

Thriving in Unity 2.0

Benchmark 6: Youth and Family Ministry (YFM) Program Assessment

This assessment is divided into several sections. To complete this benchmark, have your assessment team answer the following questions, take the required action steps (if any), and present the outcome of the assessment to the board of trustees. If you do not have a YFM, please share your thoughts about beginning a program on a separate sheet and send it in with the benchmark tracking sheet.

Glossary of terms used in this assessment:

Uniteens: ministry for middle school-age youth, usually 11 – 13 yrs of age.

YFM: youth and family ministry

YOU: Youth of Unity a ministry for high school ages, usually 14 – 18.

Planning and Support

Item	Yes	No	Required Action
Do you have a copy of the Youth and Family Ministry Guide? (Available at unity.org —click shop, click on ministry supplies, then ministry, and then manuals)			Order for your ministry #BA6010 (\$36.95 wholesale price for churches)
Are you signed up to receive the online quarterly publication, <i>Education Links</i> ? www.unity.org/el			Sign up for this free resource
Are you signed up to receive the online bi-monthly update, E-Links? www.unity.org/enews			Sign up for this free resource
Do you know the names and contact information for your Regional Education Consultants and your International Youth Coordinators?			Get information and connect
Have you visited the Youth and Family web pages on the joint Unity website?			Review website offerings

Programming

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is there a clear vision statement for the YFM that is shared by the church leadership?			
Is the mission and purpose statement of the YFM clearly articulated?			
Is the YFM program funded appropriately for the organization's mission?			
Does the YFM have a budget?			
Is the budget reviewed by the board of trustees and minister?			
Are the YFM activities scheduled on the church calendar?			
Do the YFM coordinator and minister meet regularly?			
Does the YFM coordinator communicate to parents and the congregation?			
Do you have family events and/or parenting classes?			

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Curriculum

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is the Living Curriculum philosophy being used? (See unity.org for a description of the Living Curriculum philosophy.)			
Have you chosen a curriculum, or curricula, that reflect your church's mission and vision?			
Does each curriculum utilize multiple intelligences?			
Is each curriculum used age-appropriate?			
Does it engage both boys and girls?			
Does it demonstrate Unity principles?			
Does it honor family diversity?			
Is the curriculum teacher-friendly?			
Does it utilize supplies that are easily acquired and within the budget?			
Do you have special holiday lessons and activities?			

Environment for welcoming families

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is the YFM easy to find on the church's website?			
Are there easy-to-read signs clearly marking the church entrance and children's ministry areas?			
Is the YFM ministry area easy to find in the church?			
Are greeters informed and helpful in directing families to the YFM area?			
Are printed materials containing information about YFM ministry easily accessible?			
Are the classrooms labeled?			
Are classrooms in reasonably close proximity to each other?			
Are classrooms in reasonably close proximity to the sanctuary?			
Are visitors able to identify the YFM ministry director, youth minister, or other designated staff members?			
Are visiting children welcomed and identified as visitors in each classroom?			
Is the sign-in area prepared (materials available for each event)?			
Is parent contact information on file?			
Is snack information clearly posted?			

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Sunday morning classrooms

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are the classrooms ready 15 minutes before service time?			
Is there a pre-session activity?			
Are the teachers ready to receive students 15 minutes before service time?			
Have they prepared a lesson ahead of time?			
Is there a prayer time for teachers and volunteers before each church service?			
Is there a child's prayer request form?			
Is a prayer chaplain available?			
Is there a time of prayer/meditation in each class?			
Is there a class routine that helps give structure to the hour?			
Is there consistent program implementation?			
Is there a planned opening for each session?			
Is music incorporated?			
Does it include time for the youth to connect?			
Are heart agreements used?			
Are the heart agreements current?			
Did the youth help create them?			
Have the youth and teachers signed the heart agreements?			
Do the teachers have the lesson supplies they need?			
Are the supplies organized and easy to find?			
Are old supplies recycled or discarded?			
Are the children and teens actively engaged in their classes?			
Do teachers check to determine if the youth understand the lesson and its practical life application?			

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Uniteens (11 - 13 years)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have a copy of the Uniteen Program Guide?			
Have the Uniteen sponsors read the guide?			
Do the Uniteens attend local and/or regional Uniteen retreats?			
Is there a procedure for event paper work to be completed and processed?			
Is participation in service projects available and encouraged?			
Do you have a policy about Uniteen fundraisers?			
Are the current fundraisers working?			
Do the Uniteens have the funds to do the activities they desire?			
Are there social events in addition to the regional retreats?			
Do you have a Rites of Passage program for graduating Uniteens?			

YOU (Youth of Unity 14 - 18 years)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have a copy of the Youth Of Unity Handbook?			
Have the YOU sponsors read the handbook?			
Do the YOUers attend regional rallies and international YOU events?			
Is there a procedure for event paper work to be completed and processed?			
Is participation in service projects available and encouraged?			
Do you have a policy about YOU fundraisers?			
Are the current fundraisers working?			
Do the YOUers have the funds to do the activities they desire?			
Are there social events in addition to the regional retreats?			
Do the youth take appropriate levels of leadership both in and out of the classroom?			
Is there a teen representative on the board?			
Is there a process for teens to ask questions and give input to the board?			
Is there a process in place for the next level of participation in the ministry for graduating YOUers?			

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Intergenerational Activities

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are programs in place that encourage and support interaction of congregants of all ages?			
Are there recurring intergenerational activities that happen with intention?			
Are there times for intergenerational play (i.e.: picnics, plays, family activities and outings?)			

