

Transcript Being A Y.O.U. Sponsor Orientation

Being a Sponsor

Greetings All, I am Rev. Chase, the Youth and Family Training Director for the Great Lakes Unity Region.

You will begin to acquaint yourself with YOU culture and with the role and responsibilities of being a Sponsor by watching this training video. This is one of several brief orientations to start your YOU sponsor on-boarding process.

As we move through this quick look at being a YOU Sponsor you will identify areas you want to explore in depth. More training is available. Where to look for additional support and information is noted. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the Teen Ministry Manual published by Unity Worldwide Ministry as well as local policies, procedures and practices as each ministry has specific ways of conducting their teen ministry.

In all you do let Spirit guide you. Say with me this denial and affirmation.

Denial: *Fear of the unknown has no power over me.*

Affirm: *I turn to Spirit and I am guided to do what is mine to do.*

Sponsorship is rewarding

Being a YOU Sponsor is a huge commitment. It is also tremendously rewarding. It is the cycle of giving and receiving in action. You will grow in expected and unexpected ways.

Adults serving teens have many roles. Whatever the role it involves being a mentor, building community, and being a loving non-judgmental presence. YOU Sponsors have the responsibility to create a safe space, physical and emotionally. A successful teen ministry is a place of acceptance and non-judgement. When interacting with the teens become an empathic listener. Respond with love and respect to teens and their families.

Attending trainings and meetings held, following heart agreements, policies and practices, communicating with leadership regularly will assist you in fulfilling your role. Actively participating in your local ministry will allow you to build relationships and be aware of the activities and issues facing the larger community. Being an integral part of the whole will serve you well thus the youth you lead.

“A sponsor assists in empowering teens to discover and express their inner Divinity by co-creating learning environments that empower all to explore and practice higher spiritual principles. A sponsor always models truth principles, speaking, acting and behaving in a manner appropriate of a spiritual adult.” Teen Ministry Manual p80.

Sponsorship Requirement and Responsibilities

YOU Sponsors should be 25 years of age or older and have a general understanding of Unity principles. Your way might be easier if you have experience working with teens, and good communication skills.

A Y.O.U. Junior Sponsor is a young adult who assist YOU Sponsors in carry out their duties. They are between the ages of 23 and 25. The minimum age of 23 allows the Y.O.U. Jr. sponsor to gain life experiences and skills and to be respected as a leader with authority vs a peer by the older YOUers. Y.O.U. Jr. Sponsors are required to be 23-25 years of age to attend regional events. Young adults 21-23 are encouraged to serve as Jr. sponsor with Uniteens. Adults under 25 often have restrictions on what activities they can perform. Liability issue typical prevent them from driving youth.

It is preferred that YOU sponsors make a commit to serve a year or longer. You will likely give 2 to 4 hours of your time weekly. Your responsibilities may include facilitating lessons, leading fundraisers, social activities, or service projects, and chaperoning retreats. Depending on how your teen ministry is organized you may fulfill the responsibilities with your co-sponsor or share them among a larger team

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Boundaries with Teens

It is essential that you set appropriate and consistent boundaries with the teen you interact with. The Heart agreements, Code of Conduct, Commitment Statement and Policies and Procedures all set you up for appropriate boundaries. However, your actions will speak the loudest. Here are a few pointers to avoid slippery slopes.

- Your relationship is that of Sponsor (adult sponsor) to a student. Be friendly, approachable, caring, and empathic and know you are not the teen's friend. You are a trustworthy adult.
- Listen and ask questions do not give advice.
- Practice self-awareness and self-care.
- Process your issues and challenges with other adults.
- Being with youth processing their life experiences will bring up your own past experiences. Teens push button too. It is vital you build and nurture your relationships with other spiritual mature adults. Get a prayer partner!
- Be mindful of how teens may view your interactions with their peers. Do you respond differently to your teen's friend?

Inform and Know

Each Unity center is organized slight differently. However, as a YOU sponsor meet regularly with the leaders of your community such as the YFM Director, or Senior Minister. Keep informed and share your (AHA- moments) Achievements and Happy Accomplishments. Share within your ministry and with the Regional YFM Training Director and YFM Events Director.

