fellowship's vision and goals for children and youth; I think our students should visit other denominations and participate in interfaith activities; The children and youth need to share their perspectives on all of this.
Constant spiritual exploration of their own	Facilitate but don't dictate; Live a culture of embracing all differences; Practice what we believe in together		I lack general knowledge and awareness about youth programming
Open-mindedness; Kindness; Acceptance of others	Model behavior; Provide opportunities to practice beliefs		I want to know the goals of the program
Openness to diversity; Ability to seek and articulate their thoughts; Kindness and empathy	Engage respectfully; Support youth programs		I want to know the curriculum
Empathetic; Courageous; Effective Leaders			
Open-mindedness; Respect; Serenity			
Compassion; Kindness; Empathy			The children should work within their age groups and not all together
Adaptation; Embrace less fortunate people; Engagement			I wonder how we can volunteer
Communication; Resilience; Kindness			
Courage; Critical thinking; Kindness			
Open-mindedness; Worthiness; Resilience			

# Faithful Conversations Question 11

## How Do You Feel?