Staffing/Volunteers

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Is there a list describing all YFM volunteer ministry positions available?			
Are the positions regularly evaluated and updated?			
Do volunteer descriptions include what is expected of the volunteer and how long they will serve in that position?			
Are people are given an accurate picture of how much time and effort it will take to fulfill the requirements of the position they are being recruited for?			
Do the YFM volunteers understand how their work contributes to the mission of the church?			
Is there sufficient staff? Are all the positions filled?			
Are personal invitations extended to prospective YFM volunteers?			
Is there an application process used and followed consistently?			
Are references checked and documented?			
Are background checks run on all volunteers and staff working with children and updated every 2-3 years?			
Is there an established procedure for conducting one-on-one interview with potential volunteers?			
Is a volunteer orientation and training program in place?			
Do you provide volunteers with a written handbook regarding the policies and procedures?			
Is sacred safety training available for YFM volunteers?			
Do volunteers understand how your church defines and practices confidentiality and privacy?			

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Staffing/Volunteers (cont.)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do YFM volunteers have an opportunity to “try out” a position before making a commitment to serve?			
Is there a current commitment statement for each team member on file?			
Is there a performance review process in place for volunteers?			
Are complaints or concerns about volunteers' behavior handled immediately?			
Are there written procedures for terminating volunteers?			

Training/Meetings/Development

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are meetings/trainings held on a regular basis?			
Are meetings organized? Engaging? Well attended?			
Are the teachers and minister kept up to date?			
Is the staff trained in YFM practices?			
Is the staff trained in Sacred Safety?			
Is the staff trained in how to use the Bible?			
Is the staff trained in multiple intelligences?			
Is the staff trained in Unity teachings?			
Is the staff trained in first aid procedures?			
Is the training current?			
Is there a planned, intentional calendar of group recognition events and/or a system for recognizing volunteers individually in place?			
Do volunteers have someone available to encourage and assist them in developing and growing in their roles (a mentor)?			
Are volunteers given an opportunity to give feedback and suggest changes that would improve the position?			
Are volunteers given an opportunity to change positions on a regular basis?			
Is there an exit interview process in place?			
Are records kept in the YFM of the volunteer service of each member?			
Are regular evaluations our YFM ministry goals, objectives and action plans done?			
Is there regular planning for YFM leaders to identify needs and establish goals?			

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Sacred Safety

Policies and Procedures

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Does the ministry have a Sacred Safety Policies and Procedures (SSPP) manual (available on unity.org)?			
Is the above manual available to parents and YFM teachers?			
Do you provide SSPP training for volunteers?			
Are the board members and other church staff trained in SSPP practices?			
Are the SSPP formally reviewed on a regular basis?			
Do you diligent adhere to the SSPP practices?			
Are emergency numbers posted and easily accessible?			
Are contact numbers posted for emergency utility issues?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for Evacuation?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for Severe weather?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for Shelter in place (missing child, suspicious person)?			
Does the SSPP manual include procedures for Medical emergency?			
Is an incident report process for volunteers in place?			
Is there an adequate emergency communication system for informing parents, staff, adults service, other classes, etc?			
Is there a first aid kit(s) in the YFM area? Is it accessible? Do the kits have current and appropriate supplies?			
Are the fire extinguishers labeled, accessible and does the staff know how to use them?			
Are volunteers and staff aware of the location of utility safety mechanisms, i.e. water shut off valves, alarm systems and circuit breakers?			
Do you have room usage guidelines?			
Are harmful supplies stored safely? (anything that would be harmful when ingested or skin/eye contact)			

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Policies and Procedures (cont.)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Are youth adequately supervised according to the time, place and activity?			
Do you have a policy of two-adults per room?			
Are there guidelines on who is allowed in the classrooms on Sunday and/or during the week?			
Are attendance records kept?			
Are allergies noted on records?			
Are old records retrievable?			
Is there a registration form completed for each youth?			
Is this information accessible to teachers who have a need to know?			
Is there a sign-in procedure?			
Is it followed, reviewed, communicated?			
Is it used outside Sunday classes?			
Is there a medical release completed for each youth?			
Is it accessible to the adults who have the need to know?			
Are permission slips used for attendance at events?			
Are pictures only taken of youth with photo releases?			

Insurance/Travel

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Do you have general liability coverage for the volunteer program? Who is covered and when?			
Is the liability coverage reviewed periodically?			
Have you assessed our programs for, and are you within, the level of liability coverage required?			
Have you developed a relationship with your insurance representative and know best practices?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage, for youth on playground during the week?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage, for everyone on grounds at anytime?			
Does the church have adequate insurance coverage, for outside groups using or renting space?			
Are these groups aware of your policy and procedures for young people?			

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Insurance for Drivers

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Does the ministry have insurance that covers volunteer drivers?			
Is it primary or secondary to the drivers' insurance?			
Are the drivers involved informed of this information?			
Are all vehicle types covered, including 15-passenger vans?			
Do you check for current driver's licenses and keep copies of current insurance on file for volunteers driving their own vehicles?			
Are volunteers made aware that they may need to notify their personal auto insurance carrier of their volunteer driving activities?			
Do you check driving records?			
Does each driver have all the appropriate forms for youth and adults in the vehicle?			
Does each car have emergency kits for weather and driving conditions?			

Playground (This applies if the church has a designated outdoor play area, especially if it has play equipment.)

Item	Yes	No	Priority of Goal
Has the playground been checked for cleanliness?			
Are there regular inspections of the area and play equipment?			
Is the area fenced?			
Are there rules for use (posted, trained, and followed)?			

Congregant Input

Use the form on the next page to get additional information on your YFM program from the congregant perspective.