Sign up for regional communications. Email the YFM Training Director yfmttd@greatlakesunity.com giving them authorization to add you to the appropriate email list. You will receive notifications of retreats, rallies and training events. Join one or more Regional social media groups too such as Facebook and Instagram.

Choose to receive e-news form the Great Lakes Region by signing up on their website, <https://www.greatlakesunity.com/>. Sign up for the Path and other email notifications from Unity Worldwide Ministry and Unity World Headquarters at Unity Village. Go to <https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/publications>

Attend training events and retreats. It is at these events that you will form connections with your peers; keep abreast of best practices; learn the skills to better equip you to accomplish your responsibilities and receive ideas to evolve your ministry. Retreats provide an opportunity to interact with teens and sponsors from other Unity centers. As a Sponsor your circle of influence is large.

Finances

Meet with your Minister and/or Youth Director to understand policies and procedures about how finances for the Teen Ministry are handled. Ensure practices for handling cash, checks and credit cards, receipts and disbursements are clear and documented. Know your role and responsibility. What is the budget? How are purchases made? How are expenses reimbursed? What fundraiser are expected? What are event expense practices? What are the practices around receiving a love offering?

Events

International Youth of Unity (IYOU), is a program of Unity Worldwide Ministry. In the past it has taken the form of a weeklong retreat held in July at Unity Village. The participation eligibility requirements are the YOU chapter must:

- Be under the direction of a recognized Unity member ministry of Unity Worldwide Ministries
- Be active in their regional YOU program
- Include one or more teens ranging from the ages of 14 through 18 years of age
- have adult sponsors over the age of 25.

There are four types of YOU events in the Great Lakes Region: 1. Regional: Hosted by the Region. All of the chapters in the Region are invited. 2. Area-Wide Events (AWE): Hosted by a Chapter. All chapters in the Sub-Region are invited. 3. Community Events: Hosted by one or more Chapters. Five or more chapters in a 3-hour driving radius are invited. 4. Local/Chapter Events: Five or less local Chapters are invited. Information on attendance eligibility and more details of these event is included in The Great Lakes Region Youth of Unity Policies and Procedures Manual.

The purpose of a Regional Retreat and Annual Rally is to help each individual have a greater awareness of their divine nature, and to grow in spiritual stature. Programs are to be spiritually oriented and

provide for an educational experience as well as meaningful and creative expressions and fellowship. Regional events and functions are also designed to develop a closer contact among the chapters, and to discuss and evolve plans and methods for furthering the growth of local chapters.

The Annual Rally and Fall Retreat shall be held in the Region at a time and a place designated by the YFM Event Director. In 2019 there was a Fall YOU retreat held 3rd weekend of October. A Spring retreat held first week of May, and a June Rally held the fourth week of June. Y.O.U. Jr. Sponsors are required to be 23-25 years of age to attend regional events.

Resources

The Teen Ministry Manual published by Unity Worldwide Ministries is an excellent resource for new and longtime Teen Ministry Leaders. It contains information on

- Creating and Starting a Teen Ministry
- Development of Teens
- Leadership of Teens and Volunteers
- Conducting Lessons
- Planning Events
- Finances
- Sacred Safety
- Resources and Sample forms

Visit Unity.org, and unityworldwide.media/, along with www.UnityWorldwideMinistries.org which has:
<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/youth-and-family>
www.unityworldwideministries.org/iyou-event
www.unityworldwideministries.org/curriculum
<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/music-ministry-resources>
<https://www.unityworldwideministries.org/trainings>

The regional website <https://www.greatlakesunity.com/> contains a Teen Ministry support section with Regional Policies & Procedures, Teen Ministry Leadership Support and Teen Ministry Program Support.

Teen Ministry related Facebook groups are: Great Lakes Youth Ministry, Great Lakes Y.O.U., International Youth of Unity and National YFM Training Alumni.
Visit them for ideas and connection.

Reach out

I am here for you on your journey as a YOU sponsor. Reach out to me. Together with Spirit we will discover solutions to issues, uncover the perfect resources and create a teen ministry that equips teens to live life in accordance with spiritual principles